

Press release

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(Source: Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency)

Do seniors cope with innovative technology?

Seniors and technology - two incompatible worlds. That seems to be the generally accepted idea. Is it really right?

To overcome a certain degree of reluctance of the elderly towards technological innovations, especially IT, seems to be a challenge. However, there are ways to overcome this hurdle, e.g. to involve the end-users in the design process of products and services from early on. This approach is called co-creation. During the last few months, several SMEs and public service providers in 6 European countries have tested this way of solution development in the homecare area and the received feedback shows that elderly mostly do accept IT solutions when being involved and supported as is shown in the following two examples.

Telemonitoring of physiological functions

One of the often developed solutions for the homecare sector are devices and applications for remote monitoring of seniors. E-Med4All Europe Ltd., a Hungary based SME, designed such a solution, which analyses the physiological functions of cardiovascular and autonomic nervous systems, and has a wide range of applications in medicine. The telemedicine system independently monitors over 30 physiological parameters by a simple oximeter, and sends the measured data to a processing unit in the cloud. Although most of the cardiovascular monitoring parameters offered by the SCN4ALL system had already been known to science, their practical application, especially for the general population, was not yet solved.

Representatives of the SME were surprised how much the involvement of the elderly contributed to the product development. Although the work with seniors on the solution was time and energy consuming, it revealed many important features that the SME would not have thought of during the planning phase.

“The involved elderly were very positive about the process, enjoying the work and the fact that finally someone was very seriously interested in their opinions,” says István Hegedűs from the Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency who also participated in the testing. He also adds that “seniors are great to work with and their age is not really a disadvantage.”

Smart HomeCare system



In Slovenia, the SME called Caretronic tried to develop an innovative system with a similar concept, which combines a touch-screen carephone, safety wristbands and smart pill dispensers to allow seniors to live longer and better at home and at the same time to provide their formal or informal caregivers with a tool for efficient care. The solution offers features such as emergency calls, notifications and reminders, care documentation, monitoring activity levels, detection of dangerous situations or automatic dispensing of medication in predefined time and doses.

Even though higher effort had to be made to motivate the elderly to participate, due to the fact that activities were mostly taking place virtually for covid-19 reasons. Eventually, both the SME and the seniors appreciated the possibility to cooperate in the development process. Jelena Vidović from the Business support centre L.t.d., Kranj, who participated in the process says: “the Silver generation definitely does not shy away from digital solutions, if they are properly introduced and used. Many of the seniors have digital skills. Key element is the right mixture of human contact and digital tools. Moreover, trust and regular communication are a must.”

“What we have learnt during the testing with our seniors is that the key to success and acceptance among end-users is doing your homework properly in learning what the real needs of your target group are. Ask the elderly what they want, have respect for their condition and capabilities Be patient, explain everything thoroughly and involve the end-users in every step of the process” said István Csizmadia, Chief Executive Advisor, at the Directorate for Programme Management and Project Coordination of the National Directorate General for Hospitals, who is also taking part in the testing.

About HoCare2.0 project

The project supports the delivery and deployment of customer-centred home care solutions using the co-creation method. It is funded by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and is implemented by 11 partners from Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovenia.

National Directorate General for Hospitals (NDGH) - is a governmental agency responsible for coordination, development and quality assurance of healthcare provision and services, also functions as the maintainer of over 100 hospitals all over Hungary. NDGH manages a great number of international projects and EU funded operative programmes for health development, thus having an extended international partner network.

In the Hocare2.0 project NDGH represents the public health sector from Hungary and provides assistance to form the user needs, as well as preparing and implementing a Policy Pilot to design E-Services, focusing on home care, day/outpatient surgery, and other different care types of public health providers, which can result in shortening the length of inpatient care.

Further information on the Hocare2.0 project:

<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/HoCare2.0.html>

<https://okfo.gov.hu/nemzetkozi-projektek>

[Hocare2.0 projekt](#)

