



Dear reader,

In this first SI4CARE newsletter we are presenting you the challenges that are related to social innovation for integrated healthcare of ageing population in ADRION regions. Impeccable teamwork of all SI4CARE partners involved in the consortium under the coordination of the lead partner, University of Ljubljana, enabled us to identify the most pressing issues for the elderly population in the ADRION regions as highlighted in this newsletter. Building on this analysis of the initial state, we are going to tackle state-of-the-art practices related to this field, present examples of contemporary good practices, our engagement in pilot activities and propose future strategies for policymakers.

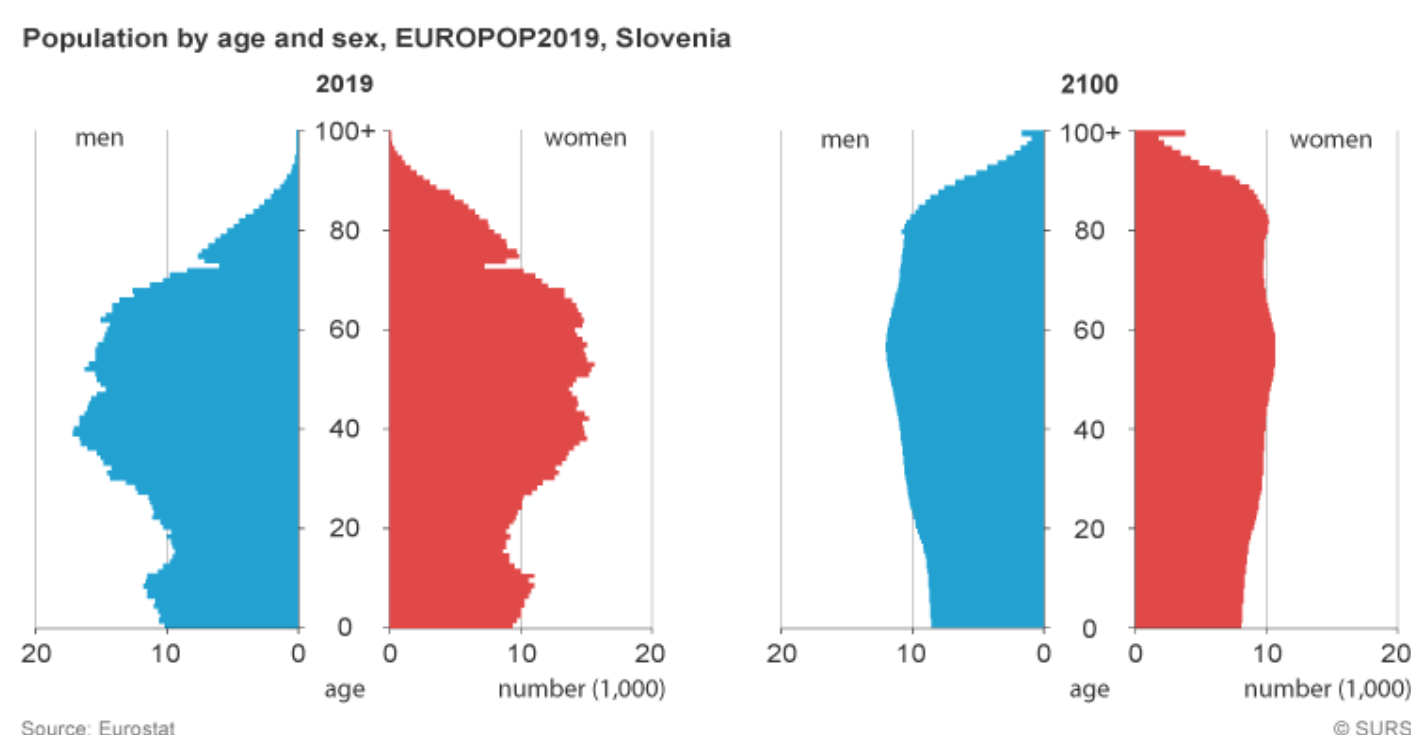
Vlado Dimovski,

Project leader

SI4CARE Challenges

One of the key challenges is to assess state-of-the-art national/regional healthcare systems. Further, the issue is also related to identifying key challenges to social innovation in elderly healthcare. As a result, it will be possible to emphasize some of the key actions that are needed for social innovation integration in the environment of public healthcare. Stakeholders engaged in this project, have vast previous experience in being involved in national projects, addressing challenges related to population trends and demographic ageing, especially in relation to healthcare and long-term care services provision. Various population projections across ADRION countries show that the share of older adults with declining functional capacities, who are dependent on help of others and will require long-term care services is expected to triple in the next 40 years. In the case of Slovenia, the population projections for 2025 show that there will be 5.9% of people aged 80 years or more, while in 2060 there will be 12.8% of people aged 80 years or more.

In the picture below, you can see the population by age and sex in Slovenia in 2019 in comparison with the year 2100:



Therefore, ensuring effective, accessible healthcare and long-term integrated care services for ageing population in ADRION area should be one of the first issues on the agenda of public authorities, local administrations and services providers. This is an especially pressing issue for remote (rural) areas. Consequently, this is where the role of social innovation could support public authorities, healthcare providers and social enterprises to equip themselves with alternative strategies and tools to improve the overall healthcare services for the elderly and their families, which would enable them to take the most advantage out of the services offered. We should not neglect the role of families as they are often the ones that occupy the role of informal caregivers to their elderly relatives. Social innovation can be defined as developing and implementing new ideas (products, services, and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In general, social innovation can be defined as new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human wellbeing. The value created by the implementation of social innovation is a shared value that is both economical and social. Our vision is to set up an efficient long-term care ecosystem based on social innovation process, enabled by digitalization (technology) and empowered by national and regional legislations, to support ageing people, also in remote areas, to keep them in the community and to make public funding more efficient.

In order to achieve this, the SI4CARE project will need to address the following challenges across ADRION countries: 1) fragmentation of institutional capacities and actors' efforts in delivering social and healthcare services to the elderly; 2) lack of integration and coordination of existing innovative information communication technology tools for healthcare provision. Research institutes, universities and enterprises within ADRION regions have developed technologies to face challenges of ageing population, including ambient intelligence, geographical information systems, transportation solutions and integrated care solutions, but these are usually tested or implemented in isolation, with consequent low penetration into public healthcare systems and institutions, due to lack of cooperation between universities, research institutes, public authorities and enterprises, and 3) lack of shared vision across public authorities on how to effectively face this changing health demand pattern (increasing demand for chronicle disease long-term treatments and general long-term elderly care) in an integrated and social innovative way.

To tackle these challenges, project partners, associated partners, and identified target groups will be part of the living lab and regional focus groups, where their aim is to represent several interests from different stakeholders in the field of healthcare, to share and compare their criticalities and needs, and on such a basis co-create, test and validate innovative instruments and common approaches for integrated healthcare of the ageing population. As the project is based on a challenge based approach, it will enable the identification of bottlenecks and barriers that are currently preventing innovation, effectiveness and performance of healthcare systems in ADRION countries and regions. Nevertheless, there are also potential opportunities and areas for social innovation application to the healthcare services in ADRION area. A thorough analysis will outline existing challenges and accompanying opportunities that are currently tackled by policymakers, services providers, social innovators and other involved actors, and will also serve as a starting point to highlight the similarities and differences across ADRION area, identifying shared areas of intervention. To distinguish between the scope and complexity of challenges, the project will differentiate between short and long-term healthcare challenges in relation to adequacy, access and quality of the services provided to the elderly population, while keeping in mind also the financial sustainability and promotion within policy-making.

In addition, researchers have been already carrying out extensive research in health and social infrastructures in both urban and rural municipalities, including suitability in terms of capacity and quality of the services provided. In this particular field, the spectrum of digital technologies and best practices proposed by SI4CARE consortium is key to investigate the possibility of their application in a real life setting that deals with solving challenges faced by rural communities and is especially related to the elderly part of their population. Related to this aspect is also the potential development of "Smart Silver Villages", which are digitally-enabled communities in rural areas as this is one potential solution for the future. For many stakeholders engaged in the project, such an opportunity is important to build up on their existing knowledge base for the development of an efficient and effective approach towards solving elder people's challenges within the local context, with a special focus on typically more marginalized (rural) areas. Improving in this area is also important because it represents an important part of sustainable development, which is of paramount importance for the future wellbeing of our society. Moreover, researchers are also part of the development of national actions plans for different national authorities and are involved in evaluating policy pilots in specific national environments. Taking into account the numerous studies that are related to our researched field, one of the key challenges is also to be able to guide the needs of the population and their issues, which will result in a framework for social innovation in social and healthcare in ADRION, which has potential to be utilized in a transnational setup. Moreover, the ability to speed up social innovation in social and healthcare services for the elderly population through the application and combination of existing tools, procedures, protocols and capacity building of actors and stakeholders and advocacy / endorsement among regional and national public authorities will enable the improvement of healthcare services and successfully respond to the challenge of ageing population, which is ultimately one of the top priorities to all countries across all of the ADRION area. It has been already claimed that issues and territorial challenges addressed by SI4CARE are common and shared across ADRION countries. Further, regional and local best practices in social innovation for social and healthcare services improvement do exist, however, are often limited to single cases, which limits their ability to influence regional and national policies. Consequently, this results in low services standards in practice and hinders the ability for cooperation between key actors that are important in the social and healthcare sector. As a response to contemporary challenges, the SI4CARE project aims to support social innovation actors in the ADRION region in the social context by empowering and strengthening civil society actors and at the same time developing new policy approaches.

Launch Event

The SI4CARE project, starting in December 2020, addresses social innovations for the integrated care of ageing population in ADRION regions. Two introductory virtual meetings were held on December 16 and 17 via Zoom and brought together 10 project and 18 associated consortium partners. The aforementioned partners were accompanied also by prof. dr. Igor Papič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana and representatives of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg ADRION program on the launch event. Completion of the 2.37 million euros worth project (financially supported by the Interreg Adrion 2014-2020 program; ERDF and IPA II funds) is scheduled for May 2023.

"Older adults will be highly dependent on the help of others and will need above all quality organizational solutions and day-to-day long-term care services. One of the project goals is related to enhancing the capabilities, knowledge transfer and the application of good practices in the field of integrated healthcare and social innovation, developed in European projects into practice. Further, we aim to contribute to the creation of an effective international ecosystem for the use of social innovation in integrated healthcare and social services for the ageing population in the ADRION region," said professor Dimovski, project leader from School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana.

Project and Associated Partners

Project partners in SI4CARE are:

1. University of Ljubljana
2. Jožef Stefan Institute
3. Municipality of Miglierina
4. University of Split School of Medicine
5. Teaching Institute for Public Health Split-Dalmatia County
6. Health Insurance and Reinsurance Institute of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
7. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
8. Public Health Institution "Health Center" Tivat
9. Special hospital for treatment and rehabilitation Merkur
10. Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia



Associated partners in SI4CARE are:

1. Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Slovenia)
2. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (Slovenia)
3. Social Chamber of Slovenia
4. Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia
5. Municipality Krško (Slovenia)
6. Posavje Social Work Centre (Slovenia)
7. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia
8. Region of Attica (Greece)
9. Federal Ministry of Health (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
10. Ministry of Health of Montenegro
11. Public Institution RERA SD for Coordination and Development of Split-Dalmatia County (Croatia)
12. Split-Dalmatia County (Croatia)
13. Athens Medical Society (Greece)
14. Region of Central Macedonia (Greece)
15. Calabria Region (Italy)
16. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia
17. Ministry of Health of Slovenia
18. General Hospital Novo mesto (Slovenia)

Project details

Project duration: December 1, 2020 - May 31, 2023 (30 months)
Contact person: Vlado Dimovski, email: vlado.dimovski@ef.uni-lj.si
Darja Šemrov, email: darja.semrov@fgg.uni-lj.si

Links:

More on the official SI4CARE project website:



Tbd

and on the official SI4CARE project Facebook and LinkedIn accounts:



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/174958477751341>



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12503237/>