



ELDICARE

Matching Skills in a Growing European Silver Economy

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Editorial

During the last months of project's implementation, the Eldicare Consortium has been mainly involved in creating and developing the Training Curricula, the Psychometric Tool as well as the Code of Conduct for the Elderly Carers.

More specifically, Metropolitan College has been in charge of preparing the Curricula, considering the results of the Scoping Analysis & State of the Art Review (can be found here). The two VET curricula that have been developed meet industry and labour market needs and enhance the employability of aspiring elderly care professionals across Europe. These curricula are:

1. **Long Term for the a-typical workers and (EQF level 4):** The course offers a plethora of health related, digital, communication and problem solving skills, supporting certification and mobility to the health care sector.
2. **Short term ICT focused for the elderly care sectoral providers (EQF level 5):** The course offers updated ICT skills, technological expertise, data literacy and extensive knowledge on the use of digital resources.

Concerning the Curricula, the next steps are:

1. Adapting curricula for country-specific contexts
2. Training the trainers
3. The piloting process
4. Assessment for fine tuning and finalization

Also, Skybridge has developed the online learning platform, where the whole training material will be uploaded and the learners will be able to study online, download the material and test the knowledge acquired.

In parallel, Asisttel has prepared the Code of Conduct for the Elderly Carers, taking into consideration Codes of other relevant professions such as the psychologist or the therapist. The Code contains the General Principles that intend to guide and inspire elderly care givers toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession and the Ethical Standards that do represent obligations and should form the basis for imposing sanctions.

KMOP has been in charge of designing and producing the Psychometric Tool, based on desk and field researches, focus groups and interviews. The Psychometric Tool has been carefully adapted to the needs of the trainees, with a certain number of in-depth questions, to identify specific issues and address them. The tool can be found here: <https://psychometRICTool.eldicare.eu/gr>.

Finally, ACQUIN as the relevant accreditation, certification and quality assurance body has undertaken the task to ensure that the design and implementation of the two VET curricula are in alignment with the development of common European frameworks and tools, especially the EQAVET indicators. More specific ACQUIN has elaborated the criteria and standards which have to be met by the VET providers to achieve positive external assessment.

Concerning the accreditation, the next steps are:

1. ACQUIN, will train the external assessors
2. An Evaluation Committee will take place



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About Eldicare Project: Our Project in Nutshell

Matching Skills in a Growing European Silver Economy

Funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme, Eldicare brings together 12 partners from 5 countries. Its goal: Paving the way to rethink, rebrand and update elderly caregiving.

The project's outputs will contribute to create better jobs and greater employability within the elderly care sector, upgrading its careers' prospects in the public eye and granting the elderly a better care provision. By 2080, over-64 Europeans will represent 1/3 of the entire population and the demand for professional caregivers will skyrocket. In parallel, we will see an exponential increase in the demand for formal caregivers to provide for needs previously met by families and/or unqualified workers.

Eldicare's partnership is developing and pilot-testing a training programme specifically tailored to caregivers of the elderly and leading to EU-wide certification with a view to empowering caregivers and rebranding their professionalism. The programme embeds a strong component of work-based learning and quality assurance mechanisms. The approach is learner-centred and result-oriented. All training materials will be innovative, transferable and comparable, able to meet at one and the same time industry's demand, EU requirements and national accreditation principles in order to facilitate skills recognition and mobility across EU internal borders.

Eldicare bridges bleeding-edge technologies and humanistic approaches within a comprehensive EU-wide training programme specifically tailored to 21st-century caregivers. The training programme will consist of:

- a **psychometric tool** (D.3.7),
- a **code of conduct** (D.3.8)
- and 2 different **VET curricula** (D.3.3):
 - a long-term one for atypical workers,
 - and a short-term one for the sectoral providers focusing on ICT.

Both curricula will come with trainers' guidelines, learners' handbooks and a self-assessment test that will help elderly caregivers identify their key strengths and weaknesses and consistently adapt their further training.

The curricula consist of different modules corresponding to the different caregiver's skillset:

- Nutrition and first aid;
- Basic knowledge of conditions and understanding the biography of cared-for;
- Legal rights of elderly people;
- GDPR in the elderly care sector;
- Computer and digital skills;
- Information handling – basic data analysis, information and data literacy;
- Technological expertise and digital resources;
- Communication and social skills;
- Compassion, empathy and supporting well-being;
- Interaction and interpersonal skills, the client-centred approach;
- Organisation and time management;
- Flexibility, initiative and stamina;
- Problem solving; critical situations – safeguarding;
- Consultations – dealing with grief;
- Engaging welfare

Acts of care, Acts of Cure

A 360-degree Training for Atypical Caregivers

Companions and paramedics, naturally skilled and technically trained, familiar with bedsores, psychology, healthy cuisine and smart healthcare: today more than ever, caregivers are expected to be all-around versatile and multitasking.

Eldicare **Training for Atypical Caregivers** (EQF level 3) will provide the basic knowledge and know-how for resourceful, multi-skilled and bleeding-edge caregivers to-be. In the last months, partners have produced a comprehensive **curriculum outline** (D.3.3) along with many useful **training resources** (D.3.6) to support the caregivers' professional training.

A substantial part of the training will be dedicated to new technologies, data management and digital resources. A second section will target paramedical skills, such as first aid, nutrition, and most common age-related conditions. Last but not least, the third segment of the training will address the psychological, spiritual and emotional needs underlying the relationship between caretaker and cared for. Delving into the elderly's biography, listening to them, expressing them empathy and supporting them when dealing with loss and grief represent the very hardcore of Eldicare atypical caregiver's training.



"Feeding & Nutrition" was the first module to be outlined. This part of the training aims to make perspective caregivers well-acquainted with the ABC of nutrition science related to age. A "Food First" approach is taken: Food and drink are selected, combined and consumed in a way that allow to optimize nutrients' regular intake on an individually customized basis. Trainees learn how a balanced eating regimen can reduce the risks of hearth conditions and get the knack of tailoring diets to other most typical age-related conditions. They learn the ropes of enteral and parenteral nutrition and are given useful tips to orientate the elders' nutrition habits. In close complementarity with technical-scientific aspects, carers are also given the opportunity to reflect on the psycho-

emotional impact of nutrition on the elderly's overall wellbeing. Besides helping prevent diseases, in fact, healthy and pleasant meals are also a way for the elderly to engage in self-care, treat themselves, enjoy life and hopefully also spend convivial moments with others. Consuming and – whenever possible – preparing food is important to stay active, taking care of oneself and keep on living a fulfilling and self-determined life.



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Towards a Unified and Learner-Centred Approach

The First Steps to Create Common European Methodological Guidelines to Train Caregivers



The **methodological handbook for the accreditation and certification of learning outcomes (D3.2)** outlines a common approach to the evaluation of the knowledge, skills and competences gained through the Eldicare training. The handbook defines the operational concepts underlying the certification procedures and outlines the skillset trainees gain through the successful completion of the Eldicare programme. More in general, they define what every caretaker of the elderly should know and be able to do in order to be certified at the EU level.

Following the EQF's definition, the Eldicare methodological guidelines

identify the “learning outcome” with three components: knowledge, skills and competences. In VET curricula design, the learning outcomes are the lighthouses driving the pathway of the trainee towards its learning objectives and gradually casting light on the assessment procedures as new milestones are achieved. The clear definition of the learning outcomes and their balanced articulation through a consistent methodological framework helps tailoring teaching and assessment activities to the actual pace of the learning process, making the overall experience more cohesive, efficient, enriching and meaningful to each and every learner.

Eldicare methodological guidelines stress the importance of conceiving the learning experience as an iterative and complex dynamic entwining at least three different dimensions, all equally essential to the overall process: cognition, psychomotricity and affection. The cognitive level of learning consists of the contents the learner is expected to get familiar with, understand, memorize, and assimilate. Particularly relevant to elderly caregiving, the psychomotor level refers to the practical dimension of doing: to the know-how, psychophysical abilities and capabilities that must be gained in order to perform the acts and gestures involved by the caregiver's professional role. Last but not least, the affective dimension concerns the set of values, beliefs and attitudes that learners must develop to build up a solid professional identity.

The affective and relational dimension is crucial to build up and sustain the caregivers' professional identity. Within the broad range of skills and competences required to nourish the affective dimension of the Eldicare training, a special role is assigned to self-care.

Caregivers have a very delicate, laborious and sensitive job, requiring a lot of both physical and psychological energy. Exposure to exhaustion and burnout is very high. This is why perspective caretakers must learn and test their capacity to take care of themselves before aiming to take care of others. The ability to listen to one's own



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needs is an essential prerequisite for learning how to listen to the needs of the others by developing a professional version of one's innate empathy. Self-care and care of the others are deeply connected and interdependent: They are the two sides of the same coin.

In a context of professional caring, it is very important to understand care as a circular dynamic requiring networking and community support. Caretakers are first and above of all enablers and catalysts of care: they do not just provide care themselves, but they support the elderly's capacity for self-care and their engagement in social activities. Perspective caregivers need to learn to create around themselves networks and communities of care. In the methodological guidelines, engagement with social resources and other carers is recognised as a fundamental skill on which caretakers need to build up their professional solidity and resilience.

Caregiving in Europe and beyond

Picks from the Eldicare consultation process

With the **final report** delivered by Staffordshire University, the project partnership laid the final building block of the **scoping analysis and state-of-the-art review** (WP2).

Involving representatives from VET providers, public bodies, local policy-makers and SMEs, the consultation process created a dedicated room for voicing the views and interests of all those concerned by elderly caregiving. Information was gathered from Belgium, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Czech Republic Portugal, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Switzerland, Israel and Cyprus addition to the countries directly involved in Eldicare partnership.

Bringing to the fore the richness in diversity of the European landscape, the scoping analysis cast light on interesting differences in the legal frameworks and socio-cultural backgrounds underpinning long-term care and caregivers' training.



Most EU member states possess their own training and accreditation schemes for formal caregivers. In some countries training programmes are also available for informal caregivers and volunteers.

In most cases, training courses are administered at the regional or even local level and often there is no harmonisation between regional systems at the national level. Eldicare goal to establish EU-standardised curricula is therefore ambitious.

The concern for shortages of caregivers is widespread and far-reaching. The risk of workforce draining from places with harder working conditions to better-off areas is also there, with the consequences of aggravating shortages in disadvantaged regions and inequalities. Gaps in opportunities were reported both among different countries and between urban areas and the countryside.



In some countries, professional caregivers are better paid in nursing homes than everywhere else. Such salary gaps often hold caregivers back from choosing options that would be otherwise more desirable for both themselves and for their cared for. Improving the working conditions of home caregivers and promoting flexibility mechanisms would help offset the current imbalance.

Europe does not lack good examples to follow suit. In Lithuania, for instance, the welfare is designed as to allow the elderly to stay at home for as long as possible through the provision of integrated services. Same applies to Denmark, where all-age people with functional limitations get financial aid and customised support to maintain the highest possible degree of autonomy.

The Danish government understood how new technologies are crucial to support active ageing in economically sustainable ways: instead of institutionalising the elderly, it gives them empowerment training courses; instead of sending them cleaning staff, it provides them with vacuum robots and customised domotic devices.

Good news also come from Belgium, where informal caregivers have recently gained a distinctive social status entitling them to indemnity, social insurance, the right to take leaves and all benefits arising from social compensation schemes.

With respect to the training offer, stakeholders emphasized the need for practical-oriented programmes allowing perspective caregivers to find out whether they are suited for the job. Most interviewees expressed the view that the human dimension should be in the forefront in all training programmes for caregivers. A minimal background in psychology of the elderly is seen as relevant but what is regarded as even more crucial is a practical training targeting communication and interpersonal skills. Situational learning is considered as the most suitable pedagogical approach for building up the caregiver's empathy on a professional level.

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Long term care for elderly – COVID-19 reflections

12 key statements

COVID-19 came not only to the care sector like an avalanche. The speed and the impact were overwhelming yet the care sector passed the biggest “test” and secured care for the elderly across the globe trying to protect both seniors and all care staff and other employees working in the aged care sector. Short overarching statements are provided which describe the biggest problems, weaknesses and threats that the recent Coronavirus crisis has opened, showed and/or accented. More you can find here: <https://1url.cz/1zsOz>.

Partners



Contact

AKMI S.A. Anonymous Educational Organization 16, Kodrigktonos Str. GR-11257 Athens/Greece
Email: Ms. Eua Vaiouli eldicare@iek-akmi.edu.gr, www.iek-akmi.edu.gr phone: +30 210 976 9560