SPERO
Social communication platform for seniors

GOOD PRACTICE - PROJECT

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

HoCare project (PGI01388) is carried out under the Interreg Europe programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

Contents

Introduction to the Good Practice (GP):

Regional development hub (gov helix), international mentor (R&D helix), local SME (Business helix) and local stakeholders (citizen helix) joint efforts to developed innovative solution for enhancing intergeneration communication. The project was funded through Innovage project.

Problem:

Seniors living in their home face a great risk of being lonely. The risk is much higher when the extended family is not living in the same house. Usually they are linked to the local environment through church visits, doctor visits, grocery shop, newspapers and television.

In the digital world they are they are very much cut off from digital media, which is more and more prevailing in the contemporary world. However seniors are not keen on digital, since it is too complicated or unknown for them. The question is how to bridge the digital communication gap for seniors living at home.

Solution:

The project develops an innovative social communication platform and end-user device designed for seniors (extremely easy to use). Seniors can easily communicate to the local care centre, local senior centre, relatives, friends and everybody who joins the platform. They are able to read news, they can be immediately informed on the local events, sport activities, clubs' activities etc. It can be used also as a reminder. The end-user device is designed to have only five buttons and not 40 -50 like computers. It is connected to TV since it is senior's prime display in the house.

Impact:

By implementing new communication channel to seniors, and sourcing multiple digital communication channels of senior's friends, family, local community and care organization, we can tackle the social isolation problem raised by the introduction of the digital communication in the society. "Local action group" (gov helix) detected the problem and prepare the call to get the solution. The triple helix cooperation (citizen, business, research) together with the Local action group bring to action an awarded prototype of communication platform combined with end-user five-button device, which was positively evaluated by end users. The next step is to design the commercially successful product.

1. Relevancy of the GP project

The “Relevancy of the GP project” section provides quick check and definition of its relevancy in regards to HoCare project objectives.

Good practice of quadruple-helix cooperation in R&I?	Yes, this GP project includes good practices of quadruple-helix cooperation in R&I
Good practice of delivery of Home Care R&I?	Yes, this GP project includes good practices of delivery of Home Care R&I.
If not in Home Care R&I, describtion and proof of its potential for transferability to delivery of Home Care R&I	
Generation of innovation in home care through answering unmet needs identified by formal or informal healthcare providers?	No, this GP project does not include good practices of innovation through answering unmet needs.
Generation of innovation in home care through public driven innovation?	Yes, this GP project includes good practices of public driven innovation.
Generation of innovation in home care via quadruple-helix cooperation for quicker delivery to the market?	No, this GP project does not include good practices of innovation via cooperation for quicker delivery to the market.

2. Quick overview of the GP project

The “Quick overview of the GP project” section provides initial overview of the good practice project (GP project) and enables readers to see if this GP project idea is relevant for possible transfer to their organization potential innovation activities.

Name of the GP project	SPERO – Social communication platform for seniors
Region of origin of GP project	Slovenia
5 keywords that best describe the content of the GP project	social communication platform, lonelinees, public procurement, seniors, new communication channel
Relevant **Operational Programme name**	The project was funded in INTERREG IVC program (European regional development fund).

through which the GP project has been funded (+ also in local language in brackets)	
Relevant **support programme / intervention area name** of the GP project **through which it was funded** (+ also in local language in brackets)	Innovage project
Single or multiple recipients of the GP project?	single recipient
Type of lead recipient (SME, LME, research centre, innovation centre, network/association, university/school, municipality, other public body, other (specify)	SME
Types of participating partners (list all participating partner types. E.g.: hospital, social house, senior house, patient association, networks, SMEs, LMEs, research actors, business supporting organizations, public institutions/regulators, other (specify)	SME, social house, elderly individuals at home.
Summary of the good practice	Social communication platform was tested to effectively inform elderly at home about all the activities, events and other services that exist in the local community since elderly often do not use digital media or read newspapers. Seniors living in their home face a great risk of being lonely. The risk is much higher when the extended family is not living in the same house. Usually they are linked to the local environment through church visits, doctor visits, grocery shop, newspapers and television.

	The project develops an innovative social communication platform and end-user device designed for seniors (extremely easy to use). Seniors can easily communicate to the local care centre, local senior centre, relatives, friends and everybody who joins the platform. They are able to read news, they can be immediately informed on the local events, sport activities, clubs' activities etc. It can be used also as a reminder. The end-user device is designed to have only five buttons and not 40 -50 like computers. It is connected to TV since it is senior's prime display in the house. By implementing new communication channel to seniors, and sourcing multiple digital communication channels of senior's friends, family, local community and care organization, we can tackle the social isolation problem raised by the introduction of the digital communication in the society. The triple helix cooperation (citizen, business, research) bring to action an awarded prototype of communication platform combined with end-user five-button device, which was positively evaluated by end users. The end user helix were representing in the design, prototyping and testing phase. They have done the needs assessment, help in the design of the prototype and do the final testing. The next step is to design the commercially successful product.

3. Transferability

The "Transferability" section provides more detailed review of strengths and weaknesses of this GP project including description of necessary basic conditions for region and leading organization to potentially transfer it. At the end of the section, the key threats in the successful transfer open up possibility to focus on specific relevant issues important for the successful transfer.

Strengths and weaknesses of the project

What are the GP project strengths? Why it was funded?	The project is working on one of the most relevant issue concerning elderly population – loneliness. One of the reason for loneliness is inadequate delivery of information of the activities and events in the local community. Therefore new communication channel is needed for fast, easy, elderly friendly and close to zero cost information delivery in local area.
What are the **key weaknesses of the GP project**?	The main weakness is relatively complex ecosystem of different players needed that the communication platform is performing well.

Basic conditions for successful transfer

Why is this GP project	The communication platform is developed till the working prototype phase. Needs

transferable? – innovation, impact, financial, legal, and timeframe aspects	assessment in EU environment and good practice learned in the UK contributed to its design. Local tech partner should customize (if needed) the prototype and prepare it for the production. There is an intend shown that IPR can be leased or sold to the interested party.
What are the **basic conditions the region needs to have** to be successful in transferring this good practise?	The most important condition is a well functioned ecosystem where local community, local media, local associations and other interested partners has a strong intend to enhance communication to the elderly living in the local community.
What are the **basic conditions the leading recipient from the region needs to have** to be successful in transferring this good practice?	The leading recipient should have good knowledge in the communication and information delivery. It is beneficiary if it is a well-known "body" in the local community with good brand name and trust. It has to have experience in the work with the elderly population. Last but not least: it has to have capacity to connect all actors working with elderly to the common goal.

Key threats in GP project transfer

What are the **key potential threats for the GP project transfer?**	The luck of a strong intend from the whole ecosystem and weak support of the local community are two main potential threats. Implementation of the new communication platform is a long process since it include habits change at the end-users. Inadequate financial and time resources can lead to the unsuccessful project. Extensive public support is needed in the first couple of years.

4. Description of the GP project

The "Description of the GP project" section provides more detailed information on the Good Practice project (GP project) and enables readers to get further detailed inspiration and easy ready-to-use information for possible innovation transfer to other project applications. This includes: tackled problem, time length of the GP project, objectives, phases, activities and deliverables of the GP project, its main innovation and target group.

Description of the tackled problem

What was the **problem / challenge tackled** by the project?	Seniors living in their home face a great risk of being lonely. The risk is much higher when the extended family is not living in the same house. Usually they are linked to the local environment through church visits, doctor visits, grocery shop, newspapers and television.

	In the digital world they are very much cut off from digital media, which is more and more prevailing in the contemporary world. However seniors are not keen on digital, since it is too complicated or unknown for them. The question is how to bridge the digital communication gap for seniors living at home. It allows the elderly to communicate with the local day centre, relatives and friends, read selected and local news, access services available in the local area and be informed when it is time for everyday task (reminders). The terminal is easy to use because it has only fi ve buttons to operate it (4 buttons for navigation and 1 button for confi rmation) and can be connected to an existing TV or PC monitor. User specifi ed administrators (family members, close relatives, neighbours) have remote access to the device via interface. They can set notifi cations, send some text messages or voice messages that are played back automatically. The pilot project allows a further development of the system (audio and video link with relatives or local centres, touch screen) after the testing phase.
What were the **reasons for the problem?**	The society is changing very fast and digitalization it the main trend. The traditional communication channels are less important and costly. Elderly has almost none adaptation to the digitalization.

Time length of the GP project

What was the **time length** of the GP project in months?	6 months

Objectives of the GP project

Describe the **overall and specific objectives** of the GP project	Overall objective: Development of social communication platform to the stage of the working prototype and quality assessment in the narrow end-user group. The main objective is to increase the social inclusion of elderly, who are living at their home and enable them to live longer and independently in their own homes. Specific objective: Knowledge transfer of a good practice and adjustment to the local environment. Secondly to put systems in place to support the development of close-to-market healthcare technologies.

Phases, activities and deliverables

List all **main phases** of the GP project including their	1. development of software (+ hardware) 2. promoting the testing of software by clients (elderly)

time length	3. education of elderlies and their closest relatives how to use the platform 4. testing phase in Dol pri Ljubljani municipality 5. evaluation of the usefulness of the platform 6. improvement of the software (further development)
List and describe all **main activities** that were implemented by the GP project	Product architecture definition based on steering committee input SW and HW development 3rd party equipment selection and purchasing Internal solution testing End-user workshop (presentation of solution) Volunteers workshop (presentation of solution) Technical assistance in the test period Evaluation of user experience and upgrade options Consultancy for development of guidelines for product use in different segments
List all **main deliverables** of the GP project	Five working prototypes of the social communication platforms

Main innovation of the GP project

What was the **main innovation** of the GP project?	The simple device offers several advantages: stability and automated services; no need to learn how to use a conventional device; no disturbances in user interface (simple layout with no additional buttons and applications); no buttons to switch the device on or off (everything happens automatically); high end aluminium housing - hard to break; availability of some functions of hardware not available in other devices; telemetry is integrated directly as a core service so the local center or family member can check the status of device or is notified if something is wrong;

Target group of the project

Who was the main **target group** of the GP project? (SME, LME, research organization, university, public institution, healthcare provider, business supporting	The main target group are: a) Elderly living at their homes in the rural areas b) Tech SME - developing working prototype of the communication platform c) Local social-care center

organization, other (specify)	
Describe the main target group	The main target group are elderly, who live alone at their homes. Usually do not use internet and internet related digital services. They are not present on social networks.

5. Impact

The “Impact” section provides more detailed information on the effect of the GP project implementation and dissemination of major outputs.

Impact

What was the level of **geographical impact** of the GP project? (village, city, county, country, international, other (specify)	Town of Dolsko located in rural area in central of Slovenia.
What were the final **impact indicators including their quantification**?	The number of prototypes delivered: 5
Describe the **changes resulted from the project** activities	The local community actors have raised the awareness, that population aging is a main concern also in their local community. The main actors are better connected and the subject of elderly related technologies got place in their vision of the local development. The potential of local tech and social SME/NGO was checked and informal actor’s network was created.

Dissemination of outputs

Describe **dissemination activities** of the project outputs carried out during the GP project	The results were disseminated via newspapers, events - Festival for Third Age where we presented Innovage project and Social Communication platform on the stand for three days and on a round table. They had meetings with the local decision makers and other representatives. They presented pilot action on local and national television. Within eco-innovation hub they organized “Professional Consultation” - Healthy and Active Aging. There were around 85 participants and they could test the social-communication platform. The project were presented in Brussels on a final project conference where it get special reward as a finalist among the pilots actions. The platform was

	demonstrated on a special project event in Slovenia “Population aging - new opportunities”.

6. Risks

The “Risks” section provides more detailed review of potential risks of this GP project implementation including their defined mitigation strategies to eliminate them.

Describe **risks involved** in implementing this GP project including their **mitigation strategies**	1) technical: connectivity problems 2) social: resistance of new technologies by end-users 3) business: problem in the cooperation between key actors The mitigation of risk1: inclusion of end users with the same operator. Close work with the willing operator. The mitigation of risk2: Larger pool of end-users The mitigation of risk3: Possibility to change partners fast.

7. Budget

The “Budget” section provides more detailed review of costs regarding the project implementation as well as operational sustainability after its end. In addition, if relevant, public tenders within the project and additional generated incomes by the project are showed and explained.

Budget

What was the **overall budget** of the project **in EUR**?	19.882 EUR
List relevant **budget lines of the project including their % share** from total budget	Since the project is small, it did not have separated budget lines.

Additional income generated by the project

Did the project create any **additional income**?	no, the GP project did not generate additional income
If yes, specify **which type of income and what**	

amount in EUR?	

Public tender

Did the project include any **public tender**?	yes, the project included a public tender
If yes, specify **what kind of contract** (specific contract, general contract, other)	The project was appointed to the SME using “small order” public procurement process, where three competitive offers were gathered. The selected company fulfil all requested conditions and offered lowest price.
If yes, specify in **what amount** in EUR	19.882 EUR
Describe the **public tender subject**	Hardware: particular acoustic and light signalization, automatic connector to server system, optional connection to hub sensor, graphical interface, monitor, microphone, camera and keyboard connection. Software: remote access and SW update, elderly friendly GUI, notification remote setting, user communication module, chat and voice module, news filtering. Open system: easy development of new modules (orders to grocery shop, pharmacy, care services).

Financial sustainability after GP project end

Was there an **operational financial sustainability plan** in the project **after its end**?	no, the GP project did not include an operational financial sustainability plan
If yes, specify **where the operational funds** after project end **came from?**	
If yes, specify the **amount of operational funds** in EUR	

8. Other information

In this section, specific additional information about the GP project could be revealed.

Please describe **any other relevant information**	In the test period, the idea of the possibility to connect the device to the user's tv proved to be wrong - all respondents (in addition to participating volunteers)

about this GP project (if relevant)	stated that they would much rather use a separate monitor.

9. Information gathered by …

The information about this good practise (GP) project has been gathered for the purpose of the HoCare project (Interreg Europe Programme) by the following organization:

Region	Slovenia
Organization name(s) (+ in local language in brackets)	Development center of the Heart of Slovenia (Razvojni center Srca Slovenije)
Name of the **contact person(s)**	Igor Košir Anita Molka
Contact email(s)	igor.kosir@razvoj.si

AUTHOR – PARTNER OF THE HOCARE PROJECT

Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia – http://www.razvoj.si/?lng=en

RAZVOJNI CENTER
SRCA SLOVENIJE
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
OF THE HEART OF SLOVENIA