

Supporting ASTE BCN intergenerational program to prevent social isolation and loneliness among the elderly through the promotion of social volunteering among young people

Grantee: Asociación Solidari
con la Tercera Edad de Barcelona, ASTE BCN
Location: Spain, Europe
Grant Cycle: 2023-2026
Type of Grant: three-year program support,
Delegació a Catalunya, Human Welfare & Rights
Website: <https://www.astebcn.org/>

ASTE is a non-profit Catalan association established in 2015 with the mission of improving the quality of life of elderly people through the involvement of young students in volunteering programs. Its strategic vision is to be an instrument of social change through the creation of intergenerational synergies capable of adding value and training people. Nowadays the problem of unwanted loneliness has become a central issue in international political discussions, with a special emphasis on the elderly. It's proven that the Catalan and European society is aging rapidly; at present, they represent about 20% of the population and it is expected that this figure will triple by 2050. Parallel to this increase, there is a lack of adaptation among the older population due to the rapid pace of new technologies, which causes ageism discrimination and increases their isolation. Therefore, an urgent change is needed, the search for new paths towards inclusion and participation that activate and validate elders.

This new social situation has prompted various areas to develop strategies, research and actions to address the problems that arise from it. The city of Barcelona is no exception: it has centers, councils, federations and associations that work together to provide quality of life for the elderly. ASTE is one of them, and after several years of activity it has established a collaborative network of different entities including the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation – Delegació a Catalunya** (NaEPF) with whom it shares interests and objectives, as well as residences and universities with which it develops its intergenerational project, thereby, achieving greater impact.

Thanks to its network ASTE's range of action has grown significantly, and it now partners with 21 elderly residences, 13 universities, 21 nursing homes and runs five programs in the Barcelona area:

- 1- Accompaniment: one-on-one meetings between a young volunteer and an elder are held weekly in the residencies.
- 2- Entertainment: specific group events are held in the residences with the goal of breaking routine and monotony in the centers, led by volunteers.
- 3- Self-esteem: the elderly's self-image, self-esteem, and confidence are improved through weekly or monthly activities held in the residences.
- 4- Cognitive stimulation: workshops or activities designed to stimulate residents on a cognitive and physical level, led by professionals and volunteers of the association.
- 5- Training and education: informative and training sessions for university students held at the beginning of each academic year to raise awareness about volunteering, social action and participation; collaboration with university centers in the development of research work done by students for which the participation of the elderly in the residences is required.

In addition to its programs, ASTE seeks collaborations with other foundations, associations or entities that allow them to carry out different activities, such as partnering with Güell Foundation and Teatre Akadèmia on event organization in the cultural field. These are acts in which the elderly are valued, given a voice and make them visible.