

Interreg

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MINDFUL

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MINDFUL Newsletter



FROM ITALY TO GREECE

THE PROJECT IS TURNING SHARED KNOWLEDGE INTO
LASTING PATHWAYS TOWARDS AUTONOMY AND WELL-BEING

Across the same sea, a new way of caring is taking shape

Imagine care that does not happen only in a hospital, through medical appointments or medicines.

Imagine care taking the form of a holiday with your family, a game in the open air, a familiar song, an activity in the water or a moment shared with others.

A child discovering confidence through play.

An older person with dementia reconnecting through music or memory.

This is the vision behind MINDFUL

The project aims to test innovative and replicable support models for children and young people with complex health needs, older adults with cognitive or mental health conditions, and their caregivers, through non-pharmacological interventions.

In its first months, partners explored existing practices, listened to communities and created a shared model and common tools.

Now MINDFUL is moving from knowledge to action.

This newsletter tells the story of our journey: the seeds we have planted and what we hope to see grow.



Technical Info

**MINDFUL – Mental health
INnovation for Diversity,
Fostering Universal Living**

Duration

July 2025 – July 2027

Total Budget

€1,026,894.00

EU funding

€770,170.50

The Cross-Border Story

**One sea.
Different experiences.
One shared challenge.**

MINDFUL connects Taranto, Maruggio, Patras and Corfu: **territories separated by the sea, but facing similar challenges** in access to care, social support and services for vulnerable people.

Each partner brings complementary experience in healthcare, rehabilitation, social inclusion, community support and work with children, older people, families and caregivers.



The partnership's journey has unfolded through **three key stops**: Taranto, Patras and Maruggio. At each meeting, partners had the chance to move beyond discussion, experience local initiatives first-hand and learn from the people and organisations behind them.

These encounters helped them discover shared challenges, recognise important differences and bring together good practices from both sides of the sea.

The question is no longer only:

“What can each partner do?”

But:

“What can we build together?”



**Cross-border
cooperation means
recognising differences,
connecting the dots
between shared
challenges and building
better solutions together.**

What we have done so far

A shared picture of needs and services

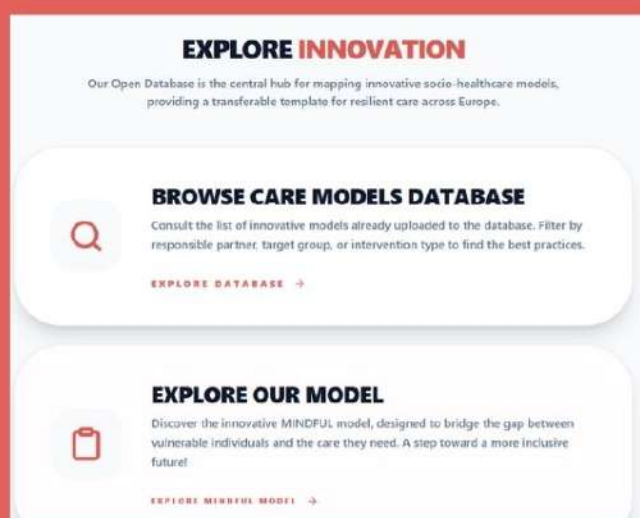
Partners carried out an analysis comparing the regulatory and epidemiological context, existing healthcare and social support pathways, service gaps and relevant practices in Italy and Greece. They built a common method to classify non-pharmacological therapies according to the people they support, the needs they address and the way they are delivered.

Open Platform available to the community

Partners then used the shared MINDFUL taxonomy to organise and classify the innovative social and healthcare models they had identified, involving recreational and other non-pharmacological therapies. This work became the foundation of the MINDFUL Open Database, transforming the common methodology into a practical tool for searching, exploring and comparing different approaches.

Spaces for community and stakeholder listening

Alongside this work, partners created dedicated spaces to listen to professionals, families, caregivers and local organisations. The experiences and perspectives shared helped them look beyond the data, better understand local needs and shape the activities that will be tested across Italy and Greece.



What comes next

From a shared approach to real-life activities



Building on the shared approach developed during the first phase, each partner will now design and test a pilot action adapted to its target group, local context and area of expertise.

What do we mean by a pilot action?

A pilot action is a structured, small-scale test carried out with the people it is designed to support. It helps partners understand how an activity works in practice, what needs to be adapted and whether it could later be replicated in other services or territories.

Measuring what really changes

MINDFUL's innovation lies not only in testing new approaches, but also in understanding the difference they make in people's lives. A shared method for understanding and measuring impact will help partners measure changes in areas such as wellbeing, autonomy, social participation, communication and caregiver support.



Turning evidence into better policy decisions

The framework combines shared indicators, **allowing results from Italy and Greece to be compared**, with tailored tools reflecting the characteristics of each activity

By making these results visible and understandable, MINDFUL will provide policymakers and stakeholders with stronger evidence on the value of recreational and other non-pharmacological therapies.

Different settings, one shared direction



ASL Taranto

As MINDFUL's Lead Partner, ASL Taranto is a public healthcare authority bringing expertise in rehabilitation, mental health and integrated care pathways.

ASL Taranto will develop **Officina delle Autonomie**, a pathway connecting rehabilitation services with nature and real community settings. Participants will take part in **horticultural, musical, creative, movement and animal-assisted activities**, before practising everyday skills in places such as shops, supermarkets and farms.

Fondazione Vanni Longo

Fondazione Vanni Longo is an Italian Third Sector organisation based in Maruggio with experience in disability support, inclusive recreation and services for children and young people.

Invictus Camp is designed for families with children and young people aged 5 to 21 living with disabilities, neurodevelopmental disorders, or serious, chronic and rare conditions. In Maruggio, they can enjoy an accessible holiday experience in a natural setting, combining relaxation and shared family time with recreational therapies such as adapted sport, swimming, outdoor activities and creative workshops.

After its first edition in 2025, MINDFUL is helping strengthen the Camp's approach by supporting staff training and the development of a more effective impact assessment framework to better understand the benefits generated for children, siblings and caregivers.



Cooperation in action - Growth Waves

MINDFUL has created new opportunities for dialogue and collaboration across the partnership. Through this exchange, **ASL Taranto** and **Fondazione Vanni Longo** decided to develop part of their activities together.



The result is **Growth Waves**, a joint programme combining ASL Taranto's Water Rehabilitation Service with Fondazione Vanni Longo's experience in inclusive recreational activities. In a safe aquatic environment, children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions will take part in adapted water-based activities designed to support movement, confidence, emotional wellbeing and social interaction.

Growth Waves shows how cooperation can turn complementary expertise into a new and more integrated form of support.

Co2gether

Co2gether is a Greek social organisation based in Patras, working to strengthen social cohesion through home-based support, healthy and active ageing initiatives and services for vulnerable people.

With MINDFUL, Co2gether will bring **personalised support directly into the homes of older adults** living in rural and isolated areas of Western Greece, where distance, limited transport and a lack of specialised services can make access to care difficult.



Rather than asking people to travel, a **multidisciplinary team** will meet them in their own familiar environment and build each pathway around their needs, abilities and personal story. Memory boxes, Byzantine icon painting, music, gentle movement and other creative activities will become practical tools to stimulate memory, encourage autonomy, reduce isolation and create new moments of connection.

Caregivers will also receive guidance and support, making the home not only the place where care is needed, but where wellbeing and participation can begin again.

General Hospital of Corfu

The General Hospital of Corfu is a public healthcare institution bringing clinical expertise in mental health, cognitive decline and community care.

Through MINDFUL, it will develop two connected group programmes. **Care for Care** will support family caregivers through dementia education, psychological guidance, peer exchange and recreational activities.

The **Active Ageing and Wellness Group** will involve older adults with mild cognitive impairment, early dementia or depressive symptoms in cognitive exercises, music, traditional dance, reminiscence and community outings.

Together, the two programmes will support both older people and those who care for them.



FRODIZO

FRODIZO is a Greek social care organisation based in Patras, with experience in dementia support, active ageing and services for older people and caregivers.

Through MINDFUL, it will develop a music-based programme for older adults with mild cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia.

Familiar songs, rhythm, simple instruments and movement will be used to stimulate memory, improve mood and encourage communication and social interaction.

Caregivers will also discover practical ways to use music to create positive moments of connection at home.



DISCOVER. ADAPT. REPLICATE.

Explore the MINDFUL Open Database

The MINDFUL Open Database Platform brings innovative social and healthcare models together in **one easy-to-use space**. Users can search and filter approaches based on recreational and other non-pharmacological therapies, discovering who they are designed for, how they work and what benefits they may offer.

But we want the platform to become more than a place to search.

Our vision is to create an open and collaborative space where organisations and professionals can share new models and approaches. Before taking this next step, we would like to hear from you. Explore the MINDFUL Open Database Platform and answer three short questions about recreational therapies, your experience and future contributions.



CLICK HERE



Why did we develop the MINDFUL Model?

A successful activity should not remain an isolated experience.

MINDFUL was created to transform different local practices into a shared and structured model that others can understand, adapt and use. The common taxonomy, practical tools and impact assessment framework help explain not only what to do, but also who it can support, how it can be implemented and what changes it can generate.

By documenting experiences and measuring their results, MINDFUL aims to make recreational and other non-pharmacological therapies easier to replicate in new territories.

EXPLORE THE PLATFORM. SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE. HELP US SHAPE ITS FUTURE.

Thank you and stay connected!

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