



Joint development of online gerontological master degree programme - GEROM

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Demographic changes, technical advances in ICT and healthcare, pressure from professional bodies and older people demands have given nurse education the impetus to rethink how they construct and deliver curricula. Demographic changes have profoundly influenced the structure of present and future populations; this is in terms of the number of older people requiring care, the nature of that care, where care can and is given and finally, those who give the care. Demands, by older people, for either social and health care or care during a chronic and/or acute health episode are very likely to escalate. Meeting that demand requires creative thinking as well as an awareness of technological advances and how they might be utilised. In addition to a growing and ageing population demographic changes are also influencing the number of available carers. The challenge of meeting the needs of long term care has been identified, raising the need for more highly educated health care providers. Meeting the diversity of needs highlights the necessity to facilitate the process of information giving in both the elderly population and in the caring population. The challenge is great but the GEROM innovative curricula and the use of technology can facilitate achievable outcomes through quality education.

The project consortium consisted of partners with diverse expertise and experiences in various fields like gerontology, health care, pedagogy, management, ICT, e-health and e-learning. The consortium used the unique opportunity to consider local, national and international demographic issues and how they are liable to influence the European society. Although the project is initially aimed at the nursing population of caregivers, the curriculum could be attractive to other health and social care professionals.

The master degree programme is available as an e-learning/blended learning course where we implemented the didactic approaches like problem based learning, enquiry based learning, Kolb's and Grafts learning styles models, Scenarios based learning, and adaptability and individualisation of learning paths and materials.

Another innovation is the simulation/virtual environment for clinical practice, which enables the students to advance their skills in clinical and nursing interventions, nursing diagnosis and in the use of ICT and ambient assisted living technology. The main project outcomes and results are:

- An innovative, contemporary, technology driven and evidence based joint European master degree nursing curriculum for gerontology.
- ICT based teaching environment implementing advanced blended learning paradigm on which the GEROM curriculum is executed on an international level enabling that the joint European curricula is available in different languages and by intensive courses in which lecturers and potential students from different cultures will meet and discuss their differences and equality in the manner to be able to provide the best care for older people.
- Extensive and contemporary e-learning course materials.
- GEROM promotion material like brochures, newsletters, poster and booklets.
- Project Website (<http://www.gerom.net/>) where all interested public can find the basic information on the GEROM project.

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1. Project Objectives

The aim of the project was to develop and introduce an innovative, diverse and contemporary gerontological curriculum, which focuses on meeting the needs of older people and their care givers. The curriculum will contribute to the advancement of knowledge within European society through high quality health care education. This has been achieved through co-operation between relevant stakeholders including educationalists, nurses, gerontologists, the community they care for, developers of ambient assistant technologies, ICT experts and representatives of employers. We achieved all proposed overall objectives which were to develop:

- an innovative, contemporary, technology driven and evidence based joint European master degree nursing curriculum for gerontology.
- an ICT based teaching environment (available at: <http://www.gerom.net/moodle/>) implementing advanced blended learning paradigm on which the GEROM curriculum is executed on an international level enabling that the joint European curricula is available in different languages and by intensive courses in which lecturers and potential students from different cultures will meet and discuss their differences and equality in the manner to be able to provide the best care for older people
- extensive and contemporary e-learning course materials
- GEROM promotion material like posters, leaflets, brochures and booklets
- Project Website (available at <http://www.gerom.net/>)

The primary beneficiaries of the curriculum developed are gerontological nursing students, their educators and the older people in the community that the nurses' serve. Other beneficiaries are ambient assisted technologies developers, managers of older people care institutions and the national health systems as a whole. Although the project is initially aimed at the populations above, the curriculum could potentially be also attractive to other health care professionals and social care workers.

From the students' point of view the GEROM master program is:

1. Offering them an experience which will develop their intellectual and imaginative abilities in order to facilitate their development of independent judgement and problem-solving skills.
2. Providing an educational framework that encourages the student to develop her/his skills of analysis and critical awareness in order to stimulate an enquiring and creative approach to gerontology.
3. Developing the student's ability to respond to changing needs in gerontological care in an analytical and innovative way regarding the demographical changes.
4. Developing the student's critical awareness of relevant research findings and facilitate integration of these findings into gerontological practice, and challenge professional and organisational boundaries in the interests of older people and to improve health outcomes.
5. Developing appropriate practices and roles through understanding the implications of and applying epidemiological, social, political and professional trends and developments

6. Developing nursing leaders in the field of gerontology for building the capacity of the workforce to deliver high quality client centred care.
7. Introducing students to the concept of participative care.
8. Introducing students to the concepts of ambient assisted living and ubiquitous computer supported care.
9. Providing students to reflect on the national situations regarding the order's people care, family structure changes and the influence which are based on those structures on elderly people.

Indirect beneficiaries are older people themselves, whether they are independent or cared for, whether healthy or sick, they will gain in the type and quality of care and information they have access to. Of particular interest will be the exploration of the interface between professional nursing and vocational caring. The curriculum, amongst other intensions fosters insight into communication theories; this is deemed essential if nurses intend to ensure that discriminatory behaviour towards older people is not fostered. A review of current evidence to support the realities of communicating with older individuals is considered an essential information tool for this curriculum. Information giving increases the individual's autonomy allowing for realistic choices to be made based on up to date information.

Exposure to the curriculum will benefit the individual professional by increasing his or her own knowledge base and encourage applied learning. Such learning also has a social dimension; the professional care giver is a member of society who communicates with older people in all aspects of their life. Raised awareness regarding contemporary approaches to the facilitation of learning is also of direct benefit. Lifelong learning is good for the individual and even better for society. Use of technology as a fundamental learning resource will have the direct benefit of reducing technophobe behaviour whilst promoting the use of technology as a means to manage the information processes. The professional care giver will demonstrate their learning both directly and indirectly. Dissemination of information to the vocational carer is liable to have direct benefits for both the carer and the older person. Awareness about the processes of communication will be demonstrated in its direct application. The vocational care giver will benefit from insight into problem solving the difficulties related to communicating and of accessing information about potential resources. Quality care is directly attributed to valued staff. Appropriately disseminated information helps individuals feel valued. Direct benefits for the lay carer includes accelerated access to information, so that decision making can be as informed and as speedy as possible . The lay carer is often an elderly relative or neighbour as such they too will benefit from improved communication. Information must meet the health care needs of these individuals. For example, moving and handling the physically dependent older person should be undertaken in a way that poses minimal risk to the carer and the older person. The opportunity to access appropriate benefits is essential to care givers. In this way the development of a communication network will help in the exchange of problems and facilitate means of resolving such problems thus providing support to an important group of individuals.

For those involved in the project direct benefits can be seen in developing a curriculum that meets local/national needs. This curriculum does not intend to produce a "one fits all" programme but rather to ensure that the curriculum is locally flexible while maintaining quality education. The project offers a unique opportunity to be involved in contemporary methods of facilitating learning, as well as the opportunity to be involved in evaluative research of the emerging curriculum. Cross cultural experiences help to reduce ethnic boundaries, produce opportunities for professional development and personal friendships to flourish.

2. Project Approach

2.1. Main activities

During the first two years of the project we developed the integrated joint master level curriculum in gerontological nursing care (GEROM) and project website, promotion materials, e-learning/blended learning environments, course materials, transformed the course materials into eLearning materials using SCORM standards, prepared the Virtual environment for clinical practice, develop scenarios for the Simulation centre, developed the mobility of staff and students and perform all related activities. In the third year we assessed and evaluated the materials using various tools like interviews, structured interviews, questionnaires, pilot execution of single subjects, and implemented the pilot execution of the study programme in the form of the intensive courses during the summer school. More specifically following activities were performed:

- State of the art report was prepared;
- A pan-European consensus on the meaning of gerontological care was explored;
- Analysis of each of the project participants needs when educating nurses who care for older people was performed;
- A partnerships with multidisciplinary professionals who provide gerontological care and users in a range of settings in each host country was created;
- The contemporary care and information needs of older persons were analysed;
- Teachers' skills in preparing the multiple learning resources and supporting students who use them were developed;
- Assessment and production of learning resources was performed focused on “anywhere, anytime” approach to learning. These include Web based learning resources, written materials and classroom based discussions;
- Evidence based practice was employed– reviewing contemporary research on caring for the older person. This has assisted in determining the quality of theory and how it can and should influence practice and future research;
- The materials for the recognition of joint degree based on ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS) have been prepared;
- The mechanisms for continuous and robust evaluation of the integrated study programme have been developed;
- Promotion materials to encourage a philosophy of “lifelong learning” within the nursing and health/social community have been prepared;
- The online materials and the platform for e-learning has been implemented;
- The concept of blended learning has been developed;
- Virtual environment for clinical practice have been developed together with the development of gerontological scenarios for the Simulation centre of the Faculty of Health Sciences;
- Mechanisms for staff and student mobility have been devised;
- Joint delivery of parts of the course (intensive programmes) has been prepared;
- Agreement of admission criteria has been developed;
- Dissemination (promotion, organization and participation at workshops and conferences, publishing of project results in scientific journals and newsletters);

The joint master degree programme in gerontology has been developed according to the Bologna process. It lasts two semesters and contains 120 ECTS. Based on the state of the art report and review in the gerontological care and education we defined:

- key competences and skills,
- list of subjects,
- content and course materials,
- recruited the experts from the field of gerontology.

2.2. Project approach

In the development and the pilot delivery of the programme we employed the following principles and didactic methods:

- Problem based learning
- Enquiry based learning
- Seven intelligences
- Kolb's learning styles and Graf's adaptivity based on Learning Styles
- Scenarios based learning
- Adaptivity and individualisation of learning paths and materials

For the preparation and the analysis of the state of the art report we used usual searching methods and engines augmented with data mining tools and we also used the WEKA open source machine learning environment for the intelligent data analysis.

For the analysis of evaluation and assessment data of learning materials (the description of the evaluation procedure is described below) we used the descriptive statistical analysis and correspondence analysis provided in the SPSS package.

2.3. Added value

The GEROM master degree program was developed and will be delivered by a network of several European universities with unique experiences in gerontological education and research. The curriculum will be multidisciplinary with a strong emphasis on international comparison, dealing with the current debates in Europe concerning policy and care for older people. The GEROM programme will enable students to travel and study in some of the key gerontological institutions across Europe. It offers a flexible combination of short, intensive course weeks in different European cities, and home study via adaptive eLearning. The lecture weeks give ample opportunity for group discussion and exchange. A broad range of cultures and nationalities – lecturers and participants come from all over Europe and beyond – provide for an academic programme of distinct European and international value. In addition the project offers a unique opportunity for beneficiaries to learn along local, national and international demographic issues and how they are liable to influence a European society.

2.4. Evaluation

The internal and external evaluation is integrated in all project activities. The objective of the evaluation is to ensure that the best paradigms, methodologies, approaches and practices

will be used to produce the best possible results in the manner to achieve the project objectives and goals according to the quality standards set.

The independent Quality Evaluation Group (QEG) has been set up at the beginning of the project. Each contributing institution did appoint one representative. The chair of the group is external and internationally recognised expert in the field of nursing – i.e. Majda Šlajmer Japelj within **the QAG are members also ???**. The QEG is tracking and monitoring the progress, the quality of the work performed, the quality of deliverables, methodologies and practice used, and all other project results, using all available techniques like report reviews, quality assurance methods, questionnaires, inspections and similar. The group is also reviewing the quality of the project management, contribution between partners and their correspondence activities and is giving feedback at the project board meetings. According to these reports corrective actions are defined and implemented.

Additional evaluation of project outcomes (module materials) was done by students in Pilot study during International Summer School 2010 entitled “Healthy living - HEALTH” that was held in Maribor in June 2010 and a separate evaluation event held in Austria in the beginning of 2010. Based on feedback from students we were able to apply the final corrections on the module prepared mainly relating to the e-learning materials content.

2.5. Dissemination

The aim of the dissemination activities was to create a strong awareness at European level among all involved parties and to provide the maximum public visibility and awareness of GEROM project and curriculum. As far as the exploitation is concerned, it is evolving throughout the whole project duration, running in parallel to the other activities. The partner consortium was very successful in disseminating the project in the Europe and broader with the financial support of some partner institutions (United States, Australia, Asia). The aim is to analyse the reality within which the GEROM is going to operate, to identify its objective market through the definition of potentialities and problems, and finally to develop a successful marketing strategy to deliver and sustain this innovative service to success.

Following dissemination activities were performed:

1. Definition of GEROM dissemination strategy and exploitation plans.
2. Web page has been launched.
3. The booklets, newsletters and leaflets have been prepared.
4. Conference and journal papers have been prepared, accepted and published.
5. The project has been promoted in various formal and informal events.

2.6. Exploitation and sustainability

The curriculum is intended to be driven by the needs of the older person. Those needs, although well documented, have not necessarily been systematically reviewed; such a review is essential in order for nursing curricula to accommodate those needs. This formed a clear and well-considered starting point. However as time passes this “living” curriculum will have the opportunity to be further developed by the users of the service. In this curriculum the users of the educational service are the nurses and other health care professionals the curriculum is educating and the consumers of the service are also the employers. User,

employer and older people involvement will be achieved through presence at regular planning meetings, through the research process and through social networks. User involvement is essential to the development of Modern Health Care services. Involving older people in curriculum development has many potential benefits of most significance being the accommodation of the older persons "stated needs", rather than a professional interpretation of what they need.

Based on above all partners are committed to offer GEROM curriculum to largest possible number of interested students and additional to professionals as a part of their lifelong learning activities using all possible exploitation channels. As such the GEROM master programme will be targeted at a number of institutions dealing with elderly. As additional exploitation activities we will perform the commercialisation by offering the courses to non EU countries, helping by accreditation of the program in other interested EU countries, mainstreaming, transferring of outcomes by translation of materials to other languages and searching funding by Lifelong Learning Programmes, 7th Framework program ('ICT based solutions for Advancement of Older Persons', Ambient assisted living) and Erasmus Mundus.

Last but not least the demographic changes in society will require, among other things, a different attitude towards the older people. There are substantial changes also in the ways of co-existence between the young, middle-aged and older generations. It is therefore necessary that various segments of society prepare themselves for these changes. A notable characteristic of demographic development in recent decades is the increasing number of old people and the decreasing number of children and mature adults. Based on the above mentioned we expect that the demand for highly qualified health professionals which society will require to care for older people will substantially increase in the labour market. As a consequence the undergraduate caregivers will see an opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge and in that manner increase their value to employers. As part of their lifelong learning development they will seek for appropriate post graduate programmes. Our post graduate joint master degree program in Gerontology will be an attractive choice for them.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

During the project life time all the project objectives have been achieved except the usual problem of joint accreditation which is still waiting to be processed, due to the obstacles in national legislatures and the missing European Law.

The following sections describe outcomes and results of the GEROM project:

3.1 State of the art report

In the report we searched the Web of Science, MEDLINE and other related databases and thus reviewed the state of the art in the field of gerontological education, computer supported education, problem based learning, asynchronous learning, clinical virtual environment, simulation scenarios for gerontology, ambient assisted living technologies for improving quality of life of older people and distance education.

3.2 Key competences and skills

During the GEROM project we defined a list of key competences and skills of the GEROM study programme.

The MSc GEROM is designed to prepare students to:

- Critically analyse social and health policies on ageing and develop and articulate informed positions in matters of social policy related to older people and their care.
- To identify, develop and refine research problems in relation to older people and their care and to plan a minor research study aimed at addressing a problem.
- To provide students with knowledge of European health and welfare systems based on the values of equity, solidarity, access to good care for older people, and universality, the different European national health systems, and relevant EU institutions.
- Synthesize theories and concepts from the field of ageing and health, in order to develop skills for health outcomes evaluation and health screening for clinical practice and/or empirical research and/or policy development.
- To equip students with all the leadership and management skills needed for a career in various private and public organization dealing with older people and care for this vulnerable group.
- Develop the analytic skills needed to solve problems of high social complexity as well as to increase students' competencies in effective communication and team work to achieve specific goals.

3.3 Study programme

GEROM study programme is designed with the programme-specific modules, which are oriented toward the older people and gerontological nursing care:

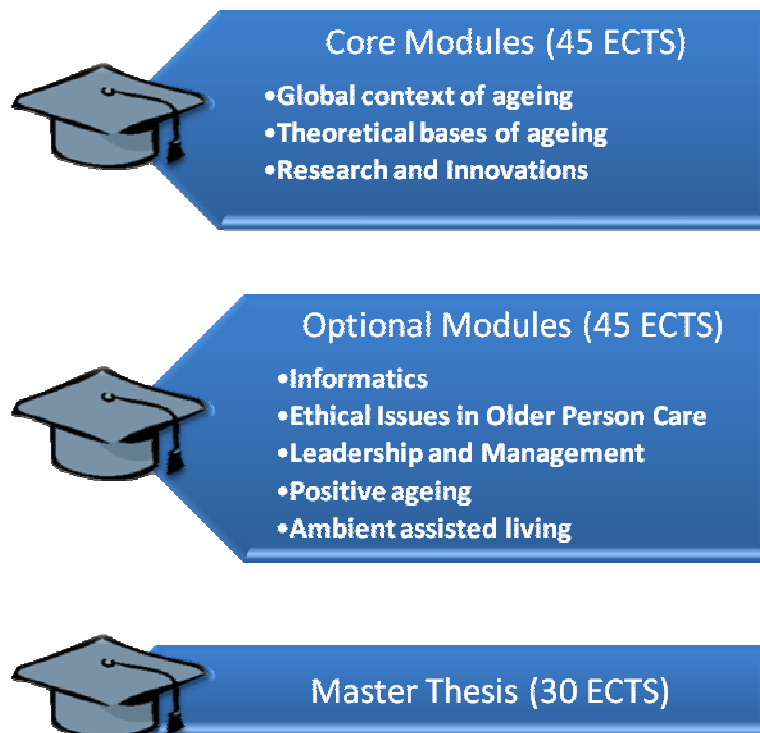
- Global context of ageing
- Theoretical bases of ageing
- Positive ageing
- Ambient assisted living

Within the programme there are also general or core modules that focus on the research methodology, learning management's skills and including informatics, which has the capacity to change the everyday life of older people. The core modules are:

- Research and Innovations
- Ethical Issues in Older Person Care
- Leadership and Management
- Informatics

At the end of the programme, after the successful completion of the specific and general modules, students will prepare the MSc dissertation. This module will enable students to develop skills in the creation of a literature review and appropriate methodology to undertake research in a diligent and systematic way. This module is entitled:

- Dissertation module



3.4 Project website, e-learning environment and course materials

Project website is accessible at <http://www.gerom.net/> and was officially launched in June 2008. The website is currently serving as a media for dissemination of GEROM idea and results and an access point to GEROM e-learning and Virtual Clinical Practice Environment. Course materials for all 9 modules were developed as SCORM standard packages that can be easily imported in different learning management systems and are therefore not limited for use with Moodle.

3.5 Evaluation of Study Programme and Impact on Target Groups

The development of the study programme started with a discussion of relevant themes and the decision for the modules which were elaborated afterwards. In a first step, we prepared module descriptions using a standardized template. These descriptions were reflected and

revised during a face-to-face meeting in February 2009 by the project team. After the completion of all module descriptions two external experts were asked to evaluate them by using the therefore developed questionnaire. Following the recommendations from external experts the project team revised the module descriptions which served as the basis for the detailed development of the learning materials.

In a pilot implantation of the GEROM study program held during a Summer School organised in Maribor participants were asked to evaluate the modules "Informatics", "Ambient Assisted Living", and "Ethics". Students from Slovenia, United Kingdom and Ireland had the possibility to get an insight into the mentioned modules. The module "Informatics" was evaluated on 17th of June 2010, the module "Ambient Assisted Living" on 21st of June 2010, and the module "Ethics" on 22nd of June 2010. All in all, data was gathered from 42 students (n = 12 for "Informatics", n = 15 for "Ambient Assisted Living", n = 15 for "Ethics". The involved project partners from Slovenia, United Kingdom and Ireland did not use the questionnaire which was prepared by the Austrian partner for this purpose; they applied a student evaluation form delivered by the University of Surrey. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix 5. The fulfilled questionnaires were sent via email to the Austrian partner who prepared the data for analysis (development of data matrix, data entry) and who executed the data analysis.

All in all the shows evaluation that the module contents and the variety of learning experiences were perceived as positive aspects and that students were dissatisfied especially with assessment issues. It is recommended to prepare transparent guidelines regarding the assessment criteria for each module when the programme will be used. Furthermore, in the sense of an exploitation plan regarding evaluative steps, the study programme should be surveyed when it will be implemented. Students and teaching staff should be asked for their satisfaction with the online master degree programme. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative methods can be combined (in depth interviews, questionnaire comprising mainly closed-ended questions). The number of applicants as well as the dropout rate could be analysed. To get an impression of the impact of the study programme, students' knowledge should be tested before and after the completion of the study programme. Due to the fact that the study programme is not implemented yet, these evaluation strategies could not be realized during the project phase.

Additional to evaluation done by Austrian partners, we also analysed the data using correspondence analysis. Regarding the individual subjects the students were most satisfied with learning experiences and that the subject was evidence based and least satisfied with the information about assessment criteria in the AAL module. In the Ethics subject the students were most satisfied with the information about opportunity to link with other professionals and the interesting content and least satisfied with the information about assessment criteria. In the Informatics subject the students were most satisfied with the range of references and least satisfied with the information about how to work successfully as a team member which in general was one of the most expressed students concern. The correspondence analysis of the student responses demonstrates the positive aspects associated with individual subjects. We can see that the AAL subject is most associated with the aspect that the student will learn what he or she has hoped for and the aspect of team working. The Informatics subject is positively associated with stimulating student's enthusiasm, clearness of nature of assessment and that the assessment is related to subject's outcomes. The Ethics subject is positively associated with the ability of learning analytical and problem solving skills. It is also evident that none of the subjects has large positive association with the variety of learning experiences to meet module outcomes, skills to improve student's confidence to tackle unknown problems and interesting content of the subject.

4. Partnerships

4.1. Added value

Faculty of Health Sciences University of Maribor has a long cooperation with the partners in the consortium. We cooperated with them in many international projects concerning gerontology and e-learning. Based on positive experiences with this cooperation and experiences and theoretical background of each individual partner we set up an excellent consortium and distributed the activities among partners as shown in the table below. In that manner the experiences and knowledge of consortium as a whole is much more than a sum of individual partner experiences and knowledge.

Activity	Partners	Coordination
Coordination and management of the project	University of Maribor	Slovenia
Development of learning outcomes	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Development of integrated study programme	University of Maribor University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, CIMRS, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Preparation of the online materials	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, CIMRS, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Implementation of the online materials and the platform for elearning, developing gerontological scenarios, developing virtual environments	University of Maribor	Slovenia
Development of staff mobility	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University College Dublin	United Kingdom
Development of student mobility	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University College Dublin,	United Kingdom
Development of joint delivery of parts of the course (intensive programmes)	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	United Kingdom
Agreement of admission criteria	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Development of assessment	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University College Dublin, CIMRS, Fachhochschule Technikum	Ireland

	Kärnten, College of Medicine	
Development of quality assurance	University of Maribor, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten	Austria
Development of recognition of joint degree based on ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS)	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	CIMRS - Slovenia
Accreditation of the programme	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Implementation and delivery of the programme	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Slovenia
Dissemination (degree awarding, promotion, organization and participation at workshops and conferences)	University of Maribor, University of Surrey, University of Oulu, University College Dublin, Fachhochschule Technikum Kärnten, College of Medicine	Bulgaria

In that manner the experiences and knowledge of consortium as a whole is much more than a sum of individual partner experiences and knowledge. In addition also the wider geographical area and different cultures, political systems, health systems and educational systems and last but not least different pedagogical methodologies paradigms , and tools have been covered and taken into account in developing the curricula.

4.2 Experiences in working together

The cooperation between partners with the exception of Finish partners has been exceptional. In spite of differences in management approaches, organisational rule and communication styles all the problematical matters have been solved with the consensus. Due to the lack of experience of Finish partners in EU projects and their devotion to national and local projects most of the tasks have been redelegated to other partners.

4.3. Benefits of partnership to target groups

The international network of the consortium partners has opened the possibilities to extend the possible dissemination of the GEROM study program to other EU countries as well as to the USA, Australia and Japan. In that manner the primary target groups these are nursing and health care students and professionals and their educators in many countries have been reached and could enrol in the program trough the consortium countries or the consortium will help them to establish and accredit the program in their own countries.

5. Plans for the Future

As part of the GEROM project an exploitation plan was devised by all partners, led by Bulgarian partner. This section provides an overview of the exploitation possibilities. All partners are committed to offer GEROM curriculum to largest possible number of interested students and professionals as a part of their lifelong learning activities using their own exploitation channels and networks. Exploitable results of the project include logo and graphical identity, collaborative workspace, mailing lists, promotion materials like leaflets and booklets, GEROM Curriculum and course materials and e-learning environment.

The GEROM master program is targeted at a number of institutions dealing with elderly in which we will recruit students like homes for elderly, health centres, hospitals, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Governmental organisations, policy makers, service providers for older/elderly people, public services, leisure centres, residential care providers, social services, voluntary organisations, as well as health professionals in general.

The exploitation activities planned by the project consortium are outlined here.

1. **Commercialisation:** offering the courses to non EU countries
2. **Accreditation:** to accredit the program in all interested eligible EU countries
3. **Mainstreaming:** sharing information on the internet and through other networks that we already have
4. **Transfer of outcomes:** translation of materials to other languages is a great potential and funding needs to be sought from Lifelong Learning Programmes such as Multilateral projects and improving education systems through the development and transfer of innovation and good practices

While project results are promising the consortium believes that other project proposal in educational and research areas could be built on them. We will prepare proposals answering on the calls below:

- The Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme will launch the third Call for Proposals with the topic “ICT based solutions for Advancement of Older Persons”;
- Another funding source from the EU is the ICT for improved public services for citizens and business (ICP PSP). The European Commission is now in the process of preparing the next ICT research Work Programme for years 2011-2013. Here is a short list of calls that could be used as a funding source for the further research based on the results of PRIMER-ICT project:
 - PPP Future Internet (Call 1): Jul 2010 - Oct 2010
 - PPPs GC, FoF, EeB (Call 1): Jul 2010 - Dec 2010
 - ICT Call 7: Sep 2010 - Jan 2011
 - ICT Call 8 & PPPs GC, FoF, EeB (Call 2): Jul 2011 - Jan 2012
 - ICT Call 9: Dec 2011 - Apr 2012
 - PPP Future Internet (Call 2): Jun 2012 - Sep 2012
- Erasmus Mundus call 2011: possible extension of the GEROM study program to third countries and the development of the Ph.D. program.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The GEROM project contributes to the following EU policies according to Lisbon education and training indicators and key competences:

Code	Policy	Description of the GEROM contribution
Lisbon Education & Training Progress Indicators		
LIS-F22	Making learning more attractive	The master degree programme will be executed as an online course supported by ICT technology, virtual environment, simulation centre with attractive pedagogical and didactical approaches like PBL, Kolb's learning style, etc.
LIS-H26	Mobility	Inward and outward mobility of teachers and trainers within the IP courses.
LIS-H28	Mobility	Foreign students enrolled in tertiary education.
Lisbon Key Competences		
KC4	Key competences	The students will use ICT supported technology for learning and thereafter acquire digital competences. Some modules in the curricula are also related to digital competences.

Povzeto iz predloga oz. iz http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

7. Answers to the Questions Prepared at the Erasmus Cluster Meeting

A – Anticipating Skills and Competences

1. There is a general perception that there is a mismatch between the needs of employers and the content of courses offered by HEIs and selected by students. Is this addressed in the aims and objectives of your project? If so, what activities do you plan in order to address this issue?

This aspect is addressed in our project in the manner that employers will cooperate in the definition of the content of the modules and they will also be members of the evaluation and curriculum boards of the program.

2. Is the assessment of future skills needs integrated in your project's work plan? If so, how? How will you take into account the different situation of Member States? Is the composition of your consortium organized to reflect this?

We have a very detailed plan of the assessment of learning outputs, skills and competences.

3. The skills requirements of employers are changing: Transversal competencies, such as problem-solving and analytical skills, self-management and communication skills, linguistic skills, etc. are increasingly demanded in addition to the technical/professional knowledge. How does this fit into your project objectives and how can this be taken into account in the implementation of your project?

The transversal competencies are part of the modules and courses content.

4. Is it a shortcoming or an advantage that the Qualifications Frameworks (QF for the EHEA, EQF) do not describe separate, specific "employability" skills? Are QFs taken into account in the implementation of your project?

Not yet but will be taken into account in the content revision during the next project meeting

B – Curriculum development as a response

1. Involving employers in designing curricula and curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes is generally identified as a relevant response to the skills mismatch, either a current or a prospective one. Does your project envisage including this sort of collaboration? What are the success factors and possible pitfalls?

We do plan to involve possible employers in the curriculum design and the program evaluation. The possible pitfall is that the influence of the employers will reduce the generalness of the program and its futuristic orientation.

2. How to define the proper balance between "subject specific knowledge" of a specific subject and "transferable skills" for ensuring employability of graduates? Does your project tackle this issue?

At the moment this balance is ensured intuitively based on the experiences of the curriculum developers, but in the future we plan to carefully assess program implementation, the success of the students at their working placement and the feedback of their employers and regularly revise the curricula based on the analysis of this data.

3. How to reconcile the immediate requirements of the labour market and long-term perspectives of employability in the context of curriculum development?

This aspect is not covered in this project, but we are planning another project in which we will use advanced data analysis like data mining and sentiment analysis to predict the trends in the labour market and professional requirements

4. Work experience is highly valued by employers. Young graduates who finish studying with work experience tend to be more competitive in the labour market than those who do not. Is an increased focus on providing work placements as part of courses the only answer or are there alternatives, e.g. outlined in your project?

Our master program doesn't offer the work placement, but the necessary advanced practical skills will be acquired in simulation centres and virtual reality environments.

C – Dialogue between HEIs and employers as an underlying success factor

1. Employers are uncertain about what to expect from a Bachelor graduate, in particular in countries where the three cycle structure has been recently introduced. Is awareness-raising among employers of the value of a bachelor qualification and associated learning outcomes part of your project?

Yes we plan extensive dissemination and promotion activities

2. Consideration should also be given to the exchange, through short work placements and secondments, between staff in business and staff in higher education institutions to overcome any barriers between them. Does your project deal with staff mobility (HEI/business)? If so, can you already identify good practices?

No

3. Acquisition of transversal and transferable skills is a recognized added value of student mobility. Is there a difference in the assessment of transversal skills acquired via mobility or those acquired via the curriculum more generally? Has your project identified methods of assessing such skills?

Not yet but we are planning to develop the measures.

4. It seems to be logical that such a dialogue needs to take on board the views of students to ensure that their concerns and needs are captured. What is the experience gained within your project?

We are planning a pilot implementation of the program in which students' needs will be also taken into account.

