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Health C Project

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## Health C project on the road!

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The Health C Project started in October 2012 and is a 2 years initiative co-founded by the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning Program – Leonardo da Vinci Development of Innovation subprogram.

This project aims at supporting health authorities' staff in the development of competences required for managing communication in emergency situations caused by a health crisis. The main results of project will include the development of a training course in communication in emergency situations and the respective training materials, and additional resources included in a toolkit. The specific objectives of the HEALTH C project are the following:

- Create new skills and news competencies in the area of communication in health crisis management;
- Raise the awareness of local health authorities on the use of new communication channels in the management of emergency situation;
- Involve general population and media in this crisis communication initiative in order to increase and improve their capacities of reaction in an emergency situation;
- Create different focus groups that will provide knowledge and feedback for the training contents;
- Design a training course from a functional point of view focusing on different professionals' competencies and including a special focus on how to use new communication channels in an emergency situation.

After one year of fruitful cooperation some results are already available and the design of the training course and of the materials is now consuming partners' attention. On the next page you can find a brief summary of the relevant findings on the identification of the target groups needs and competences and on the best practices collected.

The future plans of the Health C consortium include the finalization of the details on the training course and toolkit structure as well as the preparation of the learning contents and additional resources. These resources will be tested with representatives of the target groups before the summer of 2014 in all the participant countries.

## SWOT Analysis

During the 1st year of activities a SWOT analysis was done mapping the weaknesses, strengths and competences of the target groups. A comprehensive report containing the most relevant findings was presented underlining the

need for improvements in areas related to health crisis communication and for which competences and skills should be reinforced or created. These aspects range from more structural aspects, such as the communication procedures, guidelines,

monitoring and evaluation, to other aspect related to ways of communication and relations existing between the various stakeholders involved in the crisis communication process.

## Background Report

In order to understand the national health systems and the way in which they operate in an emergency situation, a desk research was conducted, resulting in a “background report”. This report analysis international and European

initiatives and programmes to share efforts and to coordinate actions in case of a health emergency. It also highlights some best practices and documents supporting the development of competences for an effective communication.

Analysing the national realities, a detailed overview of the national health systems and health emergency management is described presenting the way in which it works/operates in a health emergency situation and the relevant actors involved.

## Best practices in health crisis communication

A set of best practices in health crisis communication covering communicational models, practices of communication using the traditional media and also the social media was

investigated. These practices shall be used as support of both the training course contents as well as of the additional resources to be developed and offered. The practices gathered

aim to be of practical use as “ready to use” tips that the health managers and communication managers can easily adapt or use in their own contexts.

## Communication Guidelines

All the key stakeholders – health care professionals, health authorities, general population and media – must be able to work together to mitigate effects of a health emergency situation. This is only possible if extensive

preparedness planning programmes are in place and if communication tools and guidelines are available in advance for all stakeholders. Thus, an analysis of the experiences and practices with health crisis communication in

Europe was done in order to understand better what guidelines could/should be drawn.

## Next steps for the upcoming months....

Partners are now focused on the fine-tuning of the course structure and in the development of the training materials and of the toolkit resources. To be developed in English and afterwards translated into all partners' languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, Danish and French) a pilot version is expected to be ready to pilot by April 2014. At the same time additional resources will be developed based also on the findings of the previous activities of the project and will be incorporated in the toolkit.

The piloting stage is meant to be in place between May and June 2014. Stay tuned if you desire to have the chance of participating for free in the piloting of the Health C training materials and resources.

## Training course Structure

After analyzing the needs and expectations of the target groups the consortium decided to move forward with the development of the training course structure and toolkit features.

The training course will be developed in blended learning mixing in-class sessions with distance training. An estimated duration of 18hours is expected for the training course. The effort to attend the course is

expected to be of around one month, being the majority of the training time at distance.

The structure of the course that is being developed is as follows:

- a) M0: Introduction to the course;
- b) M1: Communication competences and processes;
- c) M2: Use of the social media;

d) M3: Use of the traditional media;

e) M4: Final assessment.

The training course contents will be identical for all countries. However, if some local and regional differences exist this will be taken into consideration.

## Toolkit set of resources

A set of additional but practical resources will be developed and offered to the training course participants. These resources will be designed considering the findings and results (mainly better practices

and communication guidelines) of the investigation performed by partners. The resources will include "hands-on-job" tips and guidelines on the following areas:

- i. Real communications guidelines and models;
- ii. Examples of good practices
- iii. Countries Info sheet
- iv. "Do's and Don'ts".

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