

About

Formal provision for focused education and professionalization of **Personal Health Services** is critical to driving forward the agenda of improving the quality of life for people in need and **boost employment** in this sector as well as improving employees well being. This critical issue seems to be underestimated in the tertiary education since official curriculums in Universities (i.e. Italy, France) lack strands of skills widely recognized as basic professional assets for a carer: **ICT and Social skills**. In addition, it should be noted that informal caregivers representing the largest part of the market in some European countries lack of basic skills training.

The **basic education of nurses** (formal carers) in Greece, France and other European countries is more centered upon the provision of “technical” knowledge (healthcare techniques, medication, etc) than directed towards the teaching of social skills (crises management, awareness etc.). The Eurofound report on Greece (2014) points the isolation of carers and their increased needs for stress management and enhanced communication with families in crisis.

The **use of ICTs** is a cost-effective way to improve the quality of care provided to dependent people, to ease the burden on informal caregivers and family-employed care assistants, and improve the quality of life of both groups. Currently, public and private organizations providing healthcare services face a **gap between offer and demand of specialized and qualified employees**; a gap that is expected to grow even further in the next years, as a lot of healthcare subsectors have been titled “**markets of the future**” (Telemedicine, AAL) and as the management process of complex coordinate healthcare systems (such as specialized health networks, large community organizations etc) is increasingly urgent.

The development of **basic skills in specific diseases** (e.g. cancer and mental disability) is crucial for a more equitable integration of the informal caregivers in the market. In the same line it seems that incorporating the potential of ICT skills (online management, etc) in this rapidly growing sector could boost substantially employment in this sector. In parallel, **soft skills** (such as emotional intelligence, empathy etc) in the social and health sector are increasingly being recognized as **valuable and necessary skills for nurses**.

This gap in skills is the starting point in order to share experience and best practices and develop practical tools for caregiver and VET organisms.

Objectives

The **objectives** of the i-Care Project are to provide:

a. A systematic mapping of formal and informal carers; training needs in Basic, Soft and ICT skills. In order to be able to better understand the target groups and their respective needs, a quantitative research will be held and the gaps in the carers needs will be identified.

b. Knowledge and skills: Increased specialization for caregivers (on mental health diseases, on palliative care, on chronic diseases etc) and internationalization demand a common area of skills.

c. Supporting integration Services (i.e. self assessment tools like mini games, a coaching session) for informal caregivers with lower levels of qualifications which would substantially boost employment rate in this sector by equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills and core competences.

The Project

Target groups

- **Scholars** of Nursing Schools, **VET Organizations**, **Nurses**, undergraduate **students in social care** education.
- **Informal caregivers** (**young migrants**, **patient's relatives**, **unemployed women**, etc) working either in **institution** settings or at **home**.

Innovation of the project

The i-Care project is innovative because of:

- the **systematic analysis of the needs of the target population** in order to map existing gaps.
- the **creative and free model of teaching and learning**: A massive open online course is likely to transform the delivery of education and create new competition and centres of excellence worldwide for formal caregivers. In Europe, no other free access massive course for caregivers currently exists.
- the **diversity of the focus groups and its common approach**: This project, in the contrary with other existing initiatives, focus both on formal and informal carers. It aims to place a stronger focus on higher education and more relevant skills for these home or institution based professionals.
- the **combination of theoretical and practical approaches**.

Expected results

- A **well documented systematic needs analysis** to identify the gaps regarding the social, ICT and basic skills of the carers, taking into consideration the point of view of the users of their services.
- **An interactive free training material** for a. informal caregivers, in order to increase their skills regarding patient care (basic skills) to improve the health and safety of their own self (care for the caregivers) and, as a result, to increase the quality of the services provided to the patients, b. formal and informal caregivers in order to enhance their soft and ICT skills (transversal skills).
- **Training multiplier effect** of caregivers of patient and VET organizations (“**TRAIN THE TRAINERS**”): the training of caregivers during the mobility activities will fuse a chain reaction that will generate even more activities, transfer of knowledge and training (snowball effect).



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The leaflet is part of the project **2015-1-EL01-KA202-014051/i-Care** which has received funding from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union