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VETCARE 2023-1-PT01-KA220-VET-000156915

How can we include Care for Aging in Europe?

The VET CARE Seminars

In December 2023, **four European countries** began their project about developing **training** for capacity building on care work and a **model-pool** for bringing together stakeholders from the labour market, VET providers and care workers involved in this sector in the different involved countries. The project VET CARE¹ (December 2024-November 2025), co-financed by Erasmus+ program, brings the experience of Southern European countries (**Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy**), contributing for the need of upskilling and inclusion of care workers, namely migrant women, the major labour force in the care sector in Europe, through the development of an e-learning course, in five European languages, and a model-pool where care workers can find their match in the labour market and training solutions, following the EU policies on inclusion and integration of vulnerable population. Four organizations – **CECOA, Fundación Ronsel, FORMA.Azione and IDEC** -, gather to design and reach results that could be transferable and useful in an aging Europe, balanced by the flow of migrants in need of localised training.

After researching formal and non-formal training programs in twelve European countries on long-term care (LTC) sector, applying a needs analysis to understand migrants care worker's training needs, developed within a collaborative logic, **including the project target groups**, VET CARE reached the public with the first **VET CARE Seminars** that took place in all four countries.

From the training programs research, we applied collaborative tools such as Focus Groups, the logic model of the Theory of Change and developed a questionnaire, in the four countries, to understand migrant care workers training needs at European level near local NGOs working with migrants, employment centers and other public bodies related with the area, including care homes. The Focus Groups allowed understanding what is needed in each country and then summarized it in the conclusions to be applied in the development of the content of the VET CARE training e-learning course and toolkit. The questionnaire allowed us to reach organizations and care workers that will be our peer reviewers in the training material development process during the pilot that will be done in the second trimester of 2025. The logic model of the Theory of Change was done during the seminars, to bring a collaborative approach underpinned by the peer review philosophy, to think about change and the need for it.

In VET CARE, we planned three national seminars and a final event in Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece, bringing all activities of the project together. Our first VET CARE seminars went off between April and June, gathering ninety-one participants among stakeholders and target groups of the VET CARE project.

¹ Info at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2023-1-PT01-KA220-VET-000156915>

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The VET CARE Seminars: Lisbon, Perugia, A Coruña and Piraeus

In **Portugal, CECO**A, a public vocational training centre (VET) with more than 35 years of experience, coordinator of the VET CARE project, co-organized the first **VET CARE seminar** with one Portuguese strategic partner, the Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences (CICS.NOVA), in Lisbon, at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon, under the tile “**Training programmes for Care Workers: comparative perspectives**”. On April 17, CECO A team presented the research done regarding good practices of formal and non-formal training programs for care workers in Europe, spoke about the challenges and changes needed to achieve what care workers look for and the labour market asks for, giving voice to the German and the Swiss models compared to the Portuguese one². The selected Portuguese good practice was invited to be with us, presenting the project “Caring Hearts”³ by the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) Portugal Training Academy. The presentations were followed by a collaborative exercise adapted from the theory of change model, asking the audience about “benefits”, “risks”, “constraints”, “with whom do I have to work” and “things I need to change” from the perspective of different subjects: a care worker, a migrant care worker, the labour market, a VET provider and an entity looking for care workers. After this collaborative exercise, we heard about the global crisis on the care sector with a focus on Portugal by our strategic partner, CICS.NOVA, which underlined that care workers are categorized in the domestic service sector, not recognized in the care sector. To close, we heard the Portuguese experience of training vulnerable population by SCML, a well-known and established private legal entity working in the social

² See VET CARE report on the twelve training good practices at <https://www.cecoa.pt/custompage/projects?tproj=internacional&aid=150&id=projects>

³ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iWP4wWkovE>

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sector, being the Chairperson nominated by the Prime-Minister. SCML brought their experience of networks to support care workers, “to care for the carer”.



Figure 1: CECOA 1st VET CARE Seminar - Program and collaborative exercise, April 17, Lisbon

FORMA.Azione, an Italian VET and Adult Education provider with experience in projects since 1997, organized the first **VET CARE seminar** in Perugia, **Italy**, under the name “**Workshop: Transversal competences for care work**”, using the Bertelsmann Foundation “competence Cards for immigration counselling” to help in the recognition of qualification and experience of newcomers, to empower the inclusion of migrants into the labour market⁴. In a collaborative workshop, the audience engaged in understanding how the 57 cards, divided into three categories such as social, personal and professional skills plus interests (e.g. family, music, hobbies), are organized. The audience was then invited to make an experimentation, using the cards following the instructions of selecting 2 cards, defining who would be the user and who would be the professional carrying out the orientation, the purpose of self-assessment in using the competence in the cards, underlining that personal narrative focusing on experience are a plus to understand strengths regarding specific competences or the need for improvement. The experimentation started after picking up the cards and do an interview for 10 minutes,

⁴ For the cards, see https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Aufstieg_durch_Kompetenzen/Kompetenzkarten/Englisch/Bastelbogen_EN.pdf

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changing roles after – the user became the professional doing the orientation. The seminar ended with the audience presenting their experience and analysis of the experimentations within a logic based on the framework of the theory of change.



Figure 2: FORMA.Azione 1st VET CARE Seminar - Program and cards/role paying exercise, May 13, Perugia

In **Spain**, **Fundación Ronsel**, a charitable-educational entity since 2000 working in employability and socio-labour integration, organized the first **VET CARE seminar** on June 4, under the title “**Professionalization of care: rights and opportunities**”, engaging with the audience through two roundtables: the first one was under the topic of “The importance of care training” and the second on “Domestic workers' rights and health”. Both roundtables brought together stakeholders and professionals from the care sector and migration area. When presenting the project, Fundación Ronsel team underlined what all VET CARE countries conclude after the research phase: why LCT services are provided mainly by migrant women? Why them and how they are working? The LCT sector is supported mainly by migrant women as domestic helpers, caring for sick people, dependents and doing companionship. Working as domestic helpers, in domestic services area, is related to the lack of resources, limitations regarding national language, administrative irregularities and legal procedures that have different challenges for newcomers, socio-economic difficulties due to structural violence such as culture, access to housing, racism, xenophobia, gender-based violence, among others. When presenting the VET CARE project, an overview of the number of care workers in Europe was highlighted, such as in the other VET CARE countries, in connection with the category in which they are integrated: domestic work. According to

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data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), of the nearly 76 million people who carry out domestic work in the world, 76.2% are women. Debating what kind of training is needed and what rights do care workers have, was the two focus of the VET CARE seminar in Spain. Fundación Ronsel decided to apply the theory of change previously to explain the tool to be applied in the improvement of the sector.



Figure 3: Fundación Ronsel 1st VET CARE Seminar - Program and the two roundtables, June 4, A Coruña

In Greece, IDEC, a training consulting company from Piraeus since 1989, organized the first VET CARE Seminar on June 26, under the title “Education and integration of immigrants and migrants: theory of change, capacity development and new technologies” in the format of an interactive workshop. The audience was challenged to apply the logical model of the theory of change in 10 steps, going over the methodology, to develop immigrant integration strategies, then moved into the capacity building through education and VET for migrant workers and, finally, the use of new technologies in care giver training. In the beginning, the Greek VET CARE team presented the overall project, like in the other VET CARE countries, and then spoke about the differences between formal and informal care workers, such as in the other three VET CARE countries. In the care worker landscape, it was highlighted that in Greece, the home care sector relies particularly in migrants coming to the country looking specifically for this type of job. It was shared with the audience that most of the care workers are women, following the European trend, having direct contacts with networks of expatriates and peers or recruitment agencies specialised in the provision of care services. The good practices of training care workers in the country were shared. The closure was done in reference to the VET CARE e-learning platform, calling for the use of new technologies in the care sector.

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Ο Όμιλος για την UNESCO Πειραιώς & Νήσων και η IDEC ΑΕ σας προσκαλούν σε ένα διαδραστικό εργαστήριο που θα συζητηθούν:

- Η χρήση της θεωρίας της αλλαγής για να την ανάπτυξη στρατηγικών ενσωμάτωσης μεταναστών
- Ανάπτυξη ικανοτήτων μέσω εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης μεταναστών και αλλοδαπών φροντιστών
- Χρήση νέων τεχνολογιών στην εκπαίδευση φροντιστών

26 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ • 11:30 ΠΜ - 13:00 ΜΜ
ΜΥΚΑΛΗΣ 51, ΚΑΜΙΝΙΑ, ΠΕΙΡΑΙΑΣ

Η συμμετοχή είναι εντελώς δωρεάν, ενώ οι συμμετέχοντες θα λάβουν βεβαίωση παρακολούθησης.

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Παρασκευή 17 Ιουνίου 2023

Με τη συνεργασία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

ΕΣΠΑ



Figure 4: IDEC 1st VET CARE Seminar – Program and workshop applying the theory of change, June 26, Piraeus

Three **VET CARE Seminars** will be organized, until the end of the project, in the four countries, documenting the progress of the project. Regarding the first one, in **Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece** different strategies were used to organize the seminars, according to the national reality and taking on board the different public policies and stakeholders involved. The 1st **VET CARE seminars experience** could be **transferable** when organizing this kind of activities: presentation of good practices in formal and non-formal training programs in VET and using tools such as Focus Groups and Theory of Change, that can contribute for the diagnosis of the situation, considering the lack of data on care workers in Europe. The **next VET CARE seminar** will be on, near you, between **February and April of 2025**, dedicated to the model-pools to match care workers, training needs and the labour market. **Be tuned. Be on @**

VET CARE consortium

Lisbon, A Coruña, Perugia and Piraeus



17 June 2024



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