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DOCUP: A EUROPEAN PROJECT TO EMPOWER CARE WORKERS

Changing care practices within families, demographic changes, and the increase of the elderly population in need of care, together with shifting attitudes in favor of home-based (as opposed to institutional) care before and mainly after the COVID-19 epidemic, have rendered domestic care services increasingly important in EU countries.

Despite the long-held association of paid domestic work with the unpaid work performed by women in their own homes, domestic work is an increasingly diverse sector encompassing a diverse set of tasks. However, during the pandemic, the set of duties expected from domestic workers, particularly women, became even broader, with 49.3% of them reporting negative changes in their professional lives (Oxfam, 2020). More specifically, significant numbers of domestic carers have been asked to use technological software and applications to monitor their clients' health needs, provide clients with extensive medical care, physical and psychological therapy and even nursing. Yet, a substantial share of care workers has either a limited empirical or no prior knowledge before embarking on in-home care positions.

They are among the most vulnerable groups of workers and at heightened risk of contagion, social precarity, and exploitation.

DOCUP is a 28 months Erasmus Plus project that aims to equip domestic care workers with a mix of social care, transversal, and attitudinal skills to ensure resilient employment pathways able to respond to challenges such as those raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the project also intends to contribute towards advancing the regulatory environment and working conditions pertaining to domestic care (at the institutional level).

Coordinated by the Folkuniversitetet of Uppsala (Sweden), the DOCUP Consortium is composed of 5 institutions and organizations based in Italy (Anziani e non solo), Greece (Promea), Spain (Infodef) and Poland (University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz) active in education and training and support to innovation in care services.

Among the expected outcomes of the project: an evidence-based course curriculum on critical skills and practices required for up-to-date care provision; innovative open-access resources to upskill care workers and a collection of best practices and recommendations to address policy gaps and structural vulnerabilities concerning the training and professional development of domestic care workers.

More information about the project at: <https://docuproject.eu/>

INFORMATION FOR THE EDITORS:

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