

Announcing iCareCoops: Fostering Care Cooperatives across Europe with an intelligent ICT-based and AAL-driven service framework

iCareCoops is a new, ambitious 2-year project funded by the AAL Programme, that tackles the increasing demand for elderly care at a time of limited resources. A Pan-European team develops novel ICT-driven solutions to empower carers and elderly people to extend the time they can live in their preferred environment by facilitating the cooperative model.

Due to inevitable demographic change, dignified ageing and caregiving will gain relevance in the long-term future. This development has critical social and economic implications for European healthcare systems already facing challenges of sustainability and resource scarcity.

The cooperative concept is already well-established and successful in domains such as food supply and agriculture and presents an auspicious solution for the care sector as well. It encourages informal carers and care organisations to build autonomous, regional care systems. The team of iCareCoops identified emerging information and communication technologies as the missing link to foster these independent care communities all across Europe.

iCareCoops is designed as a three-level-concept with information, cooperative, and, AAL-driven service levels. These intelligent, interactive, and inclusive services can easily be accessed on a powerful web-based platform with a flexible and scalable architecture. Users will find essential know-how on elderly care and cooperatives on the complementary Open Knowledge Hub. The Foundation Navigator and convenient applications such as Member Management, Shared Logistics, and Collective Buying of AAL devices streamline the process of founding and efficiently running a cooperative. Existing AAL tools will be deeply integrated via the AAL Solution Selector and a free CareCast App with an open API.

iCareCoops brings together eight partners from seven different European countries, experts specialised in the fields of elderly care, cooperatives, ICT, and AAL applications: SYNNO (Austria), Teamnet (Romania), Cit Development (Spain), Cooperatives Europe (Belgium), ZHAW (Switzerland), ZDUS (Slovenia), iDeal Development and VIA (both Denmark). Based on comprehensive base research and stakeholder studies they will elaborate the concept of the ICT-driven care cooperative. End-users will be involved in all phases of the project. The platform will be demonstrated in a real environment with, among others, the Senior Citizen Cooperative Riedlingen, a pioneer in the field of care cooperatives. The project is co-financed by the AAL Joint Programme and the related National Agencies of the consortium partner countries and has been launched in March 2015.

Visit project.icarecoops.eu for regular updates!