

## European collaboration in developing professionals' competences in working with older people

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**Background:** Europe faces severe population ageing in the near future. A new positive vision of ageing and promotion of possibilities in older age is needed. The challenge is how to transfer this vision into practice. Higher Education Institutes have a crucial role in meeting this challenge. Consequently, 26 European partner institutions and associations agreed to apply a project. Funding was received from Life Long Learning Programme – Erasmus Academic Networks for a project for the years 2013-2016.

**Relevance:** As population is ageing and there will be more and older people needing social and health care services, new competences will be required from the professionals in older people's care; especially important are attitudinal competences as well as multidisciplinary team work skills.

**Aim:** The main aim of the project is to develop an agreed Core European Competencies Framework for working with older people. The Framework will be used for curricula development and improvement.

**Participants:** 26 European Higher Education Institutes, from 25 different countries.

**Methods:** In order to enable the development of a Core European Competencies Framework, the consortium of 26 partners conducts the analyses on European level of (1) older people's thoughts on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of health and social care professionals when working with older people; (2) research and literature on competencies required in older people's care; (3) professionals' views of desired competences for all working with older people; (4) social and health care students' opinion of factors inhibiting or facilitating working with older people; and (5) innovative learning approaches to working with older people – exemplars of good practices across Europe.

**Evaluation:** As the core competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) will be developed from pan-European perspective, based on empirical research with all stakeholders and older people themselves as well as with the evidence of best practice, the competencies are transferable throughout Europe and would inform international education for social and health care professionals.

**Results:** An agreed Core European Competencies Framework for working with older people.

**Conclusions:** As the Competencies Framework is adopted in all the partner countries as basis for education of bachelor level students, the quality of curricula related to ageing and working with older people will be improved. Moreover, the framework of core competencies enables the evaluation of professionals' proficiency, and supports to acknowledge the need for further training as well as focusing the training in order to enhance proficiency.

**Keywords:** Competence, older people, positive ageing