Title of the Story: Senior volunteers in Berguedà

Destination Name: Berguedà County

Country: Spain (Barcelona province)

Submitter name: Karina Behar

Email address: beharmk@adbergueda.cat

Position: Tourism advisor

Nomination Category: Culture & Communities

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☐ Localizing the destination supply chain
☐ Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
☒ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☐ Nature & Ecotourism
☐ Tourism Reset & Recovery
☐ Other

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Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

The Berguedà region was throughout the 20th century one of the areas of Europe that was most affected by the industrial revolution in its society and landscape, in just thirty years the region saw how emerged twenty industrial colonies and numerous coal mines that transformed the rural society of the region into one of the most dynamic in Spain.

Today we’ve got in Berguedà 3 museums that preserve and explain this collective memory that transformed the European society, the Museum of the textile colony of Cal vidoal, the Museum of the mines in Cercs and the Museum of the cement factory in Castellar de n’Hug which received all three thousands of visitors yearly and almost all the students of Catalonia to show and explain how technological and social improvements have changed in our lives.

But despite the emotional link between the museums with the local community they are visited by people from outside our region, there is no relationship between the museums and the local community that hosted them, so they were facilities geographically located in our community but did not interact with the local population.

With the creation of this project we achieve a real link between the local communities with the museums.

In addition to this challenge, the project has also been sought to give to the local community over 65 years old activities that are emotionally fulfilling and a link between them and the rest of our society, giving value to the senior population.

Methods, steps and tools applied

To carry out this project a small public-private working group was created to achieve the organization and communication of the project, this working group consisted of an external project manager, the managers of the 3 local museums, the tourism board advisors, members of the 3 town halls and the public workers who are in daily contact with the senior population, this working group was responsible for determining the recruitment of volunteers and the tasks that volunteers would carry out in the museums.

The recruitment of volunteers was carried out through three major actions, the meetings of the senior population with public workers, the presence in local media and the use of new technologies through informative videos that the same senior population sent between them which was the most decisive tool of all three.

To determine the tasks of the volunteers, it was agreed between each museum and each group of volunteers their needs, expectations and limitations of mobility and schedules.

The tasks were such as cataloging, maintenance of green spaces, transmission of the memory lived to the scholars, the creation of The Family Weekend, photographic cataloging, transmission of missing jobs and video
recordings for the survival of experiences and historical memory.

Of course the most valuable tool was the senior community itself who was the most helpful elaborating the tasks and being itself the best information channel for this project.

Key success factors

Undoubtedly the most important key that has helped the success of this project is the will of the society to keep the collective memory alive, the fact that the 3 museums are responsible for transmitting the history of our society and the determination that the senior community has to transmit it and the dedication of our community to help our museums not only to be museum facilities but to be living facilities where the community itself is explaining the life in to the colonies, the mines or the factories filling the value and increasing the visitor experience.

One of the organizational keys was the adaptation of the project to the needs, expectations and limitations of the volunteers, putting the volunteer at the center of the project and taking care of its limitations and wills from the museums and administrations, such the possibility of having public transport on demand and the adaptability of the museums to the tasks to be performed by the volunteers.

But definitely he key to the success of this project is the love of the local community for the heritage of our society as we are aware of the imprint they left on our way of life and the firm conviction to take small actions to avoid the deterioration of our tangible and intangible heritage.

Lessons learned

The biggest challenge in this project was the mental barrier that society has in associating museum centers as facilities that have always been focused on visitors, tourists and schoolchildren from abroad the region, the biggest challenge has been to change the mental concept that museums are for those who visit us not for the community that hosts them.

To overcome this challenge, the three public parts of the project (county administration, town halls and museums) have approached the senior volunteers adapting the tasks to be developed, seeking the maximum of satisfaction of them and providing them spaces for their own uses.

This has showed us that the best way to preserve the material and cultural heritage of the community is the empowering of the community.
# Results, achievements and recognitions

The Project has left us 3 groups of local volunteers working in the local museums, these groups (of about 8 to 10 members each) are performing about 3 or 4 different tasks in the museums, being responsible for a corner for the younger visitors of the museum, cataloging of museum material, photographic cataloging, maintenance of green spaces and textile material and transmission of historical memory.

This activity has brought these museums closer to the local community and has integrated them as a living and present facilities in our society and at the same time has increased the quality of the visits to the museums, as well as the knowledge of museum workers and guides on the thematic of the museums themselves since the volunteers can transmit experiences and memories of what was lived in the colonies, mines and factories where we find the museums.

The project has given to the seniors a reason to feel useful, has made them more visible in the social and cultural life of the villages.

At the same time it has increased the feeling of belonging and connection with the common heritage and has created the need for protection of this heritage.

The project has definitely helped museums that have few resources to perform tasks they could not do with their own staff; and give the senior population the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with the new generations.

This project, which is in its first year of its life, is expected to be expanded in the second edition by maintaining the group of volunteers and increasing it with other volunteers.

# Additional references

**Project explanation in Berguedà tourism website:**

**News about the GPS-GGDD in Berguedà tourism website:**
https://bit.ly/3waZbYr

**Project’s resources (photos, videos)**
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BtPzvyPAMVrg_Jn6KhXn3kjjZ-iVn00y4