



**Building ICT competencies in the long-term care sector to
enhance quality of life for older people and those at risk of
exclusion**

Call for an Open Pilot

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Call for an Open Pilot

The careNET Consortium, coordinated by IPERIA, consisting of eight European partners is inviting organisations outside the Consortium and potentially from other countries to join an Open Pilot experience. It is an open and free possibility for home care service providers or other organisations dealing with home care workers or older people as receivers of home care to take part in a pilot exercise.

The careNET Consortium is implementing the project entitled “Building ICT competencies in the long-term care sector to enhance quality of life for older people and those at risk of exclusion” with the support of the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Programme. The careNET project is aimed at developing a critical set of ICT competences in 2 identified ‘at-risk’ target groups: care-workers and older persons.

Organisations joining the pilot will receive full access to the key outputs of the project including the map of domains of competences, learning path and learning resources, and other tools of the Virtual Learning Environment. Pilot organisations will also receive methodological support from the Consortium and will be invited to present their pilot experience at the careNET final conference (‘ICT and e-Skills for Social Care’) taking place in February 2014 in Brussels.

A Handbook of Piloting Procedures is available to provide practical guidance to the piloting exercise that can be used by staff and organisations involved in the open pilot and their local partners. The Handbook introduces the pilot in the context of the project, describes the original national piloting scenarios (France and Spain), and presents in details the three phases of the pilot: pre-pilot, pilot and post-pilot activities. It explains for each phase the range of activities, the administrative procedures and the required templates.

If your organisation is interested in joining the Open Pilot experience, please contact Laure Lhermet (laure.lhermet@iperia.eu) project officer at IPERIA or Peter Palvolgyi (peter.palvolgyi@telecentre-europe.org) responsible for exploitation activities at Telecentre-Europe. For more information about the careNET project, the implementing partners and the ongoing pilot experience in France and Spain, please visit our website (www.carenetproject.eu) or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/carenetproject).

The careNET Team

Background information

The project

In the European context of ageing population, decline in welfare provision and risk of social exclusion linked to the digital divide, the careNET project brings together eight European partners to develop solutions in order to improve the quality of care and life of care workers and older people (over 65 years of age). On a broader perspective the two years project (2012-2014) contributes to the enhancement in employment in social services, in the wake of the strategy Europe 2020.

The careNET project promotes Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as an instrument fostering social inclusion and improving the quality of life of both audiences (care workers and older people) and the professionalization of care workers. It also facilitates the transmission of knowledge and enhancement of expertise of older people in this area. Given the benefits of ICT careNET further supports the development of digital knowledge and skills by experimenting with new cooperation and tools.

The project team has produced beforehand an analysis of the state of the art of vocational training in Europe related to digital skills, identified common and specific digital competences of care workers and care recipients, and designed learning architecture and resources.

The training

The careNET training is based on a previous identification of digital competences and a scaffolding of the learning architecture and resources.

The project partners have produced a Map of domains of competences defining three areas of common and specific digital competences of care workers and care.

The foundational domain of competences includes the common digital competences, the day-to-day domain of competences contains the specific competences of care recipients and the vocational domain of competences gathers the specific competences of care workers.

Utilising the Map of domains of competences, King's College London has designed and developed the three following learning pathways and their objectives within the careNET learning architecture:

Foundation: the objective is to build a set of foundational digital competences that provide a range of reusable skills, knowledge and attitudes for basic ICT use.

Day to Day: the objective is to use authentic joint learning scenarios to build on the foundational skills and focus on particular elements of digital competence that promote active engagement with online and digital activity.

Vocational: the objective is to enable care workers to manage and advance their professional life through the use of acquired digital skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Each learning pathway is supported by micro and macro tasks that utilise a task orientated and problem solving learning approach.

The pilots

The project pilots implement and validate the learning architecture, pathways and resources produced. The piloting partners will carry out the training through specific ICT tools. The pilots will involve the two main publics of the project: care workers and care recipients.

Each national pilot will last 4 months. The outcomes of each national pilot will allow the validation of the learning resources, the evaluation of their implementation and further the improvement and development of the project to ensure the ongoing acquisition of digital competences in both target audiences.

Each pilot represents the three following phases:

- The pre-pilot : the preparation of the pilot;
- The pilot: the implementation of the training;
- The post-pilot: the closure of the pilot and decision on the further use of the digital tools.

The piloting partners in the Consortium

The pilot is currently taking place in two European partner countries: Spain (by Fundacion Burgos por la investigacion de la salud) and France (by IPERIA), both in urban or rural areas. The piloting partners may involve external organisations at local level during the pilot.

The participants

The pilots shall involve care workers and older people over 65 years old via binomials. The characteristics of the participants shall be:

- Older people living in their own homes alone or with their family without receiving care by any social institution;
- Care workers as employees of public social care services, private care organisations or on the basis of a formal contractual obligation directly with the care recipient or his relatives.

The implementation's instruments

Participants will have at their disposal several instruments to acquire digital competences during the pilots. They will own specific digital equipment and they will learn, exchange and train in the framework of a Virtual Learning Environment.

The learning centres (Telecentres)

The training shall take place at digital learning centres (telecentres) where participants will access to information and guidance to careNET learning opportunities.

The equipment

The project identifies digital tablet as the more appropriate device to introduce new technology to seniors and care workers because of its easy use and its intuitive interface that people at every age can handle and especially older people suffering from disabilities. Besides as a light tool the tablet is adapted to frail people. Tablets equipped with a 3G connection also permit a wireless access to the Internet in every area developing a wireless broadband. Digital tablets are also a less intimidating tool than computers.

The applications available for tablets are numerous and are constantly expanding. They offer diverse services, which may be used to pursue careNET pilot's objectives including social integration, life improvement of both participants and professionalization of care workers. Through the Internet applications thus provide access to services like e-mail accounts, social networks, learning platforms or communication tools (Skype, chats, forums...).

The Virtual Learning Environment

The participants will learn in the framework of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) consisting of three tools: a social network, a learning platform and a competency wiki. The social network will integrate or give access to the learning platform and the competency wiki. In each piloting country participants shall access to these tools developed in their national language.

Social network

A social network based on the Drupal technology will offer to participants a diverse range of communication tools allowing social interactions. They will specifically collaborate through a personal page, an online messaging and a chat. Care workers will also have the possibility to complete an e-Portfolio where they will describe and support their acquired digital competences with digital evidence of performance. As an online community the social network will allow peer learning between participants.

Learning platform

The Virtual Learning Environment includes a learning platform based on the Moodle technology. The learning platform will contain all the learning pathways produced by KCL and UPRC. It will further allow distance learning for the participants as well as easy validation of competences for the facilitators.

Competency wiki

The competency wiki is an information source and also a co-edition and co-creation tool. It provides to participants access to the Map of domains of competences and the description of each area of digital competence developed in the project. Each competence is introduced in one page with a unique web identifier. The competency wiki constitutes a bottom-up approach based on the contribution of the learning community. In this way participants could add comment and content to the wiki and thus participate to its ongoing enrichment. Participants could also use the wiki as a way of sharing experiences and providing support related to the development of a given competence.

The pilot evaluation

The objectives

The evaluation of the pilot shall reach three objectives:

- The assessment of the training based on the map of competences areas and its adaptability to care workers and care recipients;
- The assessment of the impact of the training on the quality of life of participants;
- The assessment of the sustainability of the training in Europe.

5 aspects of the training will be evaluated:

- The adaptation of the training to a national environment;
- The implementation of the learning pathways through blended learning;
- The acquired competences at the end of the training;
- The cooperation between care workers and care recipients;
- The impact of the training on the quality of life and of care.

The Piloting Handbook

The national piloting scenarios

The Piloting Handbook describes the initial national piloting scenarios in France and Spain. Each national scenario first gives an overview of the situation of care workers and care recipients in the country and further describes the piloting scenario

designed by the piloting partner. The national piloting scenario indicates the main actors, sites and actions of the pilot implementation.

The preparation and set up of the pilot (pre-pilot)

The Piloting Handbook guides the piloting partners to prepare and launch the pilots. The pre-pilot includes several stages:

- The involvement of external actors;
- The involvement of participants;
- The preparation of learning resources;
- The preparation of learning's instruments;
- The preparation of the evaluation.

The pilot implementation

The pilot implementation phase begins with the organisation and realisation of training for care workers and care recipients. The training will last four months.

Personal and technical support as well as community animation will be delivered to all participants along the full pilot period.

The Piloting Handbook provides support and guidance to these pilot activities:

- Implementation of learning;
- Implementation of learning support;
- Management of potential withdrawal of participants;
- Evaluation of the pilot.

The post-pilot activities

The post-pilot phase deals with the closing of the experimentation preparing its improvement and further development. In this way the piloting partners will ensure the sustainability of the pilot beyond the project timeframe. The piloting partners will undertake the following activities to organise the post-pilot:

- Training achievement;
- Management of training instruments;
- Dissemination of the outcomes;
- Piloting report.