

The role of carers in Europe

Recent advances in healthcare research and innovation have opened new horizons for care provision addressing older people with long-term care needs. Still, around 80% of care across the European Union (EU) is still provided by informal carers – i.e. family members, friends and neighbours.

Caring for a loved person can be very rewarding, but also very demanding and cause physical and psychological exhaustion, social isolation, difficulties in reconciliation of work and care responsibilities, and other issues. Support services based on information and communication technologies (ICTs) can do a lot to support informal carers, as recent evidence prove (Carretero et al., 2012).

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partners

LINNAEUS UNIVERSITY (Sweden) - As part of the Linnaeus University, the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (NKA) and its research team are a national centre of excellence in the field of informal care, commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs via the National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden. **web:** www.lnu.se

ANZIANI E NON SOLO SC (Italy) - ANS is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 and working in the field of social research, community development, advocacy and training for informal carers. ANS periodically holds classes for informal carers and has developed the first e-learning course for family carers available in Italy. **web:** www.anzianienonsolo.it

INRCA (Italy) - The Italian National Centre on Health and Science on Aging (INRCA) is the Italian leading Public Institute in gerontology and geriatrics dedicated to carry out an integrated and multi-disciplinary research on aging and care of the older population. Within INRCA, the Centre for Socio-Economic Research on Ageing is devoted to gain an holistic understanding of the ageing process from a demographic, social, economic and political perspective. **web:** www.inrca.it

SINGULARLOGIC S.A. (Greece) - SingularLogic, the largest software vendor in Greece, offers world-class, integrated technology solutions to the private and public sector, in South East Europe, Middle East and Africa. Its activities include the development and distribution of business Software products, the study, design and implementation of integrated IT solutions and services for both the private and the public sector, as well as the distribution and support of well-established international IT products. **website:** www.singularlogic.eu

VIRTUAL CAMPUS LDA (Portugal) - Virtual Campus is a development, training and consulting SME in the areas of Information Systems, Technology Enhanced Learning and Social Inclusion. Its vision is to actively promote the development of the Knowledge Society by supporting public and private entities in the process of designing and developing strategies and projects that lead to increased societal benefits. **web:** www.virtual-campus.eu

CYPRUS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (Cyprus) - The Cyprus University of Technology, represented in the project by the department of Nursing, was founded in Limassol in 2003 and consists of 6 faculties: Faculty of Geotechnical Sciences and Environmental Management, Faculty of Management and Economics, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts and Faculty of Engineering and Technology. **web:** www.cut.ac.cy



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for those who care

SUPPORT SERVICES BASED ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
CAN DO A LOT TO SUPPORT INFORMAL CARERS IN PERFORMING THEIR CARING ROLE



www.appsforcarers.eu
#apps4carers

carers and mobile devices

Mobile devices, in particular, can be of great advantage for carers as they are highly widespread and normally easier to use compared to computers. They allow the access to a wide range of internet-based mobile applications (apps) and websites already available on the market, extremely useful to address some of main carers' needs such as: care scheduling and task sharing; health information and training; reminders; remote communication with other family members and care professionals. In brief, carers could benefit significantly of many existing apps, but in most cases they are not aware of these solutions, how to install and use them, or the potential benefits they could get. The proliferation of mobile devices and dedicated solutions is creating a pressing need for carers to acquire digital skills and adequate knowledge, in order for them to understand, find, use and benefit from these apps and websites.

aims

The Apps for Carers (A4C) project intends to contribute to the wellbeing of informal carers by overcoming barriers which limit them from benefiting fully by learning, information and social participation opportunities offered by mobile solutions (apps and websites).

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT ARE:

to select mobile solutions already available in app stores and on-line with functions and features useful for carers;

to develop training tools and methodologies to empower carers how to use and choose apps and websites appropriately;

to provide digital skills to carers on the use of mobile devices and solutions that will allow them to exploit the potential for everyday life;

to create a new mobile app which will serve as compact, usable and informative library of mobile solutions dedicated to carers.

project outputs

a selection of mobile apps and websites currently available in the different partner languages (Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish) and in English, useful for informal carers and addressing main needs of: care plan and management; information and micro-learning; communication and social inclusion;

a set of training methodologies and tools for improving digital skills and use of mobile solutions for carers,

including suggestions for activities to be performed in class, materials for trainers and video tutorials. Such methodology and materials will be pilot tested with at least 10 carers in each partner country and refined according to feedback collected;

a trainers' manual for social workers and ICT trainers, which should provide training methodologies, materials and country-specific recommendations for addressing carers' learning needs on mobile solutions;

a new mobile app dedicated to carers which will include a repository of selected apps and websites in partner countries, information and tutorials on their use.

After this, a training methodology and programme will be developed, including: characteristics of target group (level of digital literacy, care role and burden, availability of proper devices...), training objectives, expected learning output, duration etc.

