



**CARITAS  
EUROPA  
INNOVATION  
FESTIVAL  
2024**



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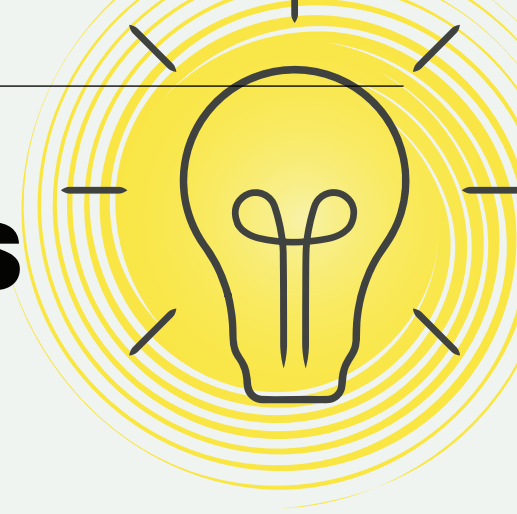
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## The Mission of the Festival

**“Innovative approaches will be essential in all areas of our work to enable the Caritas Europa network to fulfil its mission in the years ahead. Innovation is about being efficient and ensuring sustainability for us as a network, but first and foremost, about finding sustainable solutions for the people we serve.”**

*Caritas Europa Strategic Framework 2021-2028*

Caritas Europa’s 2021 launch of the Innovation Festival marked a strategic move towards fostering innovation across our network. From its inception, the festival radiates with a collaborative and celebratory spirit. It is the mission of the festival to demystify the perception of innovation as something unattainable, high-threshold and high-tech. This has been achieved through mapping and highlighting existing innovation within Caritas Europa – celebrating ourselves and each other as innovators.

## CEIF 2024 X YoungCaritas

This year, we encouraged project teams with a focus on youth engagement to apply with their ideas to shed light onto this immensely important area of work at Caritas. The results have been mesmerising – a record number of projects with a focus on youth engagement, youth empowerment and intergenerational dialogue has reached us, with inspiring methods and initiatives in active ageing, battling loneliness and ageism.

## CEIF 2024 X Caritas Africa

For the fourth exciting edition of the festival we welcomed innovative projects from Caritas Africa member organisations. This expansion mirrors the diversity and collaborative spirit of projects that the festival has highlighted over the years and makes the festival accessible to more agents of change from the international Caritas community. Hopefully, the festival catalyse change all across the globe within the Caritas network.

## Sustainability Award

Each year, the festival acknowledges outstanding achievements in ecological sustainability, climate adaptation, or climate justice through the prestigious Caritas Europa Sustainability Award. Accompanied by a monetary prize, equivalent to

the costs for offsetting the Caritas Europa annual carbon footprint, this award serves a dual purpose. It supports the financial longevity of the awarded initiative, while prompting Caritas Europa to adopt mindful, eco-conscious practices in its operations.

## Festival Trophy

For the past two years, the Caritas Europa Innovation Festival trophy has been a canvas for a remarkable collaboration. This unique fusion involves a visionary designer and carpenter from Vienna – Fabio Spink, a socially impactful wood workshop empowering underprivileged youth – PreWork from Caritas Vienna, and of course – Caritas Europa, the biggest social NGO in Europe and the host of the annual innovation festival.

This collaboration gives birth to the festival’s trophies every year, celebrating innovation across continents. This year’s trophies embody a special narrative, crafted from sustainably sourced ash wood, by the deft hands of PreWork’s aspiring young carpenters. The beautiful massive wood is sourced by Stadtholz – an association bringing cut down and fallen trees of the Viennese public spaces to the public good initiatives for further use.



Fabio Spink 2023

## What's in it for project owners?

Caritas Europa Innovation Festival presents a unique opportunity for Caritas employees across countries, roles and impact areas to showcase their innovative projects within the larger network and receive support and recognition.

### The CEIF timeline is filled with opportunities to connect, go deeper with your work and receive feedback and support:

- **Application Phase:** you submit your project and share with us what makes your project innovative, as well as details about the problem-solution fit and your impact.
- **Selection Phase:** a jury formed by Caritas Innovation leaders from different countries evaluate all the applications and select the CEIF Laureates.
- **Training Phase:** the selected CEIF Laureates receive training on public speaking, presentation and pitching skills, and prepare their presentations for the CEIF event.
- **Caritas Europa Innovation Festival:** the larger Caritas network gathers for a half-a-day virtual event where in a festival atmosphere, we celebrate and learn from all the selected projects and distinguished guests.
- **Deep Dives:** after the festival, CEIF laureates get the opportunity to develop and grow their innovative projects during an in-person Deep Dive week featuring 1:1 training and group workshops with innovation managers from within Caritas Europa and beyond.

## What's in it for the audience?

Attending the Caritas Europa Innovation Festival can give you a powerful dose of inspiration, new ideas and a sense of connection. Through this half-day virtual event you get a chance to:

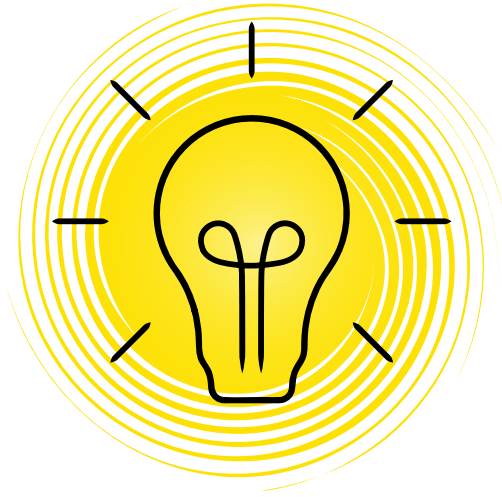
**Connect** with incredible innovators from Caritas and beyond, and get inspired by their work and vision;  
Explore ideas that you can replicate or scale in your own context and bring innovation closer to home;

**Exchange** with like-minded people and become a part of the larger Caritas Europa community of people looking to innovate and multiply the impact of their work at Caritas;

**Expand** your Caritas network beyond local realities and rejoice in this intercultural celebration.



Illustration by Arash Salem



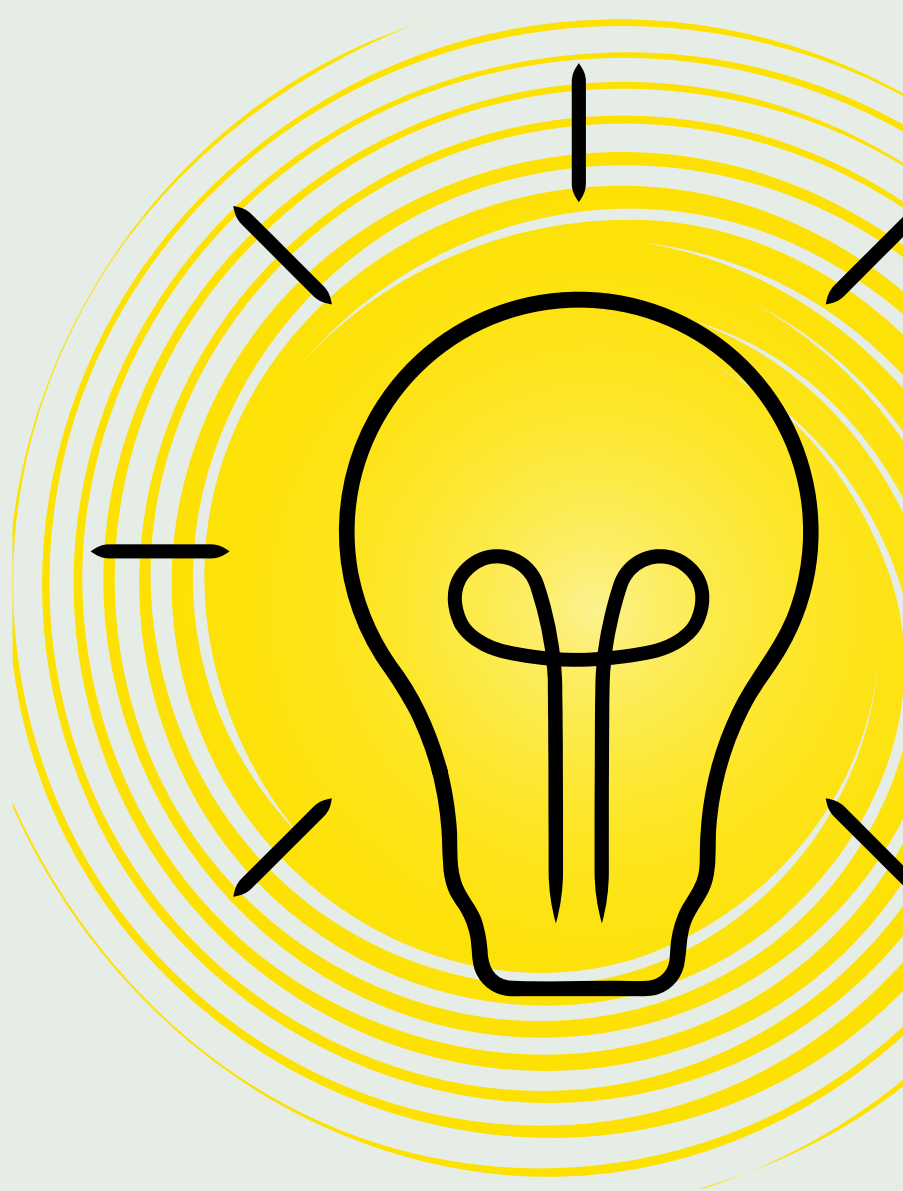
Zoom Meeting Screenshot - CEIF 2021

# CEIF through the Years

In its previous three editions, the festival has highlighted 150+ innovative projects and brought together 1100+ participants from 50+ countries around the globe.



# Young Change Makers





<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Caritas Vlaanderen
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Belgium
<b>START</b>	April 2023
<b>TEAM</b>	Le Nha Truc, Massimiliano Festuccia, Alida Battaglia and Azpiroz Amaia
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# Rights to Education for Romani Children

Empowering Romani children through on-site educational support, fostering learning and growth within their community

## PROBLEM

Discrimination against the Roma, rooted in centuries of fear and misunderstanding, has marginalised this community. Their nomadic lifestyle and societal exclusion limit their access to resources available to other citizens such as education. This exclusion hinders their participation in democracy and perpetuates illiteracy.

## TARGET GROUP

- Children and teenagers in Romani communities
- Romani Parents

## SOLUTION

The team goes to Roma settlements to teach them literacy and social skills using creative methods. Every child gets a personalised learning plan to match their skills. With a diverse staff, the approach is adapted for caravan settings. The aim is to expand the children's outlook, encourage critical thinking, and facilitate their societal integration, while advocating for suitable educational methods for Romani children

## INNOVATIVE ASPECT

This project, focusing on Romani children in Belgium, uses a unique learner-centred approach that adapts to their culture. It employs flexible educational methods, inspired by Dewey and Montessori, specifically for the challenges of teaching Roma children. The project respects Romani traditions, bringing education into their community and blending learning with their cultural values, building trust.





<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Caritas Wien
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Austria
<b>START</b>	June 2021
<b>TEAM</b>	Hannah Wiener-Withalm, Julia Seewald, Margerita Piatti, Mary Kreuzer, Malgorzata Ben, Sheelane Hochhold
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# Mutfluencer\*innen

**Fostering Courage & Resilience: A dynamic initiative to ignite the creative and social potential of youth facing poverty and exclusion.**

## PROBLEM

Recent crises have intensified poverty and exclusion among children and young people, leading to social isolation and economic hardship. This often results in loneliness and emotional stress, adversely affecting their physical and mental health. These health challenges further increase their risk of poverty, creating a difficult cycle of deprivation.

## TARGET GROUP

- Disadvantaged youth (16-29)

## SOLUTION

The Mutfluencer\*innen project supports youth with crisis and project management skills through a 4-day course. They independently create and implement project plans with the team's support, including coaching, over nine months. Their activities foster peer collaboration and end with a final presentation and celebratory event, plus a networking weekend.

## INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The Mutfluencer\*innen program boosts at-risk youths by enhancing their skills, mental health, and self-efficacy, building networks for education and careers. It equips them to motivate others, promoting a creative, courageous approach to generational challenges. This strategy not only combats poverty among participants but also benefits the wider youth community through its ripple effect.



**ORGANISATION**

Maria Queen of Peace parish Caritas of Klaipeda

**COUNTRY**

Lithuania

**START**

January 2023

**TEAM**

Priest Mindaugas Šlaustas

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# Young Caritas

## Meaningful free time for teenagers and foreign students

**PROBLEM**

The project tackles the prevalent problem of loneliness and isolation among teenagers, foreign students, and the elderly in Klaipėda, a city facing significant ageing and disparity in life expectancy between genders. Loneliness, particularly acute in seniors, is mitigated when they feel connected and valued in the community. Similarly, foreign students, especially those of African descent, often feel excluded.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Teenagers
- Foreign students
- Elderly persons

**SOLUTION**

The project aims to involve young people in volunteering. Youth and students gather Sundays for Mass and an English language club, followed by tea distribution to encourage parishioner interaction. They visit care home residents on Wednesdays, grandparents on Thursdays, and partake in senior club activities and lectures monthly. Their involvement extends to church events, hiking, retreats, and training.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This initiative uniquely connects teenagers, international students, and seniors, fostering communal cohesion. It combats isolation, enriches language and cultural understanding among the youth, and empowers seniors through regular gatherings. The involvement of foreign students in sharing their cultures bridges age and cultural gaps, enhancing communal unity and empathy.



**ORGANISATION**

Regional Caritas of Castilla y León (Spain), composed of eleven Diocesan Caritas organisations and Vicariate of Puyo (Ecuador)

**COUNTRY**

Spain, Ecuador

**START**

May 2023

**TEAM**

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# Short-Term International Volunteering

## Youth for Amazon indigenous communities

**PROBLEM**

The project addresses poverty and exclusion in Ecuador’s Amazon, where environmental degradation harms indigenous communities. Key challenges include resource privatisation, damaging mega-projects, and pollution, leading to social issues like health crises, crime, and loss of cultural identity. These problems, driven by economic and political interests, disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such as children, youth, women, and the environment.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Indigenous communities living in Puyo vicariate
- Spanish general public
- Young volunteers

**SOLUTION**

This initiative focuses on increasing global awareness and enhancing fraternal cooperation to protect the Amazon and its inhabitants. Summer camps are organised for indigenous vulnerable children, coupled with organic gardening projects for sustainable food production. Spanish society benefits from firsthand accounts of the Amazon’s reality shared by young volunteers, inspiring change. For these volunteers, experiencing a new culture, understanding poverty’s root causes, learning from indigenous communities, and observing local commitment offers transformative experience.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This project’s innovation lies in engaging young volunteers, a demographic underrepresented in Caritas Spain. It focuses on their active participation and development, offering transformative experiences and training in Ecuador. Their involvement extends beyond the trip, including organising events and mentoring new volunteers, thereby revitalising the Caritas partnership and inspiring commitment to global realities.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Trócaire
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Ireland
<b>START</b>	September 2022
<b>TEAM</b>	Development Education Team Trócaire Ireland and Fóroige Youth Project
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# Trócaire Game Changers – Development Education Competition

## Game Changers: Empowering youth to tackle global issues through game design

### PROBLEM

Development Education by Trócaire informs youth about global issues like poverty, injustice, and climate change. Game Changers empowers youth to create games addressing these challenges. Workshops guide the young participants in game design, encouraging active engagement for positive global impact and cultivating empathy from the early age.

### TARGET GROUP

- Young people in Ireland from the age of 10 years up until 18 years old

### SOLUTION

By incorporating Games-Based Learning into development education, an experiential learning environment is created. This not only enhances understanding of development concepts but also fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge in real-world contexts. This innovative approach has the potential to inspire a new generation of informed and empowered global citizens committed to positive change.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

Overall, Games-Based Learning in development education offers an innovative and effective way to engage learners in exploring and addressing complex global challenges. It leverages the immersive nature of games to create a dynamic learning environment that prepares individuals to be informed and proactive contributors to positive social, economic, and environmental change on a global scale.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Poltava, Caritas Ukraine

**COUNTRY**

Ukraine

**START**

February 2023

**TEAM**

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# Youth – Agents of Change in the Community

## Involving IDP youth in a local urban regeneration site

**PROBLEM**

The invasion of Ukraine has led to the displacement of millions, many seeking safety within the country. The Poltava region, adjacent to conflict zones, hosts around 200,000 refugees, 50,000 being children. Uprooted from their usual settings, these young people face difficulties in adapting and forming new connections. The strain on educational facilities, often serving as bomb shelters, underscores the urgent need for social integration for these displaced children.

**TARGET GROUP**

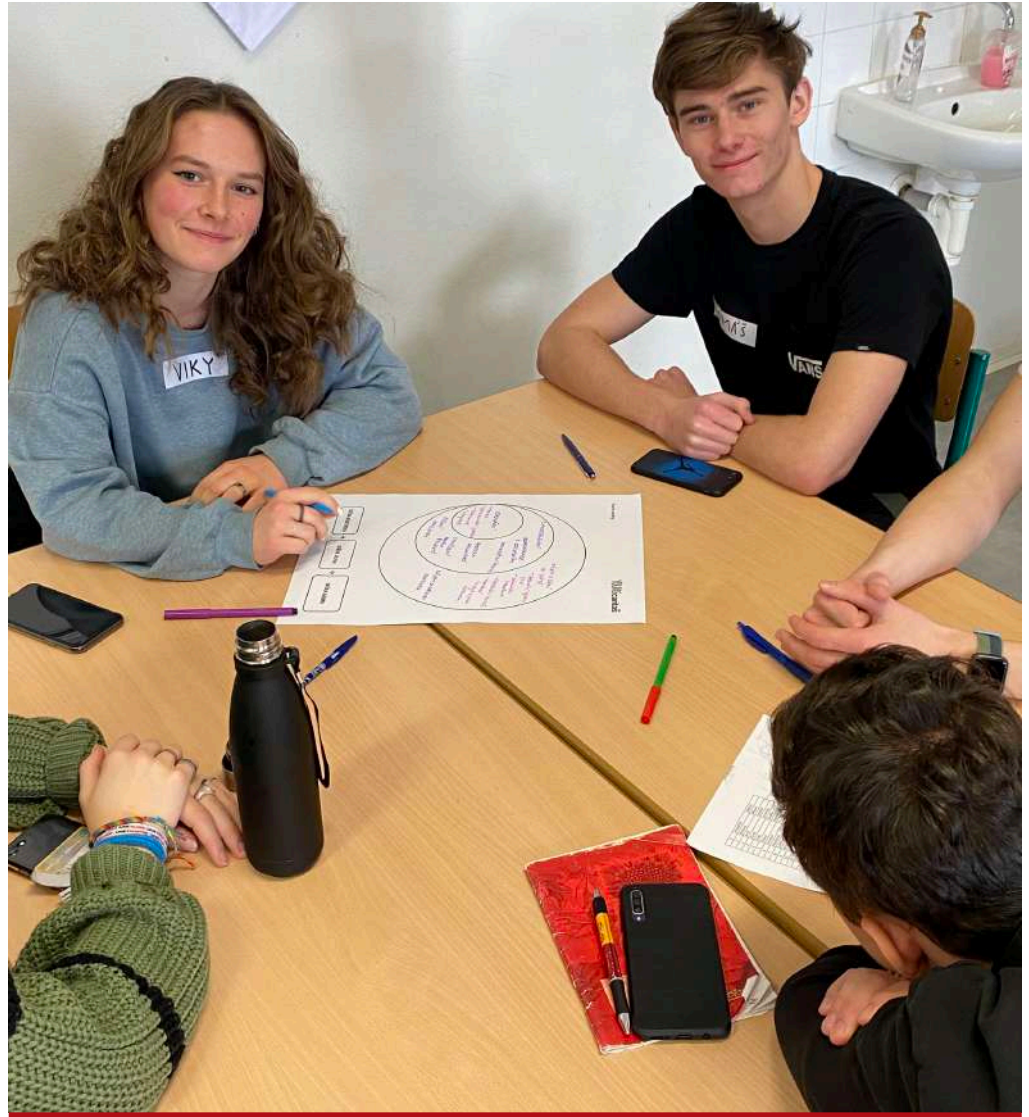
- IDP teenagers (13-18) from Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions

**SOLUTION**

The project aimed to integrate young people from Ukraine’s occupied territories into the Poltava community by enhancing and renovating their chosen location. The team first identified Poltava’s safe, popular, and secure spaces for children. Over six months, the project focused on revitalising Poltava’s historic observation deck, encompassing a mapping phase, a design phase for discussing ideas and selecting sketches, and a technical phase with expert involvement in planning and documentation.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This project’s innovation lies in enabling non-local youths to create a significant landmark in Poltava, blending their unique experiences with the city’s local style. It instils in them a sense of empowerment, as they contribute their perspectives and efforts, transforming their temporary sanctuary into a city marked by their presence. This initiative is significant for both its unifying impact amid adversity and the lasting, meaningful imprint these youths leave on Poltava.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Young Caritas CZ ( Caritas Czech Republic)
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Czech Republic
<b>START</b>	September 2022
<b>TEAM</b>	Katerina Kadlecova, Lucie Kocikova, Petra Cmarova, Vaclav Sneberger
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# Ideathon!

A participative way to engage the youth in positive community change

**PROBLEM**  
Ideathon helps bridge the gap - it brings potential changemakers together and helps them identify social issues they care about - such as gender inequality, student well-being, mental health, migration, peace development, and combating prejudices.

**TARGET GROUP**  
• Youth from all around the world

**SOLUTION**  
Ideathons, organised by Young Caritas Czech Republic, are collaborative events where youth brainstorm and devise creative solutions for real-world challenges, aligning with SDG goals. These ideathon sessions foster youth-led innovation, addressing social issues through creative collaboration.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**  
An innovative aspect of the approach is a combination of activities leading to better social sensitivity and youth participation. In one school, the team trains teachers and youth workers on inclusion of social topics in their everyday curriculum. At the same time, Ideathons help raise awareness about social problems and bring about new solutions.



## ERAKUSKETA ENFOKATU IN FOTOGRÁFICA ENFO



### ORGANISATION

Caritas Diocesana de Bilbao

### COUNTRY

Spain

### START

January 2019

### TEAM

Ziortza Gomez, Mikel Filgueiras and the youth emancipation team of Caritas Bizkaia

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caritasbi.org/juventud-y-emancipacion/

# Namaste – Participation and Youth Empowerment Group

## Namaste: Uniting Youth through Art, Entertainment, and Leisure

### PROBLEM

Transitioning to adulthood is increasingly difficult in today's complex social and economic landscape, especially for socially vulnerable youth. They struggle with limited support networks, housing and job instability, citizenship paperwork issues, social exclusion, and restricted access to rights, making their journey to a stable adult life difficult.

### TARGET GROUP

- Youth

### SOLUTION

This project provides vulnerable youths with empowerment tools, creating supportive networks for growth and equality. It leverages culture, sports, and social activities for community engagement, focusing on diverse education, confidence-building initiatives, multi-dimensional exchanges, and values like cultural heritage and social responsibility.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The project innovates with collaborative, youth self-led mentoring and combines five elements: emotional support, flexible task management, shared responsibility, resilience against adversity, and understanding the complexity of social identities.



**ORGANISATION**

SCIAF (Caritas Scotland),  
Fundación Buen Punto  
(FBP), University of Brighton

**COUNTRY**

Colombia, Scotland

**START**

January 2021

**TEAM**

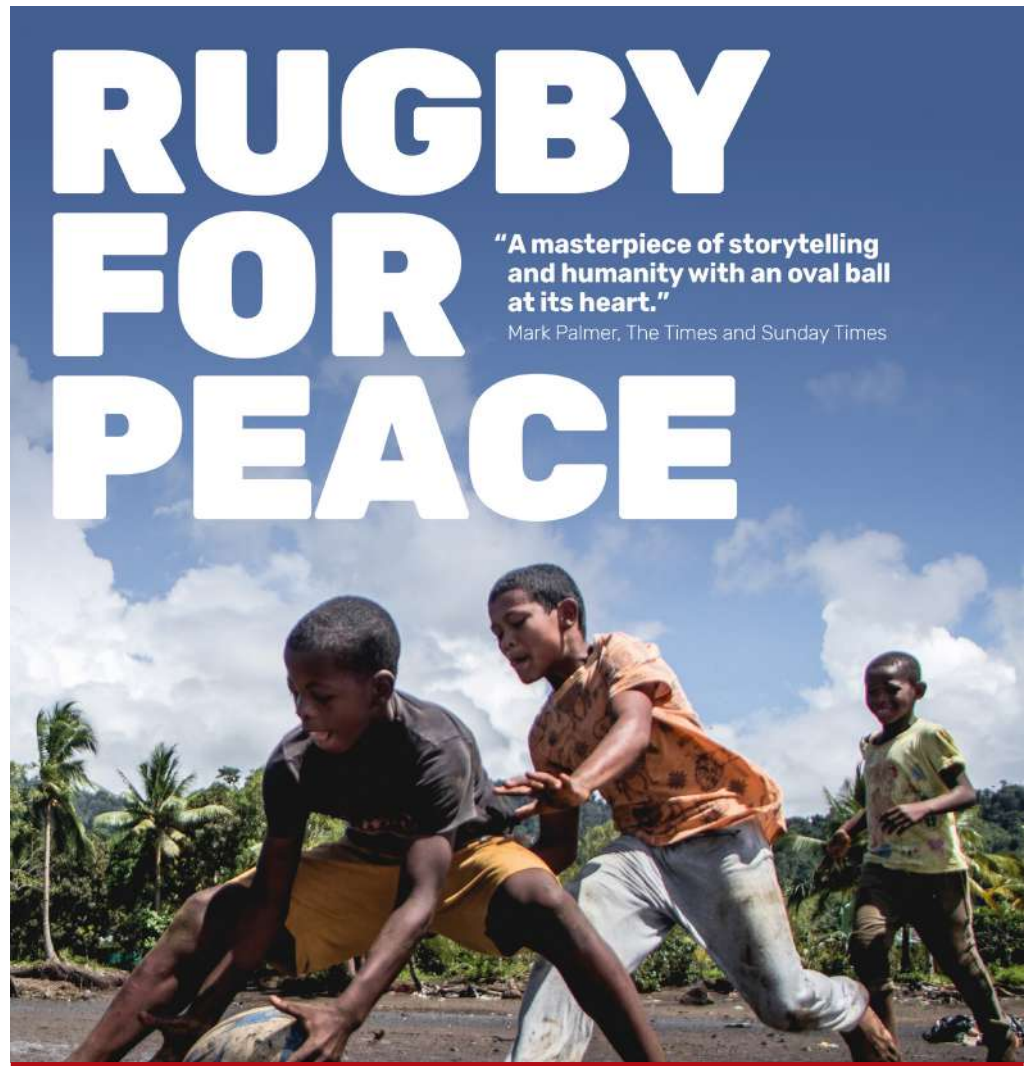
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ects/242-rugby-for-peace



## Rugby for Peace

**An ambitious and innovative collaboration, using film, communications media, development education tools and a unique SCIAF project, to engage, inspire and educate new and existing audiences**

**PROBLEM**

In Colombia's Chocó region, youth face conflicts and limited opportunities, leading some into illegal activities. Simultaneously, Scotland lacks quality non-formal education in global citizenship and parish development. Despite curriculum goals, educators often aren't equipped to deeply engage students in global matters.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Colombian youth (5-18) from rural Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities
- Scottish youth (12-18)
- Scottish and Colombian adult learners
- Rugby community

**SOLUTION**

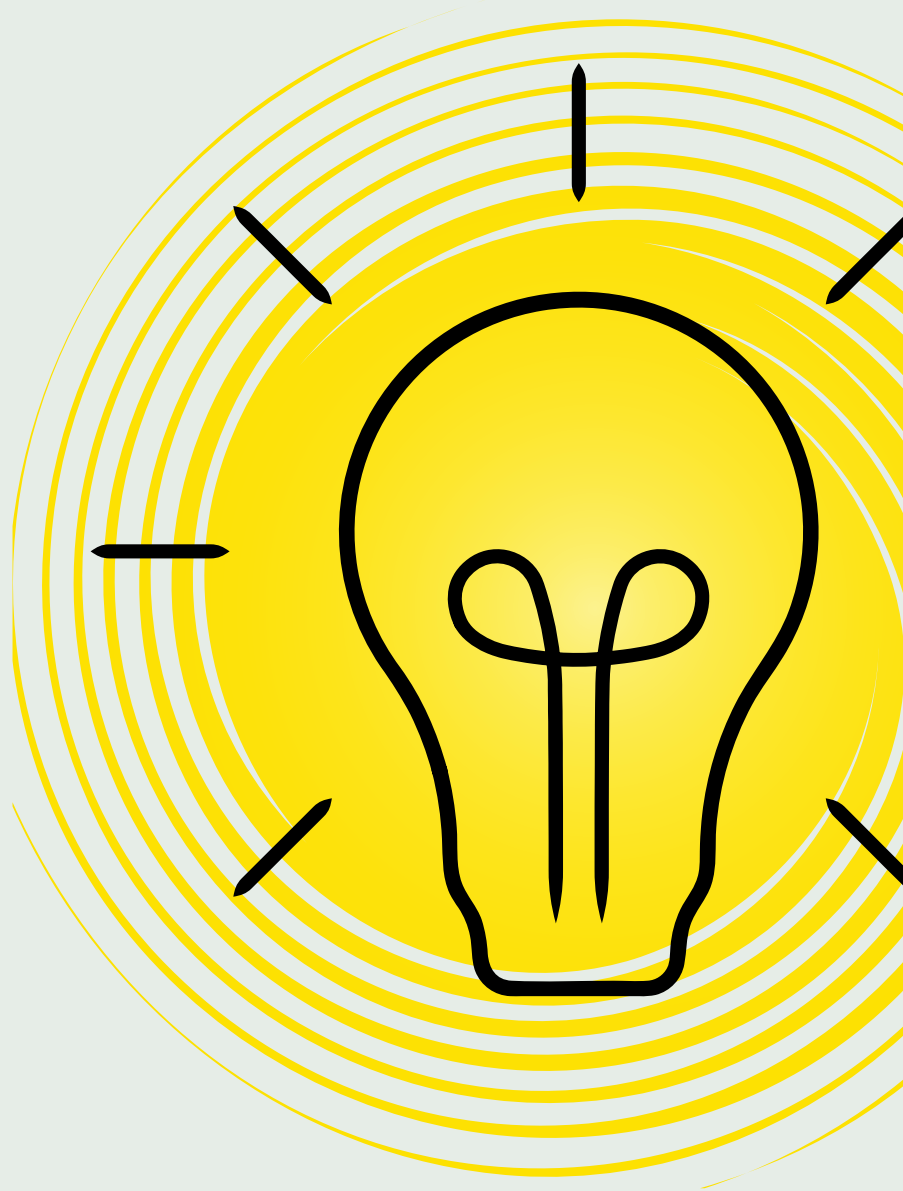
The Rugby4Peace project combines film, learning resources, communication, and fundraising to attract and educate diverse audiences about SCIAF's work. Focusing on a creative initiative in Colombia, it uses rugby to build community and promote health. SCIAF aims to raise public awareness of global issues, mobilise support, and inspire collective action. This strategic mix of engagement methods in Scotland and Colombia seeks to amplify the voices of the vulnerable and drive impactful change.

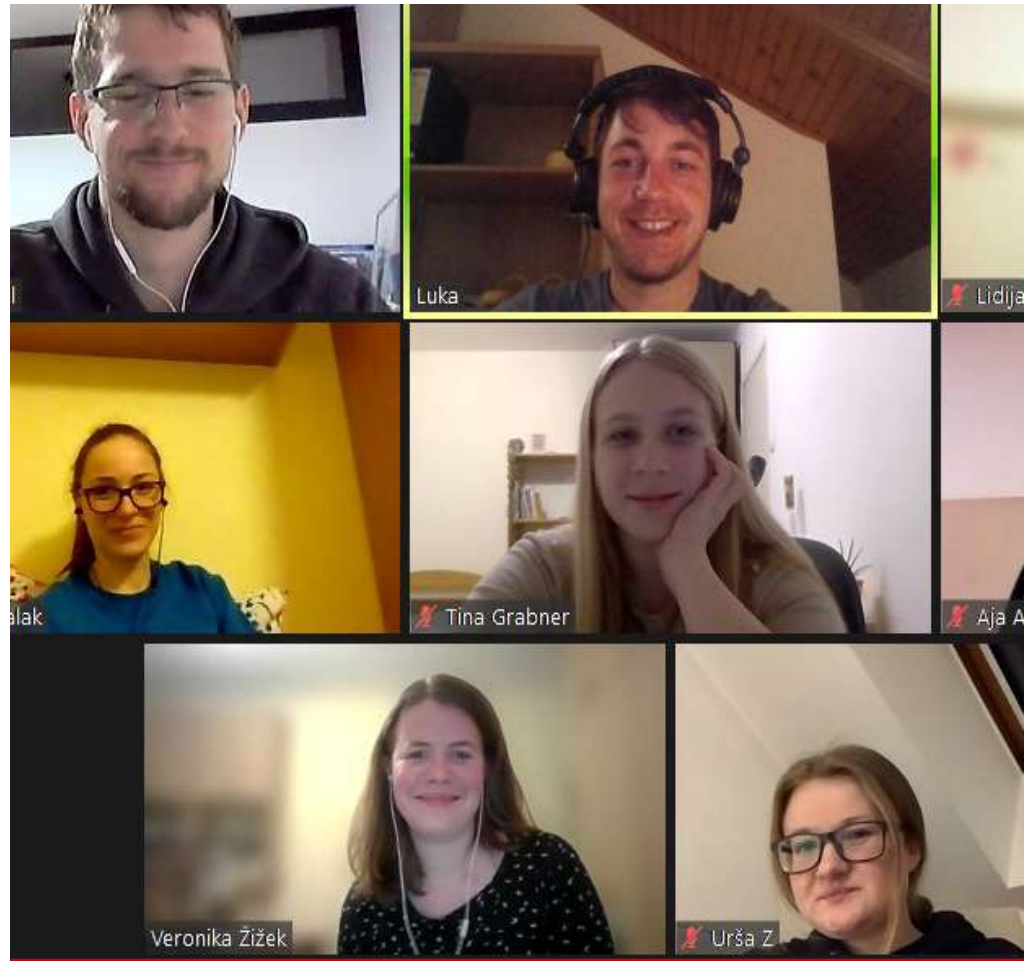
**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

Rugby4Peace uniquely merges peacebuilding through sport in Colombia with peace education in Scotland. It introduces rugby to developing regions, challenges gender norms with a female head coach, and leverages film to gain popularity, attract new audiences, and garner support. This collaborative effort diversifies SCIAF's program and public engagement.



# Better Together





<b>ORGANISATION</b>	YoungCaritas Slovenia
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Slovenia
<b>START</b>	January 2021
<b>TEAM</b>	Luka Oven, Matej Šadl
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<b>WEBSITE</b>	youngcaritas.si

## Connected through Phone

**Building bridges between generations: connecting young volunteers with elderly individuals through telephone conversations**

### PROBLEM

Many elderly individuals living in rural regions experience isolation, leading to loneliness and depression, especially as their social circles shrink due to family and friends relocating or passing away. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this situation by imposing restrictions that further limited their interactions with others.

### TARGET GROUP

- Elderly people
- Young volunteers

### SOLUTION

Volunteers make regular phone calls to elderly people, helping them feel less lonely and more included. They build strong bonds with seniors, greatly improving their well-being and reducing isolation. This project not only helps the elderly but also teaches young volunteers about patience and respect. They learn valuable lessons from the older generation and keep track of the seniors' needs, reporting any changes to ensure ongoing support.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The project stands out by uniquely connecting volunteers and elderly individuals solely through phone calls, without physical meetings. This approach allows meaningful bonds to form regardless of distance, making it accessible to people across the country. This innovative method ensures inclusivity and wide-reaching support for the elderly, breaking traditional barriers of location.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Wien

**COUNTRY**

Austria

**START**

October 2023

**TEAM**

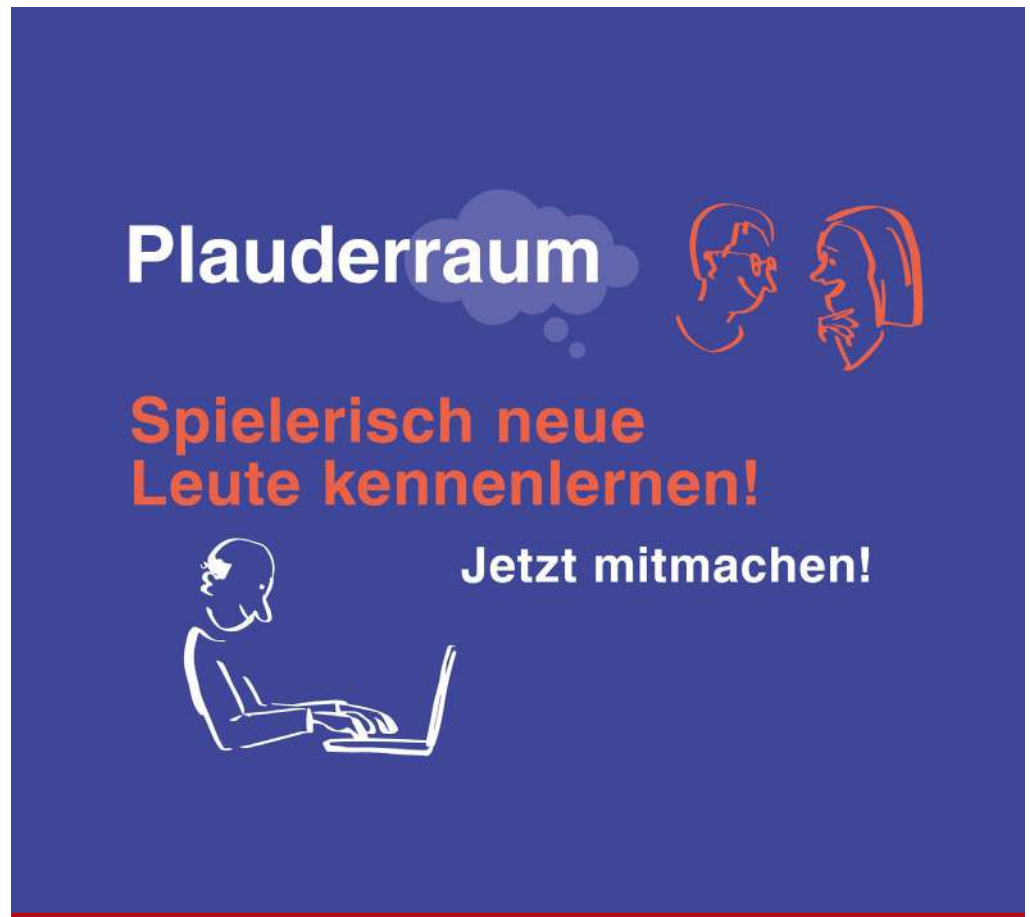
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# Plauderraum

**Plauderraum: your digital playground for making new connections**

**PROBLEM**

Loneliness is on the rise worldwide, with 6% of Europeans feeling lonely and two-thirds of Austrians fearing solitude. It is especially difficult for the elderly to forge new relationships. The surge in single-person families in Austria, exacerbates the problem. Loneliness not only reduces quality of life, but it also causes psychological problems, resulting in a vicious circle of isolation and health degradation.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Individuals aged 50+

**SOLUTION**

Plauderraum combats loneliness by offering meeting spaces for informal and playful connections, especially for people over 50. It creates a relaxed atmosphere for socialising through games, conversations, and idea exchanges, making it easier to meet new people.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

Plauderraum is innovative because it connects people easily from their homes, making it simple to meet others. All one needs is a computer or tablet, which many in this age group already have, so joining is easy. The meetings are free and anyone can leave at any time. This way, it's easier to meet new people without feeling uncomfortable. Furthermore, Plauderraum helps its users to develop digital skills.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritasverband der Erzdiözese München und Freising e.V.

**COUNTRY**

Germany

**START**

May 2023

**TEAM**

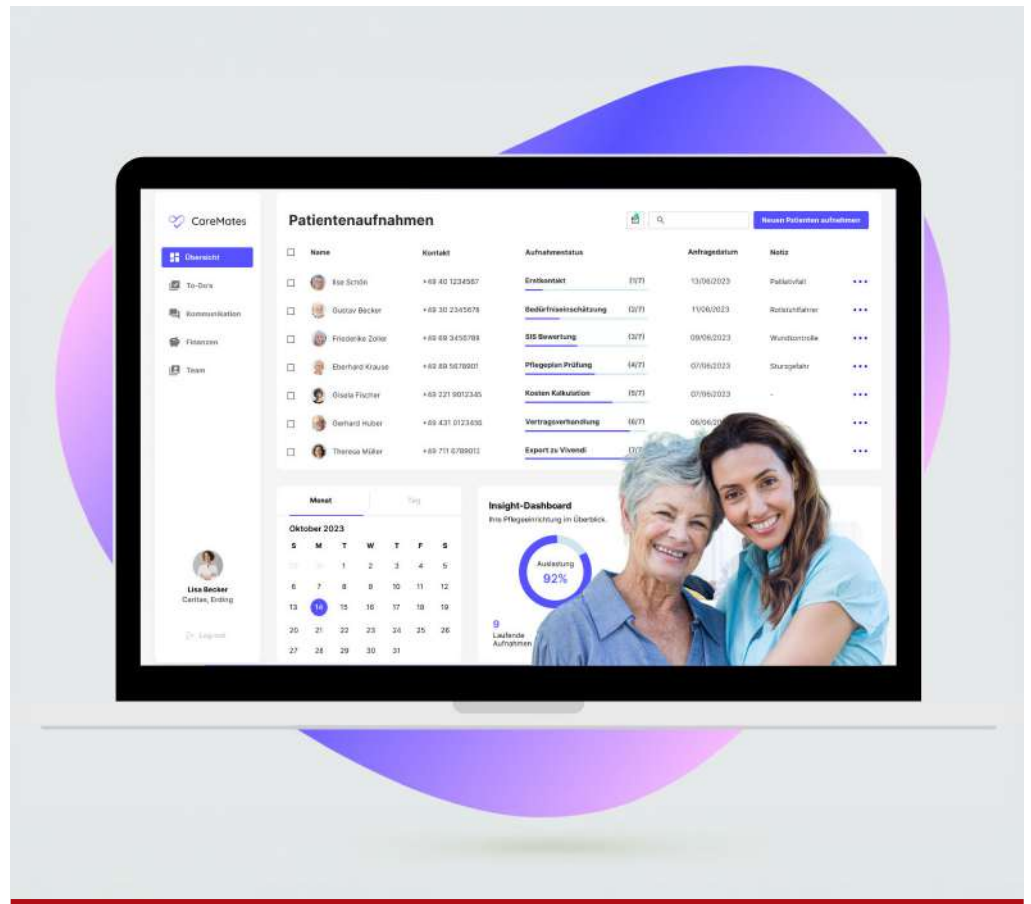
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# CareMates

## Revolutionising patient admissions with CareMates: reduced administrative time, more time for care

**PROBLEM**

CareMates addresses two significant social problems aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): promoting good health and well-being, and fostering decent work and economic growth. Within the medical field caregivers are overwhelmed, leading to burnout, while the healthcare industry grapples with a lack of nursing staff. Integrating with existing software systems and ensuring regulatory compliance is also a crucial challenge in the healthcare sector.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Caregivers
- Medical administrative staff
- Care facilities
- Patients

**SOLUTION**

CareMates, an AI-powered software, streamlines patient admissions from 5 hours to 1 hour per patient by automating data collection and generating care documents through AI. It simplifies the process by sending an admission questionnaire to the patient's relative and using AI to create health summaries, care plans, cost estimates, and care contracts, which only require evaluation.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

CareMates innovatively tackles the underexplored area of digitising patient admissions in care facilities. With backing from reputable institutions like Caritas, AWS, and UnternehmerTUM, we offer a credible and supported solution. Project's integration of AI and data analytics modernises the process, setting it apart from providers dealing with legacy systems. Its agile architecture enables CareMates to leverage cutting-edge technologies efficiently, a challenge for traditional players to replicate.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Belarus, Caritas Witebsk, Caritas Banja Luka, Caritas Mostar, Caritas Upper Austria

**COUNTRY**

Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**START**

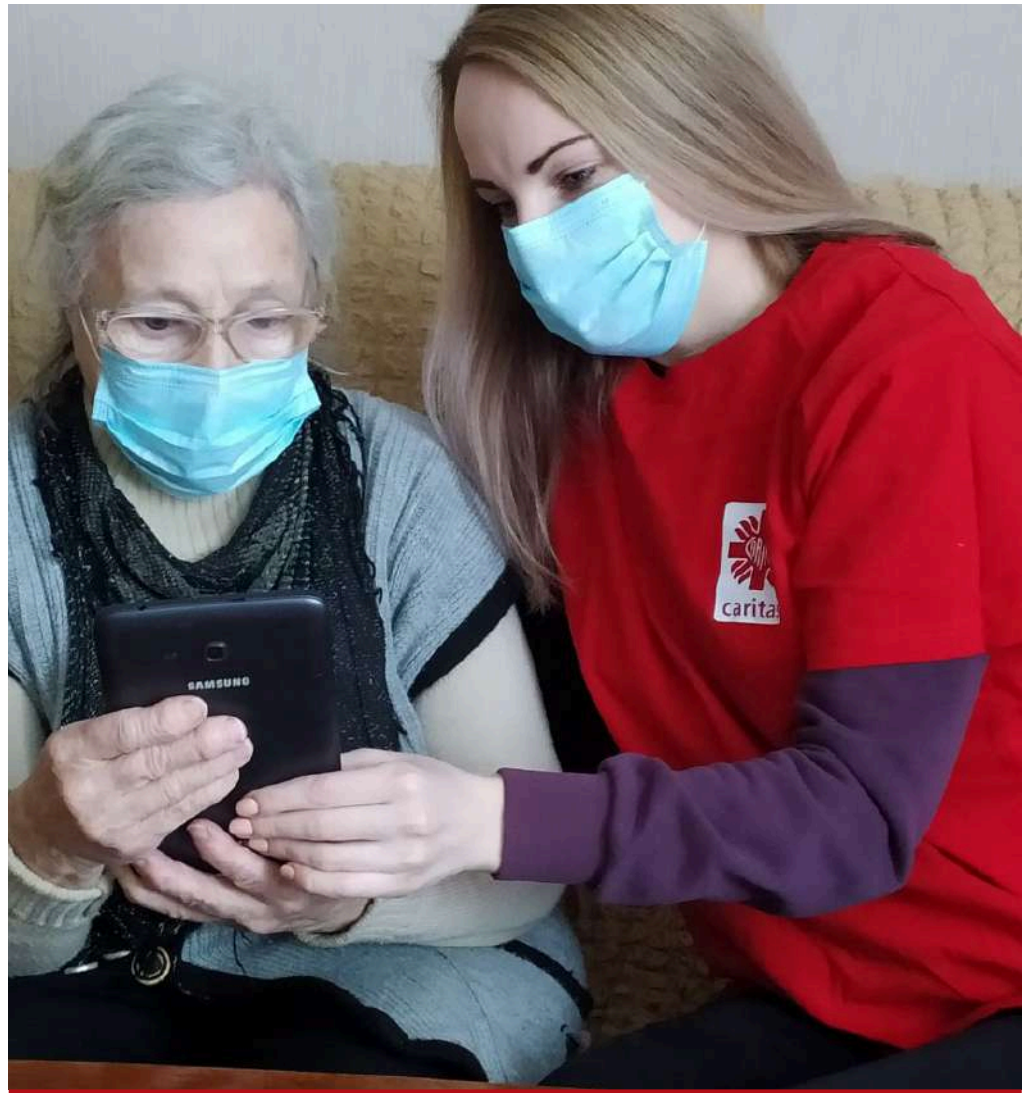
January 2020

**TEAM**

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# Grannies Against Scammers

## Connecting Generations for Safer Digital Exploration

**PROBLEM**

The project aims to tackle the digital skills gap among older individuals, particularly those who live alone with family members abroad, by mobilising young volunteers within parishes to provide internet literacy training. The goal is to empower older adults to use digital devices and services securely, reducing their vulnerability to online scams.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Elderly persons

**SOLUTION**

Young volunteers, supervised by Caritas staff, assist older individuals within parishes in using digital devices, fostering intergenerational connections. This initiative enhances older people's sense of security, enabling them to seek help when faced with suspicious online activity. It also encourages the formation of self-help groups, like 'Grannies Against Scammers,' for mutual support.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The peer-learning approach and youth engagement transform this initiative from a service for elderly people into something innovative. The youth hold valuable expertise & knowledge in internet literacy & safety, this initiative is a smart application of their know-how for a good cause.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Caritas Vienna
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Austria
<b>START</b>	January 2018
<b>TEAM</b>	Leo Söldner and Fabio Cannalonga
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<b>WEBSITE</b>	faltenrockfm



## FALTEN ROCK FM – Nursing Home’s Podcast and Radio

Radio and Podcasts enable people advanced in years and in need of care. Through digital media they are empowered, heard and valued in public by a wider podcast audience.

### PROBLEM

People advanced in years and in need of care (who live in nursing homes) are less visible in public. Their experience, stories and views on today’s society are unheard. Faltenrock FM addresses a range of social issues from feelings of isolation and disempowerment to challenges related to mental health.

### TARGET GROUP

- Elderly persons residing in nursing homes
- Young volunteers
- German speaking podcast and radio listeners in Austria

### SOLUTION

Faltenrock FM’s approach to actively involving seniors in content creation not only addresses social issues but also fosters oral history preservation and intergenerational connections, contributing to a more inclusive and empathetic society.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

Faltenrock FM offers a fresh and innovative approach to empower seniors as podcast content creators. Faltenrock FM goes beyond acknowledging social issues; it actively empowers seniors and preserves their stories as podcasts.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Cáritas Diocesana de Coimbra
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Portugal
<b>START</b>	November 2021
<b>TEAM</b>	Andrea Campos, Angela Rodrigues
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# DigiLife – Digital Life Learning

## Connecting Generations: Digi-Life transforms societal ageing

**PROBLEM**  
Elderly individuals often experience social isolation, which primarily contributes to the overall decline in their health and well-being.

- TARGET GROUP**
- Elderly individuals who want to improve their digital skills
  - University students

**SOLUTION**  
DigiLife aims to tackle social isolation in older adults by enhancing inter-generational interaction through digital skills training. It equips seniors with digital literacy for greater inclusion and independence in society, and offers university students the opportunity to gain experience and credentials by training them.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**  
DigiLife innovatively equips seniors with digital competencies for today's technology. At the same time providing university students the chance to teach digital literacy to these older adults in return for micro-credentials.



**ORGANISATION**

Càritas Diocesana de Girona, Càritas Espanyola

**COUNTRY**

Spain

**START**

January 2021

**TEAM**

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**WEBSITE**

<https://www.caritasgirona.cat/ca/3991/revista-trenats.html>



# Trenats

## Bridging Generations: 'Trenats' magazine, crafted by and for Caritas youth and seniors

**PROBLEM**

Since the pandemic, loneliness amongst seniors has been exacerbated, and a culture of isolation, fear and sadness has been perpetuated by the constant flow of negative news in the media. At the same time, ageism remains a social issue that affects both elderly and young populations in their everyday life.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Elderly persons
- Youth
- Persons affected by ageism

**SOLUTION**

The magazine, created through intergenerational meetings, is distributed by youth to seniors for shared reading and discussion. This not only provides companionship for the elderly but also encourages their active social participation, including contributing articles. The magazine fosters a community sense for all ages, valuing seniors' experiences and wisdom, and reinforcing their societal belonging.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This magazine, crafted by and for its beneficiaries with youth support, fosters equal relationships between young and older individuals. It stands out by involving all parties in its creation and evaluation, actively challenging ageism and demonstrating the societal value of both generations. Unique in its approach, the project not only bridges generational gaps but also produces a creative, tangible community asset: the magazine itself, serving as a tool against ageism.





**ORGANISATION**

Caritas of Kaunas Archdiocese, Caritas of Vilnius archdiocese

**COUNTRY**

Lithuania

**START**

June 2022

**TEAM**

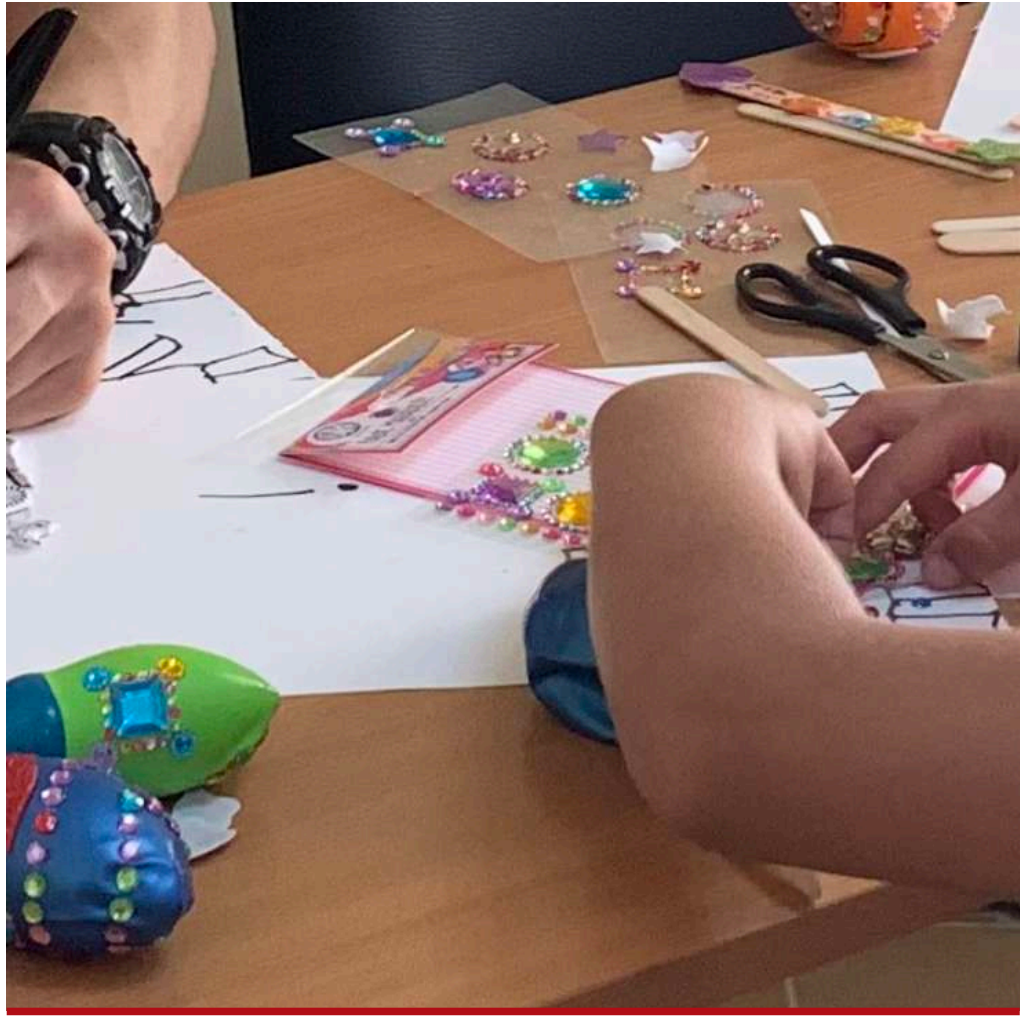
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# Relatives of Convicts towards Empowerment

## Supporting the Unseen: strengthening families of prisoners in Lithuania

**PROBLEM**

In Lithuania, the families of prisoners, often overlooked, are key to their successful reintegration. International research underscores the importance of familial ties in preventing recidivism. Yet, these families, including parents, spouses, children, and siblings, face many secondary consequences due to the imprisonment of their loved one, a fact highlighted by both local practices and global studies.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Families of imprisoned persons

**SOLUTION**

This project used advocacy and awareness to support prisoners' families, creating an information platform, offering targeted assistance to 180 relatives, engaging 21 communities, hosting family days in prisons, developing professional guidelines, and bolstering the team's skills with international training and networking.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This is a pioneer project in Lithuania, being the first to provide social services tailored to the unique needs of prisoners' families. It goes beyond service development, aiming to raise broader community awareness about these families' challenges.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Wien

**COUNTRY**

Austria

**START**

April 2020

**TEAM**

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## 'füreinander' – Austrian Community for Humanity

Online volunteering platform that promotes humanity and solidarity in Austria

**PROBLEM**

In our crisis-ridden era, many feel stressed, lonely, and powerless, exacerbated by media and societal polarisation. Moreover, the social sector faces a decline in volunteers, especially amongst younger generations. The social sector fails to cater to the needs of younger generations who seek flexibility and spontaneity, balancing their desire to contribute with personal schedules and lifestyles.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Vulnerable groups
- Volunteers

**SOLUTION**

'Füreinander' offers a versatile platform for short-term volunteering, tailored to individual resources and availability, supporting facilities like nursing homes. It fosters community solidarity, raises awareness of social issues, combats loneliness, and connects diverse individuals, thereby benefiting society at large.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

'Füreinander' innovates with a digital platform offering accessible, flexible participation in social causes. It simplifies onboarding for immediate involvement, with missions tailored to interests and direct local assistance options. The platform cultivates a sense of community and connection to larger causes, enhancing social awareness, experience sharing, and understanding of diverse life realities.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas association of the diocese Augsburg e.V., Diocese Augsburg

**COUNTRY**

Germany

**START**

May 2022

**TEAM**

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# Carikom – Digital Participation for People with Disabilities and Elderly

**Bridging the digital divide for people with disabilities and the elderly**

**PROBLEM**

The pandemic has exacerbated social isolation for the elderly and people with disabilities. Mentioned has caused a significant need for inclusive digital solutions to enhance their social participation.

**TARGET GROUP**

- People with disabilities
- Elderly individuals (especially those with cognitive impairments)

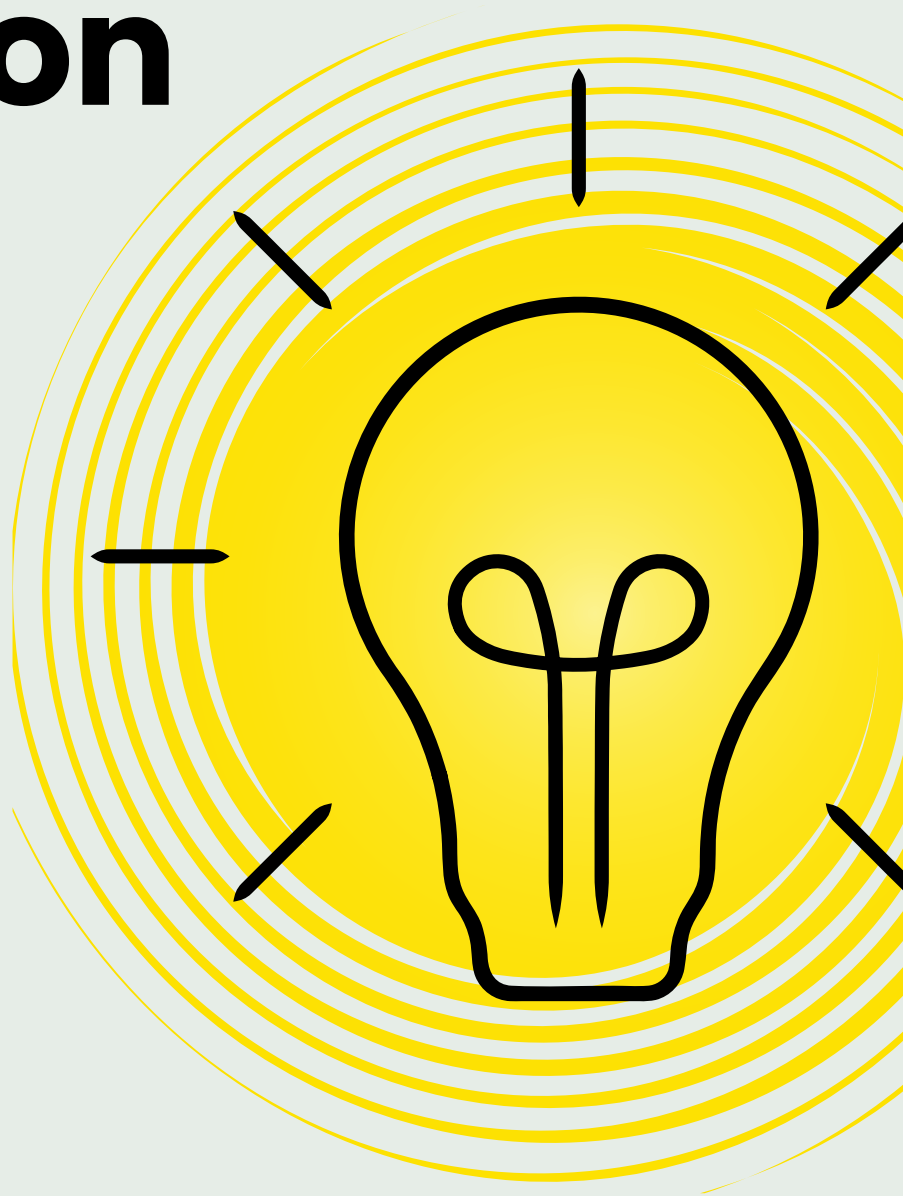
**SOLUTION**

The initiative introduces two applications designed to streamline digital access and communication. CariKom, a customizable launcher, simplifies smartphone and tablet use with various functions for newcomers to technology. The 'HUHU' app offers chat, video calls, and image sharing without any barriers. It's supported by digital cafes and courses that boost tech knowledge, helping the elderly and disabled to engage more in the digital world.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The innovation in this project lies in the synthesis of app development-partner collaboration, and direct engagement with the target audience. It envisions active participation of the elderly and people with disabilities in every phase. They influence all aspects, ensuring the outcomes are shaped by a participatory and egalitarian process.

# **Social Inclusion & Cohesion**





**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Georgia

**COUNTRY**

Georgia

**START**

October 2017

**TEAM**

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## Engineering Laboratory in Day Care Centre for Children in Village Eshtia of South Georgia Region

Equipping children with diverse skills in language, arts, and technology at the Center for Creative Learning and Vocational Training

**PROBLEM**

In the village of Eshtia, Georgia, the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent travel restrictions from the 2008 war with Russia have led to economic decline and mass emigration. The community, mainly ethnic Armenian Catholics, used to thrive on farming and textiles. Now, they struggle with poverty and few chances for economic growth, affecting their living standards and economic security.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Eshtian children and youth aged 6-16
- Armenian Catholic ethnic and religious minorities from village Eshtia

**SOLUTION**

The Eshtia Day Care Center offers language, arts, and IT skills to Georgia's minority youth. Through education and vocational training in heritage crafts and technology, the centre enhances communication, creativity, and job readiness. Caritas Georgia ensures a supportive growth space, blending tradition with modern skills.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The Eshtia Engineering Laboratory is a pioneering initiative, being the sole facility of its kind in rural Georgia. It breaks new ground by providing advanced technology like IT, graphic design, and 3D printing to a traditionally underserved community. The lab not only equips children with in-demand skills for the digital economy but also promotes entrepreneurship. It focuses on technology-based businesses.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Caritas Hungary
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Hungary
<b>START</b>	March 2017
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# Emerging Settlements

## Breaking the cycle of generational poverty in underprivileged communities

### PROBLEM

In 2019, the Hungarian government launched a large-scale project to help 300 of the most impoverished villages prosper. The aforementioned communities are densely populated with Roma communities and have significant childbirth rates. Key challenges within these communities include inadequate community services, widespread poverty, insufficient housing, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and the ghettoization of Roma villages.

### TARGET GROUP

- Children from underprivileged families

### SOLUTION

Firstly, the project builds trust by regularly interacting with and being open to everyone in the settlements. The goal is to make sure the local people are comfortable with and accept the support staff who work there. This 'Presence point', equipped with social workers and an office, forms the foundation for all subsequent activities. Based on the established trust and need assessment analyses, the program develops a strategy for necessary interventions.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The Presence Programme is a unique social initiative as support staff are always available in the communities they serve, building long lasting relationships and trust. The program is participatory by design, comprising comprehensive children services. The uninterrupted, stable support system leads children to employment and an independent future.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Caritas Rožňava
<b>COUNTRY</b>
Slovakia
<b>START</b>
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# A Way to Employment

## Bridging the gap for the unemployed through education and skills training

### PROBLEM

Widespread job discrimination, often due to unfair social attitudes, makes long-term joblessness worse. The Roma community is unfairly seen as lazy and hard to teach, while ageism stops people from getting jobs because they're seen as too young or too old to learn new skills. Disabled people find it hard to get jobs because of negative societal views, and those who haven't worked for a while struggle to return to work.

### TARGET GROUP

- Long-term unemployed
- People with disabilities
- Roma community

### SOLUTION

The project sets up a social business and directly hires beneficiaries. It also assists them with money matters like bills and debts. Social counsellors provide support with problems like understanding digital tools and managing finances. Finally, the project works to reduce local discrimination by making its work more visible and working with the media.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The innovative approach of the project lies in creating job opportunities for our beneficiaries, beyond offering social counselling and services. Caritas acts as an employer for project beneficiaries, employing them in menial jobs. Beneficiaries often lack basic work skills and live in dire conditions, unfamiliar with common tasks like lawnmower maintenance.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Caritas Pflege Wien
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Austria
<b>START</b>	September 2023
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# Telepflege (Telecare)

Enhancing quality of life through digital counselling from professional care workers, right in the comfort of your home

## PROBLEM

With an ageing population, there's a shortage of staff in healthcare, especially for home care. The situation is even worse in rural areas where it's more difficult to reach due to long travel. Furthermore, care work is less appealing because it is physically demanding, does not pay much, and is time consuming.

## TARGET GROUP

- Elderly people from lower Austria
- Social care workers

## SOLUTION

Telecare provides healthcare services remotely via tablet devices, where professionals contact clients through video and audio. It includes nursing services and setting up the tablet at the client's home. Tailored to individual needs, it offers various consultations like health promotion, therapy services, and nursing care such as blood glucose monitoring.

## INNOVATIVE ASPECT

Telecare introduces an innovative way to care for the elderly, regardless of their location or mobility. As a unique digital homecare service in Austria, it addresses healthcare staffing shortages. Telecare's potential to enhance and expand healthcare services is significant, offering a modern solution to traditional care challenges.





**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Romania  
Confederation, Secours  
Catholique – Caritas France

**COUNTRY**

Romania

**START**

April 2021

**TEAM**

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## In the Virtual World: Smart and Safe Education

Empowering children from vulnerable groups to navigate the online world safely, harnessing the Internet’s opportunities while guarding against its risks.

**PROBLEM**

When Romanian schools switched to online learning due to COVID-19, many kids struggled, especially in poorer areas. They lacked resources like computers and internet access, and often did not have parental support. Now, as more kids access the internet, they face risks like oversharing, cyberbullying, and encountering harmful content. Often, they face these dangers alone as parents and teachers are not equipped to guide them in staying safe online.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Primary and secondary school students from vulnerable communities
- Parents of school students
- Teachers

**SOLUTION**

The project helps kids from less-privileged areas learn safely online. It uses Caritas Day Centres with internet access devices and staff who can teach about online safety. Kids and their parents and teachers get lessons and help on internet dangers. The project also works with NGOs and the government to make the online world safer and teach all kids from all backgrounds on how to use the internet safely.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This project brings safeguarding policies into the virtual world, emphasising the seriousness of online risks. It sees internet access as key for educating children from vulnerable areas, providing them extra support for safe use. Project also seeks broader change by involving decision-makers and civil society, aiming to improve online safety for children overall.



<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Vilnius Archdiocese Caritas
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Lithuania
<b>START</b>	March 2018
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# Friendly Rental

Safe, affordable homes for those with financial struggles

## PROBLEM

The “Friendly Rental” project focuses on the problem of economic homelessness, aiming to offer housing solutions for those struggling financially to rent at market prices or who have previously experienced homelessness.

## TARGET GROUP

- Residents of homeless shelters
- People who can not afford to rent at market price
- People at risk of becoming homeless
- People with disabilities

## SOLUTION

Friendly Rental provides affordable, secure homes for low-income individuals, easing their move from homelessness to community life. It includes social worker support for financial skills, fostering independence. The initiative also promotes community involvement, helping overcome isolation. Stay lengths are tailored to each person’s specific needs and objectives.

## INNOVATIVE ASPECT

“Friendly Rental” is a distinctive Lithuanian project providing affordable housing and social worker support, a first in the nation. Self-funded and parish-based, it goes beyond typical transitional housing by also aiding those at risk of homelessness, proactively working to prevent it.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Diocese of Salford

**COUNTRY**

United Kingdom

**START**

January 2022

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# Aspire Business

**Tailoring success for refugee entrepreneurs, turning business dreams into sustainable realities**

**PROBLEM**

Displaced individuals arriving in the UK bring skills and diverse business ideas but often struggle to integrate into the local economy due to unfamiliarity with specific UK business requirements and local nuances. This gap in understanding hinders them from developing their business potential and contributing economically.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Refugees

**SOLUTION**

Supporting displaced individuals to set up businesses in the UK fosters their integration, independence, and contribution to society. Project guides them through UK legislation and best practices, enhancing their creativity without imposing strategies. Project focuses on offering practical help that leads to financial independence, personal empowerment, and fulfilment, allowing them to transfer their skills and contribute positively to the community.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project's innovation lies in its flexible, participant-driven approach, offering both online and in-person services. It considers the unique refugee experience, addressing biases and barriers, and constantly adapts to UK law and best practices. The program's fluid, customizable nature allows for lasting impact, with past participants returning as mentors and guides for newcomers.



**ORGANISATION**

Cáritas Diocesana de Coimbra

**COUNTRY**

Portugal

**START**

December 2019

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# Pharaon – Pilots for Healthy and Active Ageing

**Pharaon project: Crafting citizen-centric solutions for an integrated care system, redefining community support and well-being**

**PROBLEM**

Older adults often feel isolated. Restricted mobility and lack of inclusive initiatives lets loneliness levels rise. Although social services exist, there is a disconnect between the health, care work and social infrastructures, making it difficult for people at care and elderly houses to access human connection they seek for.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Elderly persons
- Formal and informal caregivers

**SOLUTION**

This project introduces holistic changes through community engagement and tailored services. It includes Proximity Volunteering for personal interaction with older adults, Services on Demand for personalised activities, and Carers Campus offering blended learning for caregivers. Additionally, a digital app, City Audit Tours & Together City and Nature, enables citizen feedback on urban infrastructure and fosters participation in cultural activities, creating a supportive, inclusive community environment for older adults and their caregivers.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The innovativeness of this intervention lies in its comprehensive, community-focused approach, combining preventive and direct care strategies for healthy aging.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Diocesana de Coimbra

**COUNTRY**

Portugal

**START**

june 2022

**TEAM**

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# ALLright(s)

## Fostering human rights, diversity and interculturality

**PROBLEM**

While the 2030 Agenda and SDGs advocate for global dignity and opportunity, problems still persist. The EU emphasises gender equality, but Portugal's strategies reveal persistent gaps in equality, non-discrimination, and children's rights. There's a crucial need to address these unresolved challenges in gender equality, violence prevention, and youth empowerment, to meet both EU and national objectives.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Pre-school and secondary school students
- CDC's Leisure Activities Centres
- Vulnerable groups

**SOLUTION**

The project includes five components: training professionals in human rights and gender equality; educating children and young people through workshops on human rights, gender equality, and diversity; formation & moderation of "Youth in Action" discussion groups amongst the youth; dissemination of communication materials created by the youth; management, monitoring, and evaluation of project outcomes.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

This project emphasises co-creation and co-production in non-formal education to enhance social awareness and a range of personal skills. It acknowledges that changing attitudes and behaviours is a long-term endeavour, requiring engagement across various ages, areas, and contexts, especially in matters of human rights, diversity, and interculturality.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Austria, Caritas Serbia, Caritas Albania, Caritas Bosnia & Herzegovina, Caritas Kosova, Caritas Montenegro, SEC Socio-Educative Centre

**COUNTRY**

Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Serbia

**START**

May 2022

**TEAM**

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# ACTIVE – Accessible Communication Toward Inclusion of Vulnerable and Excluded persons on Western Balkans

**Sustainable social inclusion of disadvantaged people through accessible communication in Western Balkan society**

**PROBLEM**

People with disabilities together with other vulnerable groups in the Western Balkans are experiencing many common challenges. The legal framework guarantees equal rights and non-discrimination. However, the implementation remains limited. Despite the progress made in the last decade, persons with disabilities still face considerable barriers and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Disadvantage, socially excluded persons
- Persons with disabilities
- Civil society organisations
- Policy makers

**SOLUTION**

Project ACTIVE proposes improvement of accessibility in the area of communication through the development of easy-to-read guidelines in languages of targeted countries and the development of recommendations for barrier free events. The project encompasses various awareness and capacity building activities as well, involving a wide range of stakeholders and relevant decision makers in all processes.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The innovativeness of the project lies in its collaborative nature. In the framework of ACTIVE a plethora of materials and toolkits have been produced and made available. These materials are used by five different Caritas organisations in five Balkan countries, sparing valuable time and financial resources and boosting the impact of the project fivefold.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Viseu, Municipality of Viseu, Viseu Cultura.

**COUNTRY**

Portugal

**START**

April 2023

**TEAM**

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# Festival TRIP – INclusion By Arts

## Empowerment through artistic expression

**PROBLEM**

The project addresses the challenge of increasing active societal participation and advocacy for minority groups' values. It aims to enhance the visibility, promotion, and integration of these groups within society, tackling issues related to their underrepresentation and marginalisation.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Young adults and children from the Roma community

**SOLUTION**

The project aims to empower Roma children and young people, enhancing their societal participation through artistic expression like music and dance. It uses culture and art as a strategy to open up dominant societal groups to minorities, fostering intercultural understanding. This approach seeks to reduce cultural and social conflicts, bridging gaps between diverse groups in society.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project's innovation lies in employing artistic languages across various artistic domains as an alternative to traditional education and social intervention methods. This approach aims to establish ongoing learning spaces, nurturing skills and addressing personal, social, and emotional aspects in Roma community children and youths.



**ORGANISATION**

CAW Brabantia, antenna Caritas International in Belgium.

**COUNTRY**

Belgium

**START**

April 2018

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# Xtra Mena

The Xtra MENA project informs and supports unaccompanied foreign minors in transit

**PROBLEM**

Belgium is increasingly confronted with “unaccompanied foreign minors” who choose not to apply for international protection or who are highly uncertain about building a future perspective here. Instead, these minors often turn to people in alternative, informal networks for help, who often do not usually have the best intentions. As a result, the society is systematically losing this group of minors because of their distrust of the existing system that requires specific forms of registration.

**TARGET GROUP**

- The direct beneficiaries are “unaccompanied foreign minors” (UAMs) ‘in transit’
- All actors that come into contact with this target group

**SOLUTION**

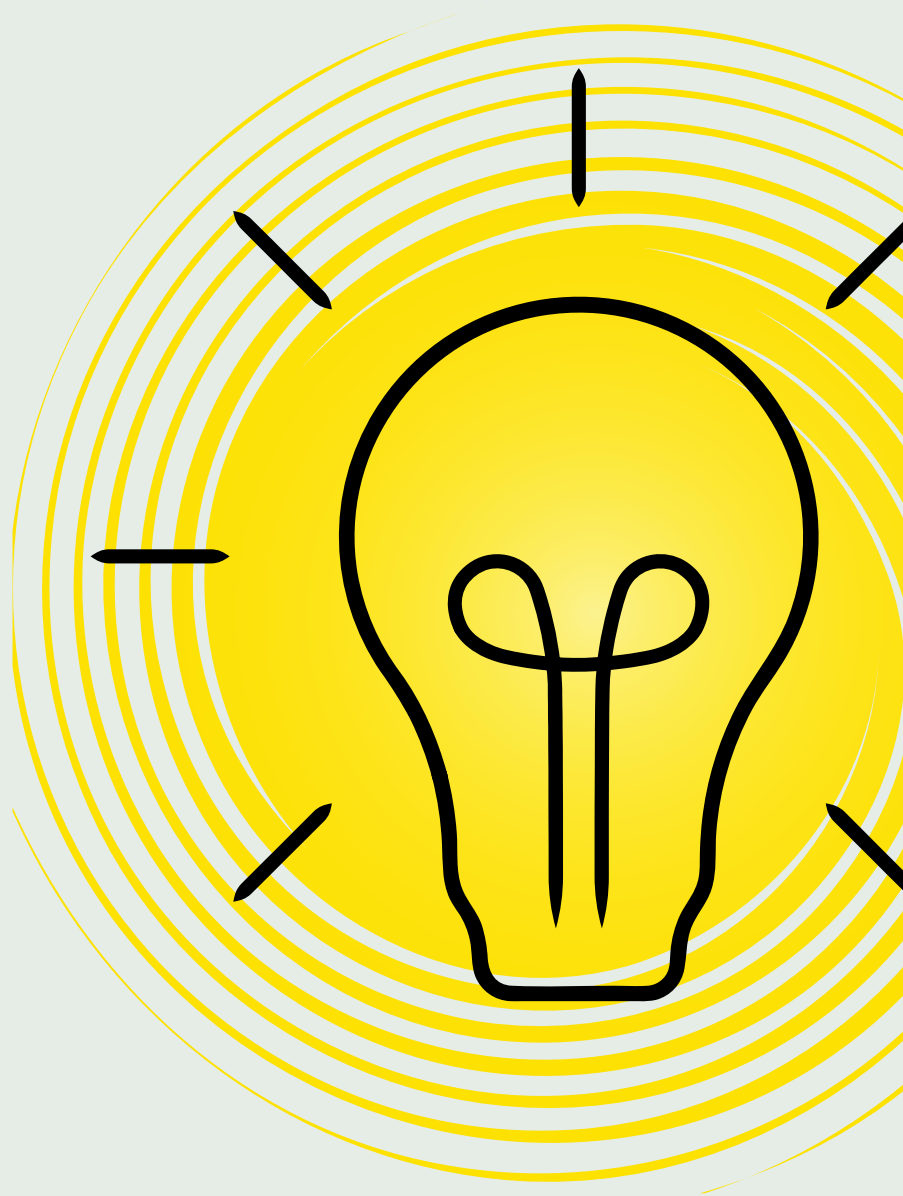
The Xtra MENA project team has been working with UAMs on the ground (reception centres, squats, homeless shelters, streets), gaining expertise in the obstacles and difficulties they encounter. The team also offers training to all actors that might come into contact with this group of youngsters. Based on its experiences, the Xtra MENA team made clear recommendations and guidelines for opening Belgium’s first pre-reception space.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

Xtra MENA enabled the creation of a pilot unconditional pre-reception space in 2018. Unique in its nature, the pre-reception space provides support to UAMs without the prerequisite of a residence permit or other forms of legal registration. The successful pilot led to two further space openings in 2022, in total the Belgian centres now reach around 200 UAMs per year.



# Green Futures





**ORGANISATION**

Caritasverband der Erzdiözese München und Freising

**COUNTRY**

Germany

**START**

July 2022

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# Fashion Truck

**Dressing with Dignity: The Fashion Truck’s unique approach delivers donated clothing to those facing financial challenges**

**PROBLEM**

In Munich, despite economic prosperity, 17% of people struggle with poverty, lacking funds for basic needs. This is evident when underdressed children are seen in winter. Many avoid traditional donation stores due to shame or mobility issues. Furthermore, the dominance of fast fashion harms local textile businesses and crafts, resulting in pollution and resource loss from overproduction.

**TARGET GROUP**

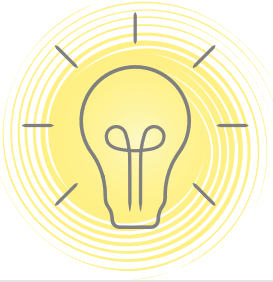
- Financially vulnerable population

**SOLUTION**

The project gathers and delivers clothes in and around Munich, pleasing donors and helping those in need. Fashion Truck reaches various localities, including communities, elderly homes, and shelters, for clothes distribution. Beneficiary feedback has expanded collections to include items like underwear and sleeping bags. Upcoming upcycling workshops will support giving new life to old clothes.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The Fashion Truck redefines clothing aid with a positive, mobile boutique-like environment, breaking the stigma of traditional distribution points. Its approach emphasises sustainability and respect for beneficiaries’ privacy and choices, offering a wide range of fashionable clothes. By visiting neighbourhoods and events, it fosters community integration.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Navrongo-  
Bolgatanga Diocese

**COUNTRY**

Ghana

**START**

January 2005

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# Women Empowerment through Indigenous Food

## Annual cultural festival of women promoting indigenous food systems

**PROBLEM**

The people of Zuarungo Moshei consume an overwhelming amount of imported food and are out of touch with the indigenous ways of food cultivation and preparation. The consequences are manifold: food insecurity, loss of indigenous food, and loss of food sovereignty. The need to build back the capacities of women to innovate in preparing nutritious meals from their indigenous foods and promote the consumption of indigenous food is what this project seeks to achieve.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Local women in the community of Zuarungo Moshei of about 3000

**SOLUTION**

Since 2005, women of Zuarungo Moshie self-organise an annual cultural festival with a focus on indigenous foods. Guests and visitors give donations and participate in food auctions. The generated income is used to support the community members with micro loans. 5 years ago, the community raised sufficient funds to purchase land under collective ownership and plan the construction of a community centre there. The centre will contain multifunctional meeting and work spaces, as well as a day care centre and food processing and storage facilities.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The indigenous food festival empowers women to take decision-making roles and co-shape a community. The festival is unique in educating and socialising local youth about indigenous knowledge systems. The initiative is a well-functioning self-organised structure, with economic empowerment and sustainability in focus.



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<b>COUNTRY</b>	Slovenia
<b>START</b>	June 2023
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# Story of Clothes

**Uniting eco-conscious individuals to form a greener community, promoting sustainable practices together**

## **PROBLEM**

This project addresses the issue of climate change, highlighting the impact of fast fashion on producing landfill waste, carbon emissions, and water consumption. Fast fashion items, often cheap and discarded after minimal use, contribute significantly to environmental degradation.

## **TARGET GROUP**

- Young adults between ages 18-35

## **SOLUTION**

The project combats climate anxiety among youth through clothes exchange events and sewing workshops. The exchanges refresh wardrobes and connect like-minded individuals. Workshops teach valuable skills like sewing and repairing clothes. Participants save money and promote sustainability by giving second life to existing clothes and not purchasing new ones. All unsold clothes will be donated.

## **INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

Project reimagines clothing through their stories. The unique clothes exchange events require participants to wash, iron, repair, and write stories about their garments, enhancing their value and life cycle awareness. Sewing workshops teach from basic to advanced skills, promoting independence in a fashion-brand dominated society and potentially inspiring careers in dressmaking or design.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas München und Freising e.V.

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**START**

January 2021

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# TauschGut

**Feeding Change: Combating food waste, protecting the climate, and promoting social justice through distributing secured food across Munich**

**PROBLEM**

Food waste contributes significantly to environmental degradation and squanders resources, while many still face food insecurity and unequal access to nutritious meals.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Recipients of the social institution with TauschGut storages and refrigerators
- Residents of the neighbourhood
- Suppliers and grocery stores
- Committed and dedicated volunteers
- Collaborative partners (e.g. other initiatives in food rescue)
- Caritas-affiliated services

**SOLUTION**

The project focuses on educating about the importance and reusability of food. Surplus food from supermarkets and bakeries is given out to anyone who needs it, no questions asked. The food is available at public storage locations situated in NGOs, Caritas service centres, and parishes. It ensures equitable resource access, targeting vulnerable groups and fostering a responsible approach to food consumption.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

TauschGut stands out with its innovative approach to valuing food across different social settings. It actively involves adults and children in food saving and rescue efforts. Not just volunteers, but also local residents contribute surplus food, like before vacations. The project also partners with schools, educating students about food waste and organising visits to TauschGut's public storage sites, showcasing practical solutions to this global issue.



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Cáritas Diocesana de Menorca
<b>COUNTRY</b>
Spain
<b>START</b>
January 1997
<b>TEAM</b>
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# Arbres d'Algendar – Trees of Algendar

## Cultivating a sustainable future and green jobs

### PROBLEM

The project tackles the issue of diminishing traditional Menorca agriculture, with a focus on reviving endemic fruit trees that have been overshadowed by introduced foreign varieties. It provides training in organic farming and farm maintenance, adhering to social and solidarity economy principles, to enhance job prospects and preserve the island's natural heritage. Additionally, the initiative plays a crucial role in protecting Menorca's significant green space, the Barranc d'Algendar.

### TARGET GROUP

- Individuals at risk of social exclusion
- People who can not afford to rent at market price
- People at risk of becoming homeless
- People with disabilities

### SOLUTION

Arbres d'Algendar aids those facing social exclusion by offering mentorship, education, and career guidance, enhancing job prospects and social integration. The project promotes socio-labour inclusion through organic farming training and sustainable farm upkeep, providing economic stability and future job readiness. Additionally, it helps preserve biodiversity, traditional agriculture, and ethnological heritage by restoring a historical fountain and ancient irrigation systems.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

Arbres d'Algendar innovatively combines training and employment with sustainability and the circular economy by merging with the Ca n'Aguedet Restoration School. This collaboration enables the connection of food production and culinary use, with the project supplying organic, locally-sourced ingredients for traditional Menorcan recipes. Recognized with the BBVA Sustainable Future Award, it exemplifies the harmonious blend of sustainability and social inclusion, paving the way for a fairer, more sustainable future.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Développement Bukavu

**COUNTRY**

Democratic Republic of Congo

**START**

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# Vegetable Production by Composting Household Waste in Bukavu

**Produce fresh vegetables in and around the town of Bukavu in the DRC by composting household waste**

**PROBLEM**

Bukavu faces food security issues, as fresh vegetables are too expensive and hard to find. Market is oversaturated with imported food products. Many families struggle to keep a balanced, healthy diet, while others are at high risk of malnutrition. The city waste management system malpractice contributes to major health, social, and environmental problems.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Unemployed youth in Bukavu collecting waste for compost
- Vegetable growers in and around Bukavu
- Vegetable vendors

**SOLUTION**

This project improves Bukavu's living conditions by providing jobs in waste collection, enhancing agriculture, and ensuring better access to fresh vegetables. It includes city sanitation efforts, technical assistance for farmers, market access, and a youth-led cleanup of Lake Kivu. The collected plastic waste will be recycled for construction, fostering a cyclical approach.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project's innovation lies in its cyclical approach: households in Bukavu dispose of waste that's transformed into compost for vegetable farming, enhancing food supply. This organic compost boosts farmers' yields and income, restoring soil quality. Additionally, it protects Lake Kivu's ecosystem by reducing household waste pollution, crucial for the local environment and community life.



**ORGANISATION**

Charitable Organization  
 'Charitable Foundation 'Caritas of the Chernivtsi Diocese', Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Embassy of Finland in Kyiv

**COUNTRY**

Ukraine

**START**

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# Biodiversity Conservation: to Know and to Act

## Empowering youth to tackle environmental challenges

**PROBLEM**

The project targets the overlooked issue of inadequate environmental awareness among youth, emphasising the pivotal role of ecological education for a sustainable future. Root causes include limited education, digital distractions, consumerism, disconnection from nature, and a lack of role models, all contributing to youth's diminished understanding and engagement with environmental issues.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Teenagers

**SOLUTION**

To enhance environmental awareness among youth, the non-formal educational program includes lectures, workshops, lab practices, and field studies. It features 15 sessions and an 'EcoWeek in the field' event. Key tools are problem mapping in native towns, encouraging youth-led eco-projects, and hands-on activities like studying soil decomposition and biodiversity's role in ecosystems. This approach not only educates participants but also benefits our planet.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project stands out with its innovative non-formal education program for teenagers, crafted by expert ecologists from Chernivtsi National University and successfully piloted by the Caritas Ukraine Child Centers network. Blending theory, field trips, and lab work, it's not just an exciting adventure but also a foundation for fostering eco-friendly behaviour among youth





**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Upper Austria,  
Caritas Austria, Austrian  
Ministry of Climate, Energy  
and Climate Funds Austria,  
Electronic Partner Austria.

**COUNTRY**

Austria

**START**

January 2024

**TEAM**

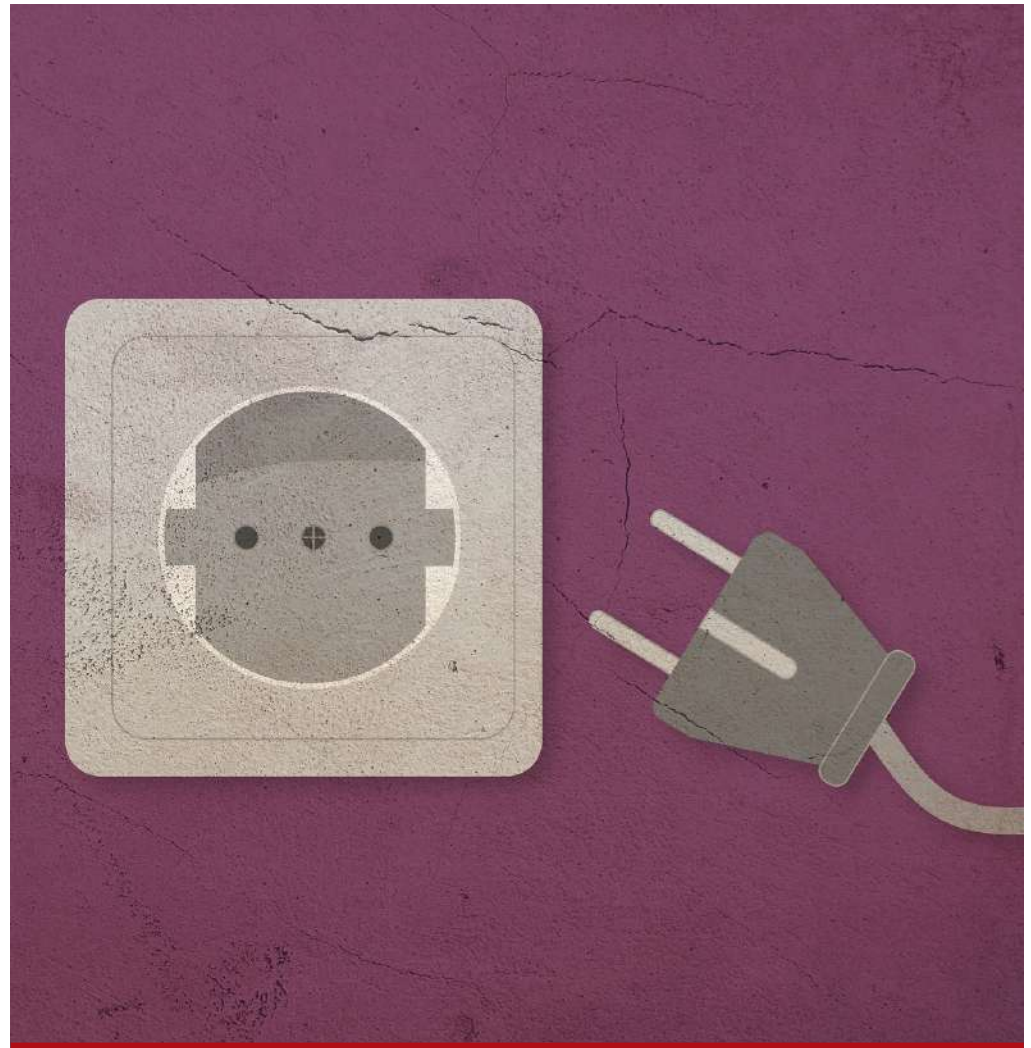
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# Energy Saving in Households

## Providing energy counselling for households in poverty

**PROBLEM**

The primary focus of the project is to tackle energy poverty and high energy prices in Austria.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Low-income families in Upper Austria

**SOLUTION**

The project offers in-home social energy counselling. People can schedule appointments for specially trained social workers to visit their homes, assess energy usage, and provide cost-saving advice. We also distribute efficient appliances like water-saving shower heads and replace up to two major household appliances. Additionally, the project addresses any other social or financial issues, ensuring comprehensive counselling.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project is innovative by way of merging energy and social counselling. The project social workers are not only trained in energy matters but also equipped to address various issues, referring clients to appropriate services. The program uniquely combines direct aid through new appliances with educational input, empowering clients to reduce energy costs by altering their behaviour.



**ORGANISATION**

Organisation Catholique pour la Promotion Humaine (OCPH-Caritas Guinée), Caritas Africa

**COUNTRY**

Guinea

**START**

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## **Fight against the Artificialization of Natural Environments through the Establishment of a Circular and Sustainable Economy in Guinea**

**Transforming Guinea’s farming with a sustainable system that combines organic fertiliser, methane, aquaponics, fish farming, gas stoves, and better farming skills**

**PROBLEM**

This project tackles critical ecological issues in Guinea, namely: natural habitat artificialization, deforestation, soil and water contamination, biodiversity loss, overfishing, fishery depletion, and climate change impacts. These challenges jeopardise ecosystem stability and community well-being.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Rural and peri-urban Guinean households;
- Guinean farmers;

**SOLUTION**

The solution combines agroecology, organic fertilizer production, methane management, above-ground fish ponds, aquaponics, and gas fireplaces. It creates a circular ecosystem where household and livestock waste become resources, fostering a sustainable economy. This approach reduces pressure on natural environments, aiding in their preservation.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project is innovative because it combines different farming and environmental ways to get the best results. It aims for a circular economy, using gas fireplaces for a greener economy. It also brings in new ways to increase farm production, making these techniques easy for locals to use.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Trnava Trnavská arcidiocézná charita

**START**

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# The Furniture Bank

## Restart of Life: transforming lives and furniture together

**PROBLEM**

In the post-pandemic times, social inequalities have deepened, pushing many below the poverty line and exacerbating psychological issues. Occupational therapy offers a way to rebound from these challenges, while our team provides comprehensive support for complex life situations.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Vulnerable groups
- Unemployed persons

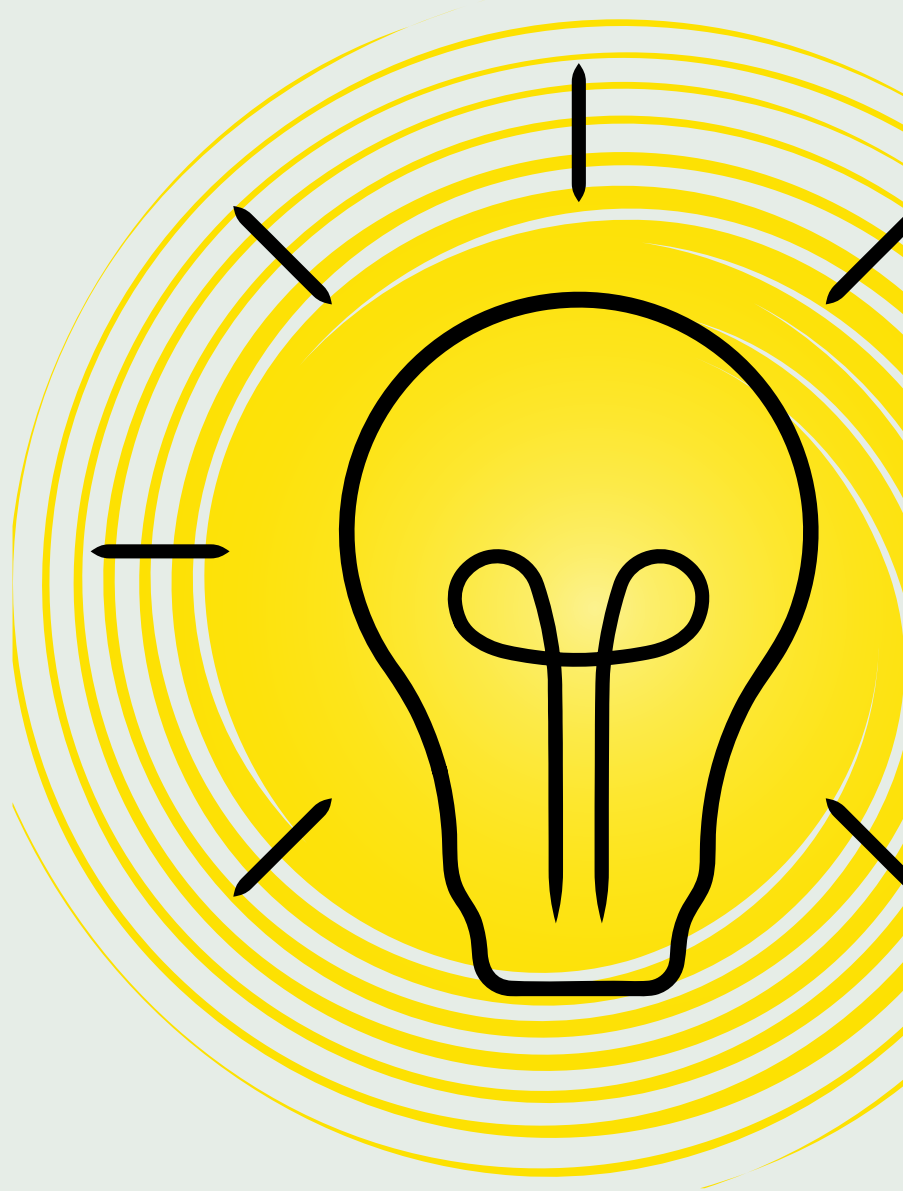
**SOLUTION**

The project includes a workshop that focuses on rebuilding work habits, offering social and psychological support alongside occupational therapy. Beneficiaries can engage in artistic furniture restoration or cater to specific requests. They also receive employment and personal development counselling. The public contributes by bringing in furniture for repair, aiding the circular economy and supporting the initiative through voluntary donations.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

Our project innovatively combines occupational therapy with a circular economy approach by refurbishing furniture in a specially designed carpentry workshop. This setup respects clients' individual needs and situations, merging social and ecological solutions. The workshop's supportive environment helps those in social exclusion.

# Well-Being & Resilience





**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Odessa, Caritas Ternopil, Caritas Khmelnytsky

**COUNTRY**

Ukraine

**START**

September 2024

**TEAM**

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# Resilience and Development

**Mitigating the adverse effects of armed conflicts on the social integration, education, and psychological health of children**

**PROBLEM**

The war in Ukraine interrupted children’s schooling and hurt their mental health. It causes them to feel lonely and face emotional problems. They do not have sufficient coping mechanisms to deal with these issues.

**TARGET GROUP**

- School students impacted by the conflict
- Parents, educators, and guardians from 12 target settlements

**SOLUTION**

This initiative enhances the psychosocial well-being of children in conflict zones through sustainable support by trained local social workers, teachers, and psychologists. It integrates extracurricular activities and developmental services into schools, fostering resilience and social engagement.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project innovatively creates child-friendly areas in schools using NaUKMA’s Safe Space methodology, proven effective in reducing stress and improving behaviour in trauma-affected children. Recognized by UNICEF and Ukrainian experts, this approach achieves results without psychological interventions, earning acknowledgment from Ukraine’s Ministry of Education. The trained specialists are locals, thus they will resume working with children after the project conclusion.



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Caritas Ukraine
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# Mental Health: The Superhero Way

## Empowering youth resilience and mental health amidst war in Ukraine

### PROBLEM

The war in Ukraine has severely affected the mental health of children, educators, and parents in conflict areas, leading to social withdrawal and heightened fear among children. Surveys indicate a dire need for more early childhood support in Ukrainian communities, with many children, especially those with special needs, showing increased distress during air alerts.

### TARGET GROUP

- School students
- Teachers
- Parents

### SOLUTION

The project uses interactive stands with the 'Join into Circuit' approach for youth education. It mixes problem-solving and games. Six stands address topics like bullying and stress. Each has a QR code linking to extra materials like games and comics. Kids, with help from guides, get involved, ask questions, and share stories. They learn about self-care and empathy during "The Way of Superheroes" journey.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The project presents "Mental Health: The Way of Superheroes," an engaging tool for kids, parents, and teachers. It makes tough topics easy to understand, promoting mental health and empathy. The content is simple to grasp. The tool is versatile, aiding in brain growth and fitting different ages. It helps with group learning, emotional bonding, and uses real-life examples, making education more relevant and hands-on.



**ORGANISATION**

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**COUNTRY**

Georgia

**START**

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# End Child Abuse

**Nurturing vulnerable children with essential services to safeguard against abuse and facilitate their societal reintegration**

**PROBLEM**

This project targets children that suffer from family neglect and abandonment, grapple with abuse, exploitation, and a lack of education, healthcare, and legal protection. They often struggle with substance abuse, mental health issues, and societal stigma, they lack safe shelter, basic necessities, and supportive services, leading to their marginalisation and exclusion.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Underprivileged children
- Families and caretakers of vulnerable children
- Child protection service providers

**SOLUTION**

The project creates a daycare, night shelter, and mobile team support for children. It ensures their well-being and social integration while meeting basic needs (food, clothes, medical assistance, and hygiene) and providing psychological support. Through education and professional guidance, it equips them for the future, also offering crucial training for their families. Beyond direct aid, it champions children’s rights and aims to reinforce the childcare network.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project concept “Mobile School” revolutionises learning by bringing education to street-connected children via a portable school, sparking their interest to reintegrate into formal education. Meanwhile, the “Protective Behavior” program equips them with skills to detect and evade abuse, especially sexual, through engaging, age-appropriate activities. These innovative approaches foster a safe, educative environment, pivotal for their growth and protection.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Ukraine, Caritas Chortkiv

**COUNTRY**

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**START**

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# Youth Club "Taboo"

**Youth Club "Taboo": A place where teenagers can ask anything and find support**

**PROBLEM**

Children that face violence, often in wartime, often have more physical, psychological, and social problems. They may not understand changes in their bodies as they grow up, which can make them vulnerable. They might not trust their parents or relatives, spend too much time on social media and dating sites, face challenges in relationships, struggle to talk to peers, and have mood swings because of stress and hormones.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Children between ages 8-17

**SOLUTION**

The project aims to engage teenagers through a club where all questions are welcomed and no topic is taboo. The project offers tailored help for children through game-based activities to boost motivation and communication. Children are equipped with tools for self-correction, utilising their mental strengths, exercises for attention, memory, and imagination, and reducing anxiety and depression.

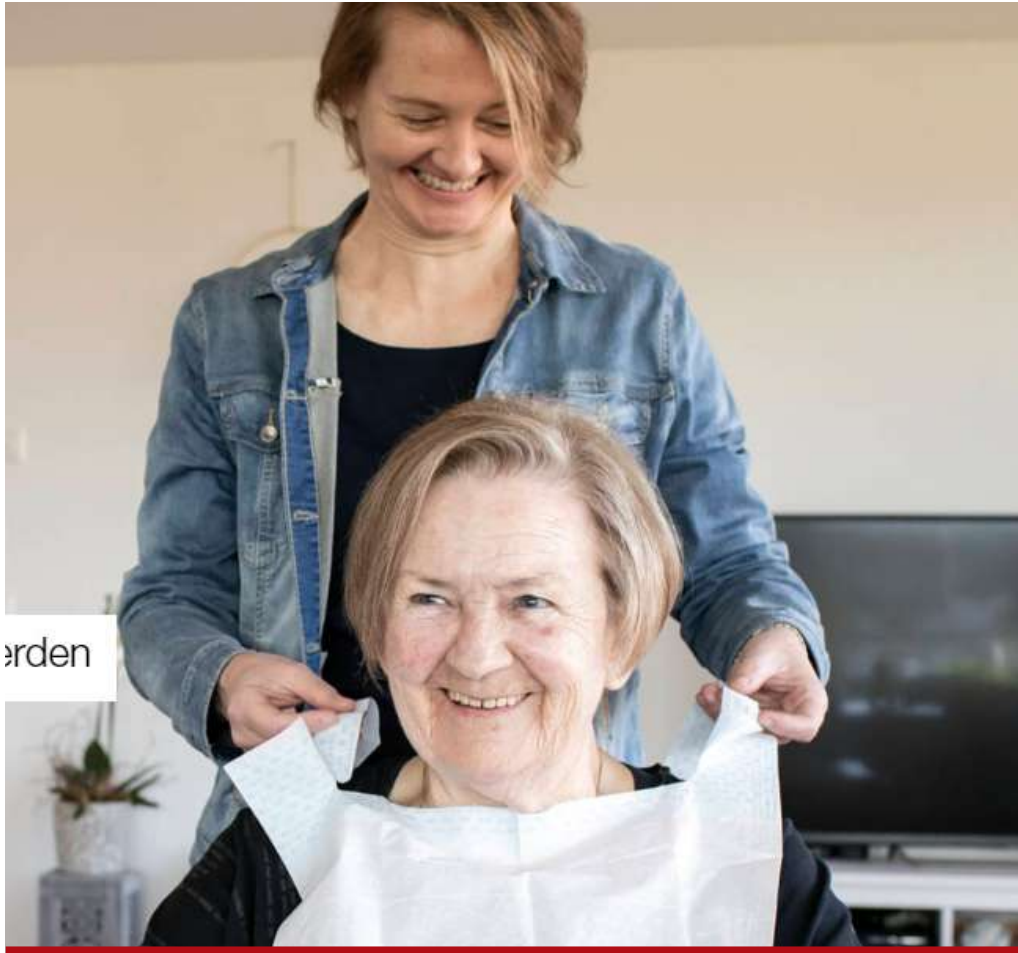
**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The psychological assistance provided is comprehensive, encompassing diagnostics, psychological-pedagogical support, psychocorrection, and restorative measures. Project approaches aim to improve mental well-being and enhance individual psychological resilience.





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<b>START</b>	September 2022
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# Care for Relatives

## Unveiling the Hidden Heroes: unpaid care work within familial structures of Switzerland

**PROBLEM**

The health system is understaffed and underfunded and often heavily relies on the informal, unpaid care work of family members, mostly women. This is not sustainable, but also burdensome for the unpaid care workers, as their financial security and retirement plans hinder.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Family caretakers
- Unpaid care workers, specifically women

**SOLUTION**

Family carers receive a wage (hourly wage) for their work in basic care, they are accompanied and supported by qualified nursing staff. Caritas settles these hours of care with the health insurance company and thus finances the project. Caritas' service is to ensure the quality of care and to protect family carers from being overburdened.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The innovative aspect of the project is the accompaniment of the relatives by a regionally based nursing specialist. In this way, Caritas is very close to the needs of the caring relatives and the person in need. In addition, networking with other organisations is central in order to offer the caring relatives the best possible advice for relief, security and social counselling.



**ORGANISATION**

Cáritas Diocesana de Santander

**COUNTRY**

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**START**

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# Imaginary Worlds

## We all have imaginary worlds

**PROBLEM**

People facing extreme vulnerability or social exclusion, including the homeless, chronically ill, and women in prostitution, lack housing and basic rights like minimum income. They arrive with few resources, deteriorating health, substance abuse issues, damaged relationships, and a loss of life's meaning, self-esteem, and hope.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Socially vulnerable individuals

**SOLUTION**

The project leverages art and creativity for personal healing and social integration, blending photography with plastic arts using recycled items. Supported by professionals like instructors and social workers, artistic expression enhances participants' abilities through human rights education and individual-focused methods. Art creation enables emotional expression, self-discovery, and social skill development, promoting individual development and community involvement.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

"The project uniquely uses imagery to access and express emotions, a method often neglected amidst tangible needs. By associating images with feelings, it enables wordless emotional expression, facilitating communication and healing without directly confronting trauma. The project represents a long-term commitment to developing a unique yet universal emotional language for expression and communication.



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## Teenager Camp “Almost Adults”

**Empowering teens with informal education: a journey of self-discovery and skill-building for the adult world ahead**

### PROBLEM

In Ukraine, many children face psychological and physical distress, leading to isolation, lack of study motivation, and poor relationship skills. They often adopt a passive life stance, risking dangerous situations and negative street influences. Societal tensions impact their emotional, social, and cognitive growth, causing aggression and behavioural issues.

### TARGET GROUP

- Ukrainian teenagers aged 12-17
- Children from single-parent, low-income, large families
- Children deprived of parental care
- Orphans, children under guardianship and/or guardianship
- Children of labour migrants

### SOLUTION

The project’s purpose is to provide youngsters with critical knowledge in areas such as social skills, physical health, financial literacy, and environmental awareness through Camp experience. Trainers tackle these subjects during the camp through engaging activities and open discussions. The project technique encourages children to participate in the community by articulating their needs and initiating volunteer projects.

### INNOVATIVE ASPECT

The project’s innovation is the active involvement of young people in designing the camp experience. Continuous dialogue with organisers and coaches ensures the camp aligns with the youth’s preferences and needs.



**ORGANISATION**

Caritas Rwanda, Caritas Kigali Caritas Byumba, Caritas Gikongoro

**COUNTRY**

Rwanda

**START**

January 2024

**TEAM**

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# Youth Empowerment in Design and Implementation of the Appropriate Community-Based Responses towards the Improved Environmental Conditions

## Green for Growth: Empowering youth through green grants

**PROBLEM**

Rwanda grapples with landslides, floods, and drought due to outdated farming practices and infrastructure, leading to human, crop, and livestock losses, and environmental degradation. The 1994 Tutsi genocide intensified deforestation due to fuel and resettlement. In 2021, significant forest loss escalated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with rising global warming concerns.

**TARGET GROUP**

- Youth in cooperatives/ associations (16-30 years old)
- Small-scale farmers

**SOLUTION**

This initiative will involve 1,200 youths in eco-friendly business ventures and train 36,000 farmers in sustainable practices. It forms Youth Community Environmental Promotion Ambassadors groups for mentoring farmers, and Youth Travelers Environmental Promotion Ambassadors to encourage eco-awareness among travellers. Competitions with prizes will further motivate and engage participants.

**INNOVATIVE ASPECT**

The project pairs youth coaches with farmers for knowledge exchange and sustainable agriculture practices, while granting youths business exposure to boost their confidence. It broadens environmental consciousness beyond agriculture, engaging travellers and schools for wider impact. This community-focused strategy, driven by ambitious youth, ensures its sustainability.

## A Look into the Future

### **Make 2024 the year of social innovation in your local context!**

Innovation doesn't have to be about high tech solutions, huge budgets and large implementing teams. Nor is it something available only to the elites.

We hope this Festival Catalogue inspires you to pursue an innovative approach in your local context. Here are a few best practices you can consider in order bring innovation closer to home:

#### **Search for the low hanging fruits**

Most of the time we don't have to start something new in order to innovate. What are the existing structures, projects or synergies that you have? What is one incremental change you can make that would drive a significant increase in the degree of innovation?

#### **Embrace participatory leadership**

Gather your community members and invite them to drive the innovation agenda: what are the solutions they need or want to see happening the most? How can you start energising these ideas together?

#### **Experiment with the prototyping mindset**

Don't wait until your ideas become perfect on paper. Instead, test your assumptions early, make small iterations and build progressively on the learnings and feedback you receive.

#### **Allocate a minimum budget for learning and capacity building**

What are the events, courses, mentoring opportunities or learning journeys you can take in order to expand your capacity as innovators? Allocating a budget for it can be a strategic choice driving results in the long term.

#### **Save the date for CEIF 2025**

Consider applying for next year's festival, and bring your own innovative projects in the spotlight. We will gather again as a larger network on **February 14, 2025**, and celebrate with you the fifth edition of the Caritas Europa Innovation Festival!



Photo via Pixabay.com

## Acknowledgments

Caritas Europa Innovation Festival 2024 has brought together various contributors committed to drive the innovation agenda within Caritas. We are grateful for the timely support offered with so much generosity by our jury members, ambassadors, organising roles and the Young Caritas and Caritas Africa out-reach support.



**The CEIF 2024 Jury** members have been the driving force behind our Selection Phase:

- Edward Luccaci, Caritas Moldova
- Jana Ziskova, Caritas Slovakia
- Marina Kostic, Caritas Serbia
- Mark Adams, Caritas Scotland
- Rebecca Rathbone, Caritas Internationalis
- Sonja Leguizamon, Caritas Switzerland

**The CEIF 2024 Ambassadors** have supported us in the out-reach and Application Phase, by reaching out to their communities and raising awareness about this opportunity:

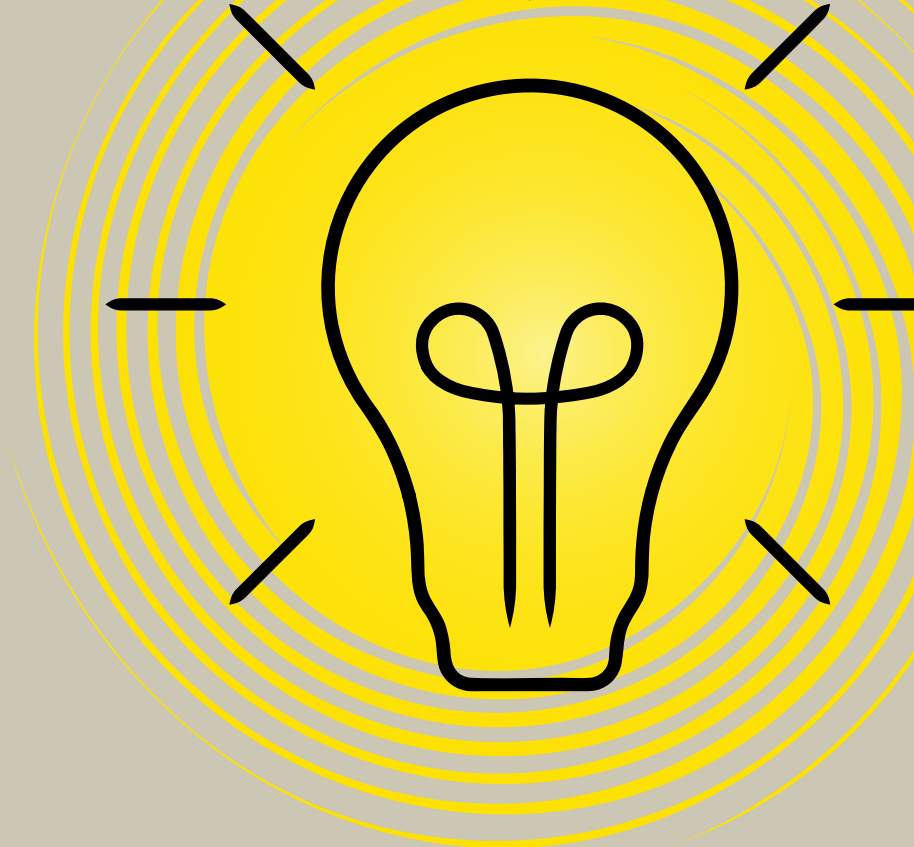
- Barbara Schinnerl, Caritas Upper Austria
- Clara Sanchez Canas, Caritas Spain
- Jana Zilkova, Caritas Czech Republic
- Regina Krukoniene, Caritas Vilnius
- Samuel Zan Akologo, Caritas Africa

Our heartfelt gratitude for Caritas Europa, Caritas Vienna and this beautiful collaboration that has now led to the 4th edition of the Caritas Europa Innovation Festival. We hope this will inspire more cross-countries synergies, promoting innovation and collaboration across our Caritas network.

## Co-funded by the European Union

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**Published by:** Caritas Europa in cooperation with Caritas Vienna

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