The IN-4-AHA consortium has hosted the second “Best Practices month”. Between the months of April and May, Futurium users were invited to share their innovations in the best practices section of the platform. Two notable examples have been selected to present their work to the community in this webinar and will also be featured in Futurium’s new quarterly newsletter. Virtual wellbeing technologies and training programs for home care will be featured in this event, showcasing real-life innovations that expertly manage digital tools, training, and health.

Speakers

Inmaculada Luengo
Head of R&D from HI-IBERIA, presenting: WellCO: well-being and health virtual coach

Clotilde Berghe
Head of promotion of jobs and training from Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Laura Guérin
European project officer from Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine
The session began with a presentation by Inmaculada Luengo, a head of the R&D Department at HI-Iberia leading the department activities and being project coordinator in several projects, especially in the e-health area such as WellCo (H2020), CoME (AAL2014) and Animate (AAL2013). She holds a Telecommunications Engineering Degree from Carlos III University. She has also gained a master’s degree in R&D Management by La Salle International Graduate School (2011). Her department has been involved along the last 10 years in more than 50 EU R&D projects in different domains providing domain use cases and cutting-edge technologies.

The best practice shared was WellCo, that can be found in futurium and on the project’s website. WellCo is an H2020 project, funded under the call for Personalized Medicine: SC1-PM-15-2017 – Personalized Coaching for Wellbeing and Care of People as they Age. According to its website. WellCo’s aim is to provide a novel ICT-based platform for a well-being and health oriented virtual coach for behaviour change. This platform would bring about change by means of adequate and personalized intervention techniques that drive people to successful behaviour changes necessary for a healthier lifestyle. The platform will cover three essential conditions that contribute toward improving the performance of I behaviour: capability and opportunity, supported by the continuous monitoring of user’s status and “Life Plan”, and motivation, provided by an affective-aware virtual coach and multi-disciplinary professionals. HI-Iberia (Spain) lead the European consortium in charge of this innovation, coordinating a multistakeholder alliance of partners from Italy, Denmark, Slovenia, The Netherlands, and Denmark. This innovation has achieved to develop a personalized virtual coach, that provides individualized advice, guidance, and follow up to its users, as to motivate them to change behaviours towards healthier lifestyles. It also allowed monitoring and intervention on areas such as nutrition, physical activity, vital signs, mental health, and social inclusion, affective computing via interactions with the virtual coach, and facilitated interactions with formal and informal carers. Until this moment, 133 users have benefited from WellCo, and 25% of them have reported an improvement in at least one aspect of their well-being. To achieve behavioural change, data was collected (sensors, life plan/self-reports, mobile camera, and speakers), monitored, and assessed, which would then be translated into personalized recommendations. Users were also motivated via social incentives,
Immediate rewards, and the visualization of the progress they had achieved. The whole process of creating and implementing WellCo was based in direct co-design with potential users, in pilot trials in Denmark, Italy and Sweden.

This follow-up package contains the presentation of WellCo and its co-design process stages in some detail. Furthermore, the project has developed several videos showcasing the user experience and the app prototype.

Then the floor was opened for questions from the audience. The 1st one regarded the co-creation design, specifically on how the users were effectively integrated into the process. Local people, from social institutions in the territories from the pilots, have been recruited to participate from the very beginning. The training sessions designed for these communities also had the added benefit of fostering social relations for the users, serving as meeting grounds for them. User profiles varied greatly in each pilot location. For example, Spanish users were elderly, with lesser digital skills, which influenced their engagement with the mock-ups and prototypes of WellCo and provided valuable feedback on the drawbacks and benefits of the design. The next question asked if any improvements have been made to the platform, based on this feedback. And yes, context is vital. In certain countries – mostly in central Europe - where most users are accustomed to IOS, then WellCo had to be adjusted, for instance. In contrast, southern European users weren’t as familiar with ICT tools, or even wearable technologies such as smartwatches, but provided better feedback and used the innovation for longer. A practical example was that users preferred short and straightforward recommendations, with not a lot of text to read. The final question addressed the future of WellCo – could it reach market-level implementation? Plans are being developed in this regard, which means addressing some challenges, such as the language barrier (plans for a bi-lingual launch) and its focus on research.

This was followed by the presentation of I-MANO: a training program on innovative management and organizations for home care service managers to deliver better quality services to the elderly. This project has been developed by Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine, a French organization focused on developing research and innovation aimed at improving the lives of senior citizens. More can be read about I-MANO in futurium and on their website. This block started with Clotilde Berghe Head of promotion of jobs and training at Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine. Clotilde has an academic background in...
Management of proximity services, and organizational change, with experience as a technical advisor for health and social care organizations and project officer. Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine specializes in supporting research, innovation, promotion of jobs and training, public policies and territories, and European cooperation. Among this activity portfolio is a relationship with home care services, which are the target of I-MANO. This innovation was presented by Laura Guérin, European project officer at Gérontopôle Nouvelle-Aquitaine. Laura has an Engineering, Urban planning, community and regional planning degree from Polytech Tours, and a wealth of experience in environmental studies, culture, and project management. I-MANO targets these services under the assumption that their quality is based on the quality of career paths, which in itself is based on the quality of their management as a whole. The key steps to enact this change, as proposed by I-MANO, are 1) awareness rising, 2) Maturity assessment, 3) Collective training, and 4) internal training. In step one, managers were immersed into 6 management approaches, one of which they were encouraged to select to implement in their organizations: a) Shared Governance, b) management by quality of life at work, c) Montessori, d) Lean Management, e) Buurtzorg, and f) Collaborative organization.

This follow-up package contains the presentation of I-MANO’s description the management approaches in the program. More can be read on their page (in French) and video presentation

Click for Video

Management approaches

Nineteen home care managers were involved in the project and have provided preliminary key insights, such as the importance of reinforcing the meaning and purpose of the proposed changes, involving everyone, and focusing on motivating employees to embrace change, distributing roles, and recognizing the expertise of field professionals, as well as supporting autonomy and provide training.

During the Q&A, the first inquiry regarded the future plans for the development of I-MANO, even after the project is completed. According to Gérontopôle’s representatives have referred that these plans are
dependent on the Social Impact Assessment report, to be followed by the development of a kit that will be able to be co-opted by other French regions, which is expected to be ready by the end of the 1st semester of 2023. This was followed by a request to know who will finance this project, once it ends, something that was difficult to pinpoint, even though some organizations have shown interest in using this innovation, included into national (France) training schemes. A member from the audience also stated that this project could be implemented in Finland, based on the knowledge of projects being developed in the country. At the moment there are only publications in French, but at a later date, exchanges with other countries will be welcomed. Another doubt regarded the assignment of the management schemes – if there were some criteria. For the I-MANO program, managers were able to choose whichever tool they preferred after the training.

On Futurium

The speakers have highlighted that platforms such as Futurium are useful for experience sharing, to identify other initiatives, projects, and networks, and also to have a snapshot of best practices from other EU funded projects.

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1 The representatives from Gérontôpole (France) and XAMK (Finland) were in contact after the event.