DISCOVER
SKILLS FOR CARERS

Project acronym: DISCOVER
Project full title: Digital Inclusion Skills for Carers bringing Opportunities, Value and Excellence

Objectives

Currently over 100 million people in Europe care for a family member, partner, relative or friend and this figure will rise sharply with ongoing population ageing.[1] The increase in demand for care will have implications for public services, families and health care providers, with families increasingly expected to take on more complex care tasks and healthcare professionals experiencing increased workloads.

DISCOVER is about using digital technologies to enable carers to access the information they need, when they need it, in mediums that facilitate knowledge and information sharing, fostering well-being of carers, older people and the development of ICT skills. DISCOVER will foster a shared learning environment for communities of carers to share experiences, knowledge, challenges and questions through the medium of the DISCOVER Product.

Evidence of longstanding physical and emotional health problems in carers is well developed. High blood pressure, tiredness, lack of energy, back problems, anxiety and depression, all have been linked to carer stress. Informal carers in particular can experience feelings of isolation because they do not have the supports that paid care workers have, for example care workers within a nursing home setting have access to a range of supports. By developing carer networks, DISCOVER aims to improve the well-being of carers and the people they care for, ultimately helping to reduce their social exclusion.

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[1] Fischer, S (2009) *The Voice of Carers Developing carer organisations across Europe.* Eurocarers Executive Committee [accessed online 9/7/12] www.eurocarers.org/userfiles/file/presentations/BrusselsSFfinal.ppt.

The DISCOVER project will create a new service to deliver skills training for carers and has **three primary objectives:**

▶ Strengthening the use of information and communications technology solutions in the delivery of care and social support;
▶ Increasing digital competencies and engagement of carers and those they care for;
▶ Raising the profile of social inclusion work.

Project Facts

Funded Under
The Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme

Area
CIP-ICT-PSP.2011.3.2 - Digital competencies and social inclusion

Total Cost
€3.60m

EU Contribution
€1.80m

Project Reference
297268

Execution
From 01/04/2012 to 31/03/2015

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▶ Coventry University Enterprises
  Limited *United Kingdom*
▶ Dundalk Institute of Technology
  Ireland
▶ Fundacion Privada Cetemmsa
  Spain
▶ Fundacion Intras
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▶ The Open University
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Website

www.discover4carers.eu

Project Description

Demographic changes expected across the European Union coupled with rising expectations for the quality of care, highlight the social necessity for action:[2]

▶ 80+ population doubles until 2050; 60+ from 20% (2000) to 29% (2025)
▶ 21% of 50+ population has severe vision/hearing/dexterity problems
▶ Today 4 working for one retiree, in 2050 only 2 working for one retiree
▶ Cost of pensions/health/long-term care go up by 4-8 % of GDP by 2025
▶ Shortfall of care staff (with estimated need for 20 million informal carers by 2025)

The DISCOVER project aims to challenge existing training practices and create a technical response that will improve carers' skills and support effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of care. The DISCOVER platform will develop new digital skills training content and will use the most appropriate technology and innovative forms of learning to reach and engage with carers.

DISCOVER is based on existing eLearning systems used by Birmingham City University and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The DISCOVER platform will integrate these existing systems with new systems and provide access to rich learning experiences through the acquisition of digital skills.

Participants will use a variety of channels, including computer, mobile phones and digital television. The project will also maximise value through repurposing and improving existing content. The DISCOVER platform will become the single point of entry for carers.

DISCOVER will be piloted in 4 testbeds in Thessaloniki (Greece), Zamora and Valladolid (Spain), Birmingham (England) and several locations across the Netherlands. Four hundred informal and formal carers will receive digital skills training. Carers will be facilitated to become mentors for their peers and for the older people they care for, thus increasing the initial reach of the project.

Expected benefits include improved digital skills, better communication and support for carers i.e. less isolation through virtual and real social networks, increased confidence and positive impacts on quality of life.

Changing the attitudes of carers towards using ICT in care delivery will be an important outcome for the project and will support more efficient care services. The 'learn to learn' approach will support personal development and ultimately employability.

The benefits for older people will include improvements in quality of care, quality of life and levels of independent living.

[2] WINTLEV-JENSEN, P (2011). *European Innovation Partnership, Strategy Workshop* [accessed online 9/7/12] http://netwatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/static/download/workshop_april_2011/2.1%20Wintlev%20Jensen.pdf]

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