

# Ageing better *IN* real *LIFE*!

*Technology enabled strategies and tools for supporting older adults living in the community*

## IN LIFE PROJECT & SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

Societies in Europe are ageing, with the cohort of “the very old” growing at a faster pace than any other age segment of the EU’s population. This increased longevity, coupled with lower birth rates and shifting family structures, means a higher demand of care directed to public and private service providers. The allocation of tasks amongst these services differ from country to country but for all the resources are under pressure.

If introduced appropriately, technology can be a precious ally in tackling this challenge. Well-designed ICT solutions can prolong independent living, help older adults stay socially connected and facilitate sustainable integrated care.

For older adults with mild cognitive impairment and different stages of dementia the IN LIFE project has developed strategies and tools in different areas of independence. The aim of the project was to test how new and existing flexible ICT solutions can assist elderly users with cognitive impairment in organising, carrying out and completing everyday tasks (e.g. activities of daily living, communication, health maintenance, mobility and socialisation tasks) and how these ICT solutions can help them stay and feel independent.

On different pilot sites in six countries (Greece, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK) IN LIFE has offered all-around, personalised, multi-faceted ICT solutions and services addressing diverse daily activities (eating, physical activity, commuting, mental stimulation, communication, social interaction, etc.) to users with cognitive impairment living in their own home or in sheltered homes, as well as to their formal and informal carers. Over the duration of the project, more than 1.800 end-users participated in the project.

A number of services and tools were developed, deployed and tested. These include the IN LIFE platform itself, which provides easy and personalized access to all the supported Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) services, as well as a tele-monitoring platform allowing for almost real-time monitoring of vital signs (including alerts with user localisation), and a number of online applications, fall detection solutions and other security services.

Turn page to read more about the lessons learned!



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## How can you contribute?

The project has shown that technological issues are not the most important barriers for the wider uptake of technology in health and social care.

Barriers include resistance within society, sectors and organisations.

Policymakers can play a key role by identifying and removing those barriers and by facilitating large scale experimental pilots.

Make sure accessibility standards are respected and interoperability requirements between solutions met. Universal Design principles should guide the design of products and services.

As with all innovations, this field needs visionary champions driving the change at all levels, including the policy level.

Wanting to know more? Contact any of the partners for insight information on the project findings or join the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe to learn how technology can improve people's lives.

## Insights, challenges and expected benefits

IN LIFE generated the following insights:

- There is an urgent need for efficient ICT solutions to address the needs of older adults with cognitive impairment;
- ICT solutions can help prolong independent living and reduce institutionalisation, the role of the informal carer is key for the technology adaptation;
- Respecting standards is important for guaranteeing interoperability.

Some challenges came to light:

- Introducing technology in the lives of older adults needs to be carefully prepared and accompanied by training;
- Proposed ICT solutions need to be designed in a way that they can be easily understood and used by the elderly;
- Permanent training is needed to ensure the correct handling of the technology;
- User groups are very diverse and solutions need to be customised and personalised;
- Availability of the minimum necessary infrastructure must be ensured (i.e. good internet) before deploying ICT based solutions.

Expected benefits of IN LIFE technology:

- The developed technologies and applications can help prolong independent living of older adults with mild cognitive impairment;
- The IN LIFE platform and the registered tools allow formal caregivers to monitor the health status of service users, to obtain information on risks and critical situations and to schedule and manage tasks (e.g. home visits, etc.);
- The outputs increase the possibility to provide more services remotely and thus to decrease the costs of human intervention;
- The tools and services can increase the knowledge of the service users' preferences and background, and make interaction and socialisation easier, while creating meaningful and joyful moments
- The collected information on relevant standards and best practices is valuable to ensure interoperability of tools and possible large scale deployment.

## Contact

Project co-ordinator: Dr. Maria Fernanda Cabrera, Polytechnic University of Madrid, mf.cabrera (at) upm.es

Project manager: Dr. Maria Panou, Hellenic Institute of Transport, mpanou (at) certh.gr

Website: [www.inlife-project.eu](http://www.inlife-project.eu)

Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe: Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, hoogerwerf (at) aaate.net

Website: [www.aaate.net](http://www.aaate.net)