



# Good Practice Stories

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## 1. Introduction

This document presents a collection of good practice stories developed by the regional partnerships involved in the EUVECA project. Building upon the templates and guidelines outlined in Milestone 31 (MS31), each regional partnership has contributed at least three examples, drawing on insights and experiences gathered during the implementation phase.

The stories focus on three core areas central to EUVECA's objectives:

- **The benefits of regional collaboration and coordination** in advancing the innovation agenda and Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S).
- **The added value of interregional collaboration** in supporting innovation and 3S alignment across borders.
- **The individual benefits for healthcare students and professionals**, particularly in relation to improved regional education and vocational education and training (VET), as well as the new opportunities made possible through the **European Platform for Vocational Excellence (EPVE)**.

These examples not only showcase successful practices from each region but are also meant to inspire further collaboration, knowledge exchange, and policy innovation among European stakeholders engaged in health innovation and vocational excellence.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology for collecting and documenting the good practice stories presented in this document is based on the framework provided by MS31 of the EUVECA project. All regional partnerships followed a common template and set of criteria to ensure consistency, comparability, and relevance across the examples shared.

### 2.1. Data collection

Regional partners identified and described at least three good practices, building on the evidence and knowledge developed during the RVEH activities. The selection of practices was guided by their alignment with EUVECA's objectives and their demonstrated impact at the regional level.

The WP6 leader coordinated the collection process across three rounds, starting with bilateral meetings with each RVEH. These meetings helped clarify the aims of the collection, deepen the understanding of ideas, and identify how best to support partners in shaping their stories.

Additionally, during the Consortium Meeting in Valencia (from 31st March to 2nd October), the WP6 and WP7 leaders conducted a storytelling workshop to provide regional partners with guidance, tools, and inspiration for developing their good practice narratives.

### 2.2. Thematic Focus

Each good practice addresses one of the following thematic areas:

- **Regional Collaboration** – Demonstrating the benefits of coordinated efforts within regions related to the innovation agenda and 3S.
- **Interregional Collaboration** – Highlighting the added value of cross-border collaboration in fostering innovation and aligning strategic efforts.
- **Individual Impact** – Capturing the benefits for healthcare students and professionals, particularly through enhanced education and VET offerings, and through interregional opportunities enabled by the EPVE.

### 2.3. Validation Process

All stories were developed by regional stakeholders and reviewed internally to ensure they reflect real outcomes, innovative approaches, and meaningful lessons learned. Where possible, qualitative inputs such as student or professional feedback were included to enrich the narrative.

This structured and collaborative methodology ensures that the practices shared here are not only illustrative of EUVECA's value, but are also inspirational for other regions and initiatives across Europe who might consider in the future to be a RVE Hub and use and contribute to the Edu4Health Platform.

## 3. Good Practice Stories

### 3.1. Denmark

#### 3.1.1. Good Story 1 - Regional Collaboration Contributes to Stronger VET: The South Danish Story



#### Overview

The Region of Southern Denmark has had a well-functioning health eco-system since 2012, when the region became a reference site within the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIPonAHA). Until now it was formed by regional and local health providers, the university of Southern Denmark and the LifeScience Cluster. With the EUVECA project the South Danish Health Eco system was expanded with educational institutions on VET and professional bachelor level as well as the HR department of the Region of Southern Denmark, being responsible for the skills development and lifelong learning of more than 20.000 regional health professionals.

#### Key initiative

We know that building networks can be difficult. This is particularly true in the health sector, where professionals are already extremely busy. This is often also the case in the education sector. As it was important to bring these two sectors together in our regional network, it was crucial that we took a bottom-up approach and focused on specific projects that we could collaborate on. We wanted to avoid at all costs simply creating another talking shop.

Another important point was to build on existing collaborations and initiatives. Therefore, the collaboration was based on both regional and national reports and commissions focusing on the challenges facing the health sector and the importance of creating smooth transitions for students from student life to working life.

Through 9 meetings and workshops in the expanded health eco system, we have managed to create a much better understanding of the work of the various organisations, we have established cooperation between educational institutions at different levels and broken down some of the inhibiting silos that we know exist in the sector.

#### Innovative Elements

What makes this initiative innovative is that we have created a regional and interdisciplinary educational innovation network that is ready to seize the strategic opportunities created at management level.

## Voices from the field

*“The greatest achievement of this project has been establishing the network itself. Creating a space where healthcare, education, and other stakeholders can meet is not easy, but once the network was in place, it enabled dialogue, idea development, and collaboration that simply would not have happened otherwise.”*

- Mark Søggaard, Member of the Regional Council, Southern Denmark

*“The strength of this network lies in its bottom-up approach. When we openly articulate our needs, we realise that others are facing the same challenges or that someone has already worked on a solution.*

*These new perspectives have influenced my work in the regional council, particularly in discussions on students’ transition from education to the labour market.”* - Mark Søggaard, Member of the Regional Council, Southern Denmark

*“The regional EUVECA network is a wonderful example on how a local network and collaboration can have a greater impact than the individual organisations alone. We will continue the good work and dialogue within STEM4Health the next three years.”*

- Camilla Søholm, Development and management consultant, UCL

## Lessons learned and results

The strengthened collaboration among the partners led to the submission of an application to the Novo Nordisk Foundation in September 2026.

The STEM4Health is a three-year project addressing workforce shortages and rising demand in the Danish healthcare system. It aims to increase recruitment to and completion of healthcare education while strengthening STEM competencies.

The project responds to digital transformation by developing new interdisciplinary skills and collaboration between healthcare and technical fields.

Key activities include preparatory courses, upskilling of student ambassadors, and simulation-based, practice-oriented teaching with clinical partners.

As an innovative approach, healthcare, engineering, and social- and health care assistant students are taught together using real-life problems to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. The project targets potential applicants, unskilled workers, and current students, and is continuously evaluated with a focus on scalability and national knowledge sharing.

Through STEM4Health, we have created a tangible outcome from the EUVECA project at regional level, which will help to secure cooperation at regional level for the following 3 years to come.

### 3.1.2. Good Story 2 – How interregional partnerships lay the foundation for continued collaboration

## Overview

The Region of Southern Denmark participates in the EUVECA project as part of a broader strategic ambition to strengthen interregional cooperation and enhance the quality of vocational education and training in the regional healthcare sector.

Through the Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence framework, EUVECA connects regional VET actors across Europe, enabling sustained knowledge exchange, joint testing activities and coordinated capacity-

building in healthcare. Collaboration with partners in Germany and Slovenia has provided South Danish stakeholders with hands-on insights into simulation-based training and the use of virtual reality to support realistic patient scenarios. This engagement aligns regional practice with wider European objectives on innovation, skills development and long-term sustainability in healthcare education.

## Key initiative

Before EUVECA, the Region of Southern Denmark was already active in European healthcare cooperation, including through the European Connected Health Alliance's group on "Skills in Health". These experiences highlighted the need for deeper European collaboration to respond to emerging requirements in digital learning, simulation-based training and new competence demands.

Taking on the leadership of EUVECA was therefore a strategic decision. The project was seen as an opportunity to position the region as a frontrunner, to shape a shared European agenda and to gain access to expertise that could not be developed within a national context alone. From the outset, EUVECA was framed as a long-term investment in strategic relationships and continuous development of healthcare education in line with future skills demands.

## Innovative elements

### Turning regional differences into shared strengths

Collaboration with Germany and Slovenia enabled access to complementary expertise, particularly in patient-facing simulation and VR-supported skills development.

### Agile digital platform development

Experience with the Edu4Health platform revealed the importance of aligning expectations with actual user behaviour, prompting a more targeted content strategy.

### Catalyst for new European projects

EUVECA opened pathways to additional innovation initiatives, including the IRecap project led by the Region of Southern Denmark and a German-led VR-focused project in which the region participates.

### Strategic European alignment

The CoVE model supports long-term system development rather than short-term project outputs, integrating local innovation into a broader European practice.

## Voices from the field

Project manager Sabine Paasch Olsen emphasises *"EUVECA has strengthened relationships and clarified mutual interests among partners. It has helped identify shared opportunities for future collaboration, while also offering important lessons on adapting ambitions to practical realities, particularly regarding the Edu4Health platform"*.

These reflections underline the value of honest evaluation and continuous adaptation within interregional partnerships, reinforcing both trust and outcomes.

## Lessons learned and results

The EUVECA experience demonstrates that structured interregional collaboration accelerates innovation by providing access to complementary expertise and by fostering sustained dialogue across professional and cultural contexts.

One tangible outcome was a joint open-house event in December 2025, hosted by University Hospital Southern Denmark in Aabenraa together with Universitätsklinikum Schleswig-Holstein, where healthcare professionals engaged in VR-based patient simulations. Cooperation with the University of Ljubljana strengthened simulation-based training practices in Southern Denmark, and the regional ambulance service has expressed interest in continuing this collaboration.

Beyond these concrete activities, EUVECA has reinforced strategic networks, improved the regional use of digital learning tools and created a pipeline for continued European cooperation through new innovation projects. The project illustrates how interregional partnerships, when embedded in a structured and sustainability-oriented framework, can generate lasting improvements in healthcare education and professional development.

### 3.1.3. Good Story 3 - Virtual reality training for safer, flexible clinical learning

#### Overview

Students and trainees represent the future backbone of the healthcare system, making high-quality clinical training a strategic priority. At Sygehus Sønderjylland, a new virtual reality (VR) training course was piloted with nursing students and social and healthcare assistant trainees in collaboration with the German partner Universitätsklinikum Schleswig-Holstein.

The cross-border initiative demonstrates how digital learning technologies can support clinical skills development while strengthening European cooperation in healthcare education. By placing learners in a virtual hospital ward, the project explored how immersive technology can complement traditional clinical placements and better prepare students for real-life patient encounters.

Through structured testing and feedback, the activity combined innovation, pedagogy and international collaboration within a practical healthcare setting.

#### Key initiative

The pilot was carried out by the Clinical Research Department at Sygehus Sønderjylland as a joint learning initiative with UKSH. Nursing students and social and healthcare assistant trainees tested a newly developed VR-based course using headsets that transported them into a virtual patient room. In the simulation, participants assessed a patient experiencing pain and measured critical vital signs.

A central pedagogical feature was the integration of learning time-outs. At selected moments, the scenario could be paused, allowing students to reflect with a supervisor, discuss clinical reasoning and consider alternative approaches before resuming the simulation. After completing the exercise, participants provided structured feedback to the course provider, ensuring continuous adaptation to learners' needs and preferences.

## Innovative elements

### Immersive clinical realism

The VR environment closely mirrors real patient encounters, enabling students to practise assessment and decision-making in a safe yet realistic setting.

### Safe space for learning through mistakes

Errors become learning opportunities without posing risks to actual patients, strengthening both confidence and competence.

### Pedagogical flexibility

The modular course structure allows training in short segments, making it compatible with busy clinical schedules and avoiding the need for full-day sessions.

### Cross-border development

The collaboration between Danish and German partners demonstrates how European cooperation can accelerate the adoption of innovative learning formats.

## Voices from the field

*“It felt a bit strange at first. But it seems like a good learning method where you can try out situations that you will later have to handle yourself. It feels more realistic than when fellow students act as patients, and you also get to practise what happens in between patient rooms.”*— Julie Klinke, second-semester nursing student in clinical placement

From a strategic perspective, Olsen highlights the need for flexible and accessible learning formats:

*“The aim is to develop an accessible and flexible course offering that can be completed in small units and does not require students or employers to set aside a full day in their calendars. We also know that younger generations increasingly engage with learning in visual ways, and this is something we want to accommodate.”* Sabine Paasch, EUVECA project manager.

## Lessons learned and results

The pilot demonstrated that VR-based training enhances students’ sense of realism while supporting structured reflection and guided clinical reasoning. The combination of immersive simulation and facilitated time-outs strengthened learning depth and improved students’ confidence in managing patient situations.

The initiative also showed that digital learning solutions must align with organisational realities. By offering modular, time-efficient training, the course responds to workforce pressures and modern learning preferences without compromising educational quality. Strategically, the collaboration illustrates how digital innovation and cross-border partnership can reinforce one another. The experience opens the possibility of developing a virtual environment that closely replicates Sygehus Sønderjylland, allowing systematic integration of VR into local education programmes. Overall, the pilot confirms that immersive digital tools can serve as a scalable complement to traditional clinical education, strengthening patient safety, educational quality and the preparedness of future healthcare professionals.

## 3.2. Germany

### 3.2.1 Good Story 1 - Bridging nursing education pathways: Academic and vocational educators join forces in Germany through EUVECA project: The Lübeck Story



Meeting on June 23rd, 2025

#### Overview

The UKSH Academy and the Institute for Social Medicine at the University of Lübeck, both engaged in undergraduate nursing education at different qualification levels, decided to explore possible synergies. Through the EUVECA regional hub, they gained a structured space for collaboration, knowledge exchange and curriculum alignment. This cooperation has made it possible to bridge institutional gaps, create more coherent training pathways and establish a strong foundation for long-term collaboration in nursing education.

#### Key initiative

The initiative focused on fostering collaboration between an academic and a vocational nursing education provider. Within one year, five joint workshops were organised to identify overlapping curriculum areas and align teaching strategies. As a result of this process, three new collaborative teaching modules are now being developed, focusing on patient communication, ethics, and interprofessional teamwork.

The initiative also directly and indirectly benefits students, who are experiencing a more complementary and integrated training environment.

#### Innovative Elements

What makes this initiative innovative is the way it brings together institutions that usually operate in parallel. For the first time, academic and vocational providers co-created teaching projects, offering opportunities for students to learn with and from one another. Simulation-based sessions have been introduced where students from both institutions train side by side, strengthening applied skills while fostering mutual understanding. The RVEH, established within the EUVECA project, has played a key role by providing the structure, facilitation and momentum necessary for these efforts to move beyond isolated experiments and evolve into a sustainable collaboration.

#### Voices from the field

*“The EUVECA regional hub has allowed us to bridge the gap between academic and vocational nursing education. We now see the value of working together on shared educational goals, which was previously a distant idea.”* — Institute for Social Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Lübeck

*“Collaborating through EUVECA has not only enhanced our curriculum but also opened doors for future partnerships, improving the quality of nursing education for all our students.” — UKSH Academy*

*“Thanks to the collaboration between the UKSH Akademie and the University, I now have a much broader and realistic view of the different aspects of nursing training. It feels like in practice — on the ward we also have the grade-mix.” — L. S., Nursing Student, University of Lübeck.*

## Lessons learned and results

The experience has shown that structured collaboration between academic and vocational institutions is both feasible and beneficial. It increased mutual understanding of different educational approaches and shared competencies, while also enabling the development of joint teaching projects tailored to the needs of both groups of learners. This cooperation has laid the groundwork for sustainable curriculum development across institutions and has significantly enhanced the visibility and recognition of cross-institutional learning opportunities, setting a precedent for future collaboration in the region.



### 3.2.2 Good Story 2 - Regional synergy unlocks European future skills innovation in healthcare

#### Overview

A leading German non-profit nursing and healthcare association joined forces with the University of Lübeck to strengthen the future attractiveness of nursing and healthcare professions through European collaboration. Their shared ambition was to jointly design and implement innovative solutions for vocational excellence and future skills, aligned with EU research and innovation agendas.

Through the EUVECA regional hub model, fragmented actors were brought together under a coordinated innovation framework. Structured cooperation, shared agenda-setting and direct exchange with European partners transformed isolated expertise into a joint strategic effort.

As a result, the partners successfully developed a joint EU Future Skills project application, positioning themselves as pioneers in collaborative, cross-sector skills development that reaches far beyond their region.

## Key initiative

The key initiative was the creation of a coordinated regional innovation alliance linking practice-oriented healthcare leadership with university-based research excellence. Within the EUVECA hub structure, both institutions aligned their strategies, identified shared workforce challenges and jointly translated them into a European project proposal focused on the attractiveness and future-readiness of nursing professions.

This collaboration marked a decisive shift from parallel, unconnected initiatives to a unified and strategically positioned European engagement.

## Innovative elements

### Hub-based coordination model

The EUVECA hub connected regional research and practice actors within a structured European innovation ecosystem, accelerating idea development and proposal alignment.

### Research–practice integration

University-based, evidence-driven research merged with practice-oriented expertise and direct field access, ensuring that innovation addressed real workforce challenges.

### From isolation to co-creation

Formerly fragmented institutions became strategic partners, jointly shaping project design and European engagement.

### Workforce-focused innovation

The initiative directly targeted future skills, sustainability and professional attractiveness, addressing urgent shortages and long-term workforce resilience.

## Voices from the field

*“Through the EUVECA hub, we moved from parallel initiatives to a shared European strategy. What would have remained an idea became a concrete EU project.”*— Regional project coordinator

## Lessons learned and results

The collaboration demonstrated that structured regional coordination is a prerequisite for meaningful European engagement. By bringing together a leading nursing and healthcare association and the University of Lübeck within the EUVECA hub, institutional fragmentation was replaced by a shared innovation agenda. This alignment enabled partners to respond more strategically to European funding opportunities and to integrate research evidence with frontline expertise. The initiative also showed that combining scientific insight with direct access to clinical practice produces more relevant and sustainable outcomes. Moving

beyond an “ivory tower” approach, research findings and field-based knowledge were continuously tested against real-world healthcare challenges. This synergy generated practice-oriented science capable of informing evidence-based decisions and innovative workforce solutions. These lessons materialised in tangible results. The regional hub led to the first joint EU project application specifically addressing the attractiveness of nursing professions and future skills development. The partnership now serves as a model for scaling vocational excellence across research and practice domains. Cooperation between institutions has been significantly strengthened, and both organisations are leveraging their shared expertise to enhance their appeal as forward-looking employers. Most importantly, the initiative demonstrates how interconnected regional excellence hubs can transform isolated expertise into European-level impact, shaping healthcare careers and training pathways for the future.

### 3.2.3 Good Story 3 – Exploring AI and XR to strengthen digital future skills in healthcare

#### Overview

On December 2026, partners from the Schleswig-Holstein Regional Vocational Excellence Hub (RVEH) undertook a study and work visit to the Netherlands under the EUVECA framework. A delegation of 11 professionals from the German hub visited Saxion University of Applied Sciences, ZGT Hospital and the University of Twente, focusing on innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), extended reality (XR) and robotics in healthcare practice, research and education.

The initiative aimed to strengthen the attractiveness of nursing and healthcare professions by exposing staff to digital future skills and education technologies. Despite initial barriers, including language concerns and financial constraints, the visit demonstrated how structured European cooperation can translate innovation into practical inspiration.

The exchange reinforced professional networking at a high level of innovation and positioned digital transformation as a strategic priority for healthcare education in Schleswig-Holstein.

#### Key initiative

The core initiative was a three-day educational excursion designed as a study and work visit within the EUVECA network. Participants explored cutting-edge facilities, including the TechMed Centre at the University of Twente, and engaged with Dutch colleagues on how AI, XR and digital processes are embedded into curricula and hospital workflows.

A particular highlight was the so-called “red and blue pill experiment” at Saxion University, an interactive educational approach encouraging participants to critically reflect on AI-related competences. Throughout the visit, the German delegation examined how the Dutch partners balance theory and practice, integrating advanced technologies into everyday training and clinical environments.

The visit marked the first joint EU study trip of the regional hub dedicated specifically to digital transformation in healthcare education.

#### Innovative elements

##### Immersive exposure to digital innovation

Participants experienced first-hand how AI, XR and robotics are applied in both education and clinical practice.

### **Cross-border knowledge transfer**

The visit enabled direct comparison of educational methods and digital tools, fostering mutual learning between German and Dutch institutions.

### **Integration of theory and practice**

The “Enschede Way” illustrated how advanced technology can be meaningfully embedded into healthcare training without losing focus on patient-centred care.

### **Strategic networking for future projects**

The initiative strengthened collaboration between RVEH partners and laid the groundwork for future exchanges, guest lectures and internship opportunities.

## **Voices from the field**

Participants described the visit as a catalyst for change rather than a simple study trip. The exposure to innovative teaching methods and technological applications created renewed motivation to rethink local training structures and to embrace digital transformation as a shared European mission.

## **Lessons learned and results**

The study visit confirmed that structured European mobility accelerates innovation transfer and strengthens institutional cooperation. Despite initial barriers such as limited English proficiency, concerns about travelling in a group and financial constraints, the experience demonstrated that participation in international exchange significantly enhances professional confidence and openness to change.

The delegation returned with concrete ideas for implementation. Plans are being advanced to introduce VR headsets into paediatric nursing training, improving simulation-based learning in specialised care contexts. Discussions have begun on organising guest lectures with Dutch experts and establishing internship exchanges in radiology with ZGT Hospital. The partners are also considering further study visits to neighbouring countries to explore developments in healthcare robotics and AI.

The initiative strengthened networking between the German stakeholders and their Dutch counterparts, embedding digital future skills more firmly within regional strategies.

### 3.3. Italy

#### 3.3.1. Good Story 1 - Building bridges for lifelong learning in healthcare: The Trentino experience with EUVECA



#### Overview

Thanks to the EUVECA project, the Department of Health and Social Policies of the Autonomous Province of Trento (PAT), together with Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK), established a Hub for Educational Excellence in Health Care. The hub brings together stakeholders engaged in lifelong learning for healthcare: educational institutions, healthcare providers, policy makers, digital solution providers, social partners, and ProMIS.

#### Key initiative

Two main initiatives were launched:

1. **Partnership with Università Popolare Trentina (UPT):** co-creation of psychogeriatrics courses, featured on the EUVECA platform and also implemented locally.
2. **Collaboration with Azienda sanitaria universitaria integrata (ASUIT):** attempt to create a Scientific Committee of health experts, responsible for developing and assessing training activities, designed to continue beyond the project's lifetime

#### Innovative Elements

The innovative elements of the initiative are diverse and impactful. A first milestone was the development of psychogeriatrics courses, including three webinars on dementia co-created with Università Popolare Trentina (UPT), which introduced a new and much-needed focus on aging and dementia. Alongside this, FBK designed digital training courses on Artificial Intelligence and telemedicine, specifically targeted at healthcare professionals, providing them with cutting-edge knowledge to respond to emerging healthcare challenges. Another key innovation was the attempt to establish a permanent Scientific Committee, ensuring co-design and the quality assurance of training offers, while also granting healthcare professionals a direct role in shaping educational programmes. Finally, the project fostered a stronger collaboration between PAT's Innovation & Research Office and the Health Professions, Training and University Relations Service, bringing together innovation and education in a way that had not been achieved before.

#### Voices from the field

*“EUVECA has encouraged us to network and collaborate with stakeholders involved in lifelong learning for the healthcare sector.”* — Annachiara Bortolotti

*“EUVECA enabled us to exchange knowledge with European partners, gaining insights into best practices we can now bring to our local hub.”* — Olivia Balagna

## Lessons learned and results

The EUVECA experience in Trentino generated valuable lessons and concrete results. One of the most significant achievements was the improvement of internal collaboration within PAT, which successfully bridged previously siloed departments and fostered a shared vision between innovation and education services. Psychogeriatrics also emerged as a new strategic focus area, gaining unprecedented attention through dedicated training initiatives. At the same time, healthcare professionals — and doctors in particular — were given a stronger voice in shaping lifelong learning, contributing directly to the design and quality of educational programmes.

These developments led to tangible outcomes. Cultural awareness was enhanced, both linguistically and relationally, while teamwork within and across institutions became more robust. The initiative also deepened the understanding of lifelong learning in the healthcare sector and enabled the creation of strong, professional, and institutional relationships among key stakeholders in healthcare training, laying the foundations for more sustainable and inclusive education in the future.

### 3.3.2. Good Story 2 - Edu4Health as a shared European platform

#### Overview

FBK, technology and innovation partner in EUVECA, designed and developed the Edu4Health digital platform to support lifelong learning in healthcare through a shared, interoperable and future-oriented solution. Rather than delivering a standalone technical product, FBK aimed to co-create a platform reflecting the needs, visions and smart specialisation priorities (3S) of regional and European partners involved in vocational excellence in healthcare.

What made the difference was the incremental and collaborative approach promoted within the EUVECA framework. Continuous exchanges with partners, iterative testing cycles, joint requirement definition and usability refinements ensured that content and technology evolved together.

As a result, Edu4Health is today a live and accessible platform, designed to remain scalable, reusable and adaptable for future regional and inter-regional initiatives in health VET

#### Key initiative

The key initiative was the design and development of Edu4Health as a co-created European digital platform supporting the objectives of the European Platform for Vocational Excellence in Health Care.

FBK facilitated structured workshops with partners to:

- Define functional and governance requirements
- Align platform architecture with training and policy priorities
- Integrate feedback from testing phases into technical refinements
- Ensure interoperability and long-term sustainability

Through this process, Edu4Health became not only a technical infrastructure, but a shared digital space enabling collaboration, mobility opportunities and knowledge exchange across regions.

## Innovative Elements

### Inter-regional co-design

Partners from different countries jointly defined needs and functionalities, ensuring alignment with diverse innovation ecosystems and 3S priorities.

### Incremental development cycles

Small, continuous feedback loops replaced a one-off delivery model. This strengthened ownership and improved usability step by step.

### Content–technology integration

Platform functionalities were shaped around concrete learning activities, mobility schemes and collaboration tools, ensuring that technology acted as an enabler rather than an objective.

### Future-oriented scalability

Edu4Health was designed to evolve beyond EUVECA, with modular architecture allowing adaptation to future projects and partnerships.

## Voices from the field

“EUVECA allowed us to develop Edu4Health not as a standalone technical product, but as a shared European effort shaped by continuous dialogue and collaboration with partners.” - FBK project team

## Lessons learned and results

Working across regions proved to be far more than a coordination exercise; it became the core driver of quality and relevance. Inter-regional co-creation enabled technological development to align closely with policy strategies, educational priorities and innovation agendas in different contexts. Through this process, trust grew between technical developers and health education stakeholders, and a shared language emerged that bridged policy, pedagogy and digital design. The incremental development approach was equally decisive. Rather than following a linear delivery model, iterative testing and continuous refinement allowed partners to influence the platform step by step. Regular feedback cycles improved usability and functionality while strengthening collective ownership. The platform was not simply delivered to partners; it was shaped with them, creating commitment and long-term engagement. Edu4Health also confirmed a broader lesson: technology generates real value only when it acts as an enabler. By supporting collaboration, mobility opportunities, governance mechanisms and interconnected learning ecosystems, the platform moved beyond being a technical tool and became an infrastructure for cooperation.

These lessons translated into concrete results. A shared European digital platform was successfully co-designed across regions, with multiple partners actively contributing to validation and refinement. The platform remains fully functional and accessible beyond the formal project timeline, demonstrating continuity and sustainability. At the same time, cooperation between technology developers and policy, education and healthcare stakeholders has been strengthened, leaving behind not only a reusable digital asset but also a reinforced network capable of supporting future European and regional initiatives.

### 3.3.3. Good Story 3 - Bridging innovation and care through lifelong learning in Trentino

#### Overview

In the Autonomous Province of Trento, the EUVECA project has led to the establishment of a Hub for Educational Excellence in Health Care, promoted by the Department of Health and Social Policies in collaboration with Fondazione Bruno Kessler. The hub was created to strengthen lifelong learning opportunities for healthcare students and professionals, directly addressing emerging megatrends in health and social care.

Rather than functioning solely as an institutional structure, the hub operates as a dynamic network designed to empower professionals at the frontline of care. Through targeted courses, international exchange and stakeholder involvement, EUVECA has translated strategic objectives into tangible individual benefits.

The initiative demonstrates how regional collaboration within a European framework can enhance professional competences, foster innovation and reinforce a culture of continuous improvement in healthcare.

#### Key initiative

The core initiative centred on delivering specialised, high-quality training aligned with contemporary healthcare challenges. In partnership with Università Popolare Trentina, three dedicated webinars and courses on psychogeriatrics and dementia were introduced, equipping professionals to respond more effectively to the needs of an ageing population.

At the same time, FBK developed courses on artificial intelligence and telemedicine, preparing professionals for digital transformation in healthcare. Dedicated training days in 2025 were organised for doctors holding management training certificates, ensuring that digital innovation is integrated into both clinical and leadership practice.

An additional strategic step was the attempt to establish a Scientific Committee within the Trentino hub. This initiative aimed to give healthcare professionals and stakeholders an active role in proposing and assessing the quality of the educational offer, moving them from passive recipients to co-creators of training pathways.

#### Innovative elements

##### Training aligned with megatrends

Courses addressed psychogeriatrics, dementia, artificial intelligence and telemedicine, directly responding to demographic change and digital transformation.

##### Professional co-governance

The proposed Scientific Committee introduced a participatory model in which professionals contribute to shaping and evaluating educational content.

##### Integration of technical and relational skills

Beyond clinical knowledge, the initiative emphasised communication, teamwork and intercultural competences.

## European knowledge exchange

Through EUVECA, local professionals engaged in exchanges with European partners, bringing international best practices into the regional context.

## Voices from the field

*“I think that communication is a really important and delicate concern that all professionals, not only doctors, should care about (...) working with a team really makes the difference.”*— Antonella Ferro, Medical Doctor specialised in oncology

*“We would be happy to keep on the collaboration after the EUVECA project.”*— Maurizio Cadonna, Director of Università Popolare Trentina

## Lessons learned and results

The Trentino experience demonstrates that lifelong learning initiatives have the greatest impact when they combine innovation, participation and relevance to daily practice. By addressing both emerging technological trends and relational competences, the hub has supported professionals in adapting to a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

Participants reported tangible growth not only in technical knowledge but also in cultural and linguistic competences, enhancing their ability to operate in an increasingly interconnected European context. The collaborative model strengthened teamwork and fostered serious institutional and professional relationships across the sector.

The initiative has resulted in new specialised training opportunities, structured collaboration between regional authorities and educational providers, and the active engagement of professionals in shaping educational quality. Beyond the immediate outputs, the most significant achievement lies in the creation of a sustainable learning community in which healthcare professionals are empowered to contribute, innovate and collaborate beyond the lifespan of the EUVECA project.

## 3.4. Netherlands

### 3.4.1. Good Story 1 - Driving innovation in health education: The Twente Story



#### Overview

The EUVECA project in the Twente region places students at the centre of shaping future healthcare and welfare education. By linking education, practice, and innovation, students from various disciplines have been actively involved in tackling real-world challenges. Six student groups from different institutions contributed through graduation assignments, minors, and the Smart Solutions Semester at Saxion University of Applied Sciences. Their work ranged from integrating megatrends into curricula to testing and optimising the Edu4Health platform. This collaboration has not only provided innovative solutions but also created sustainable links between education and the professional field, fully aligned with the regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S).

#### Key initiative

The initiative mobilised **36 students** across six groups to work on EUVECA challenges, in close collaboration with healthcare professionals and educators. Students conducted over **100 hours of practice-oriented research in hospitals and universities**, addressing three key research questions about the adoption and integration of Edu4Health. Their work resulted in two concrete action plans designed to strengthen the Twente Regional Hub and ensure its alignment with stakeholder needs.

#### Innovative Elements

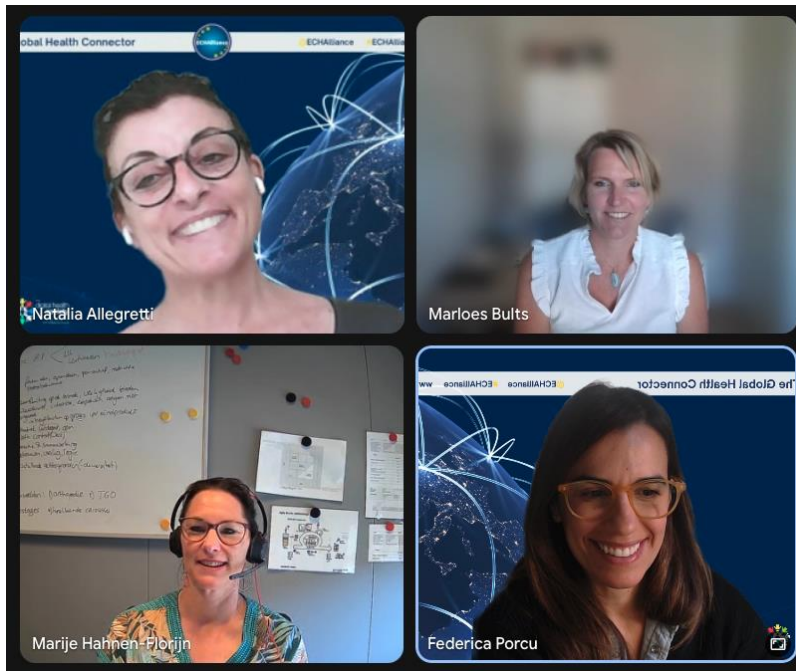
What makes this initiative innovative is the way students were positioned as co-creators rather than passive learners. Through assignments directly linked to professional challenges, they acted as a bridge between theory and practice. Simulation-based collaboration and practice-driven research enabled students to deliver tangible improvements to Edu4Health while gaining valuable experience themselves. By embedding assignments into the region's 3S priorities, such as technological healthcare innovation and digitalisation, the initiative ensured both immediate relevance and long-term strategic impact.

#### Voices from the field

*“Because our project focused heavily on students’ opinions, it was already valuable just to be a student and share those insights.”* — Participating student, Smart Solutions Semester

## Lessons learned and results

The initiative confirmed that engaging students in real-world challenges is a powerful driver for innovation in healthcare education. Their contributions produced practical implementation proposals and pilot projects at Ziekenhuis Groep Twente and Saxion. Stakeholder-driven recommendations strengthened the EUVECA Hub and guided improvements for the Edu4Health platform. The initiative also raised awareness among healthcare professionals about the value of digital learning, while students gained hands-on experience in both regional and European contexts. This demonstrates how involving students as active partners can create a great impact on education, professional practice, and regional innovation agendas.



### 3.4.2. Good Story 2 - Transforming international exchange into healthcare skills innovation

#### Overview

The EUVECA Twente Hub set out to strengthen future healthcare skills by connecting education, research and clinical practice through structured international collaboration. With a strong technological focus, partners in Twente positioned the hub as a driver of innovation in healthcare education, showcasing applications of artificial intelligence, extended reality, simulation and digital health. By hosting colleagues from the University of Lübeck and the University Medical Center Schleswig-Holstein, the hub created a shared learning environment grounded in hands-on experience rather than theoretical exchange. EUVECA provided the structured framework that aligned shared learning objectives with complementary regional expertise. Through site visits, interactive demonstrations and open dialogue, partners translated technological innovation into concrete educational approaches and professional practices. As a result, the exchange strengthened mutual trust, accelerated joint planning for mobility and cooperation, and laid the foundations for sustainable inter-regional collaboration in technology-driven healthcare education.

## Key initiative

The key initiative was an intensive international seminar programme in Twente, bringing together universities, applied sciences institutions and hospital partners within one coordinated innovation ecosystem. Over two days, participants explored simulation centres, XR laboratories, AI-supported hospital workflows and eHealth environments, linking technological development directly to workforce skills and curriculum design.

Rather than functioning as a study visit alone, the initiative operated as a co-creation space where regional ecosystems compared strategies, identified complementarities and initiated joint planning for future educational and research activities.

## Innovative elements

### Experiential cross-border learning

Participants engaged directly with AI applications, XR-supported learning environments and simulation-based training facilities, enabling practical understanding of technology integration.

### Ecosystem alignment

Education providers, research institutions and healthcare organisations collaborated as equal partners, ensuring alignment between curricula, technological innovation and clinical needs.

### From demonstration to dialogue

Interactive sessions combined hands-on exposure with strategic discussions on scalability, ethics and curriculum integration.

### Technology-driven future skills focus

The exchange centred on how digital and immersive technologies can foster collaborative, reflective and adaptive competencies for the future healthcare workforce.

## Voices from the field

*“What makes EUVECA valuable is that innovation is not discussed in theory, but experienced directly in practice, together with partners who face similar challenges across Europe.”*— Participant from the Lübeck delegation

## Lessons learned and results

The Twente experience demonstrated that experiential learning across borders significantly strengthens the development of future healthcare skills. Engaging directly with simulation centres, XR laboratories and AI-supported clinical processes allowed participants to understand not only the technological potential but also the pedagogical implications of digital transformation. Learning became tangible, contextualised and immediately transferable. The exchange also confirmed the value of a neutral and trusted European framework. EUVECA enabled universities, hospitals and regional development organisations to collaborate beyond institutional hierarchies, aligning education, research and care practice around shared innovation goals. This ecosystem-based approach helped identify complementarities and concrete opportunities for joint development. Importantly, experiencing innovation in action moved discussions from inspiration to implementation. Participants explored how AI, XR and simulation could be embedded into curricula, professional development and hospital workflows, while addressing ethical considerations and scalability.

These insights translated into measurable results. Inter-regional trust between Twente and Lübeck partners was strengthened, creating a solid foundation for future joint initiatives. A shared understanding emerged regarding the strategic role of technology in shaping healthcare education. Concrete follow-up plans for mobility, exchange and collaborative research were defined. The EUVECA Twente Hub increased its visibility as a living example of applied technological innovation in healthcare education and reinforced its commitment to sustained collaboration within the European network.

### 3.4.3. Good Story 3 - Co-creating a future-proof sustainability course for nursing education

#### Overview

Within the EUVECA project, Saxion University of Applied Sciences set out to integrate sustainability into nursing education in an accessible and practice-oriented way. Building on regional expertise in sustainable healthcare and national networks such as “The Sustainable Nurse”, Saxion developed an interactive e-learning awareness course structured around a patient journey to highlight the impact of climate change on health.

EUVECA enabled international co-creation through the Climate Challenge working group, involving representatives from seven regions. The course scenario was reviewed by partner countries, adapted to different healthcare systems, professionally filmed and translated into seven languages.

The final Awareness Course is published on the Edu4Health platform and has been tested by 124 students and 70 healthcare professionals across five countries. It is now structurally embedded in the second-year nursing curriculum at Saxion, reaching approximately 250 students annually.

#### Key initiative

The core initiative was the development of a European Awareness Course on sustainability in healthcare, centred on a filmed patient journey of a person with a diabetic foot. Rather than presenting sustainability as an abstract concept, the course links prevention, lifestyle interventions and early action directly to clinical reasoning and environmental impact.

The development process was highly collaborative. Teachers, professionals and students were actively involved, including contributions from students in the Saxion Smart Solutions Semester and participants from the Master Health, Care & Social Work programme. After filming at Saxion with a professional crew, the e-learning module was translated into all EUVECA partner languages and made available through the Edu4Health platform.

At Saxion, the course is now structurally integrated into the second-year nursing programme, where students complete the e-learning individually and engage in guided reflection sessions in class.

#### Innovative elements

##### Patient journey approach

Sustainability is made tangible through a recognisable clinical pathway, demonstrating how preventive care reduces both patient suffering and environmental impact.

### **European co-creation model**

Partners from seven countries reviewed and adapted the scenario, ensuring relevance across diverse healthcare systems and strengthening intercultural understanding.

### **Multi-level involvement**

Students, teachers and professionals contributed to design, testing and refinement, ensuring practical relevance and pedagogical quality.

### **Scalable digital format**

The course is translated into seven languages and accessible via the Edu4Health platform, enabling broad European dissemination.

### **Voices from the field**

*“The most sustainable care is the care that is not delivered. By focusing on prevention and health promotion, we not only support healthier lifestyles, but also reduce pressure on healthcare systems — and that is ultimately sustainable care.”* — Marlies Pepers, Saxion University of Applied Sciences

*“During the development of the awareness course, we continuously reflected on the importance of thinking differently and more sustainably within both healthcare and social work. (...) The situations presented in the patient journey are realistic and engage students.”*  
— Saxion University of Applied Sciences

*“The course stimulates thinking about what can be improved within your own organization and raising awareness around the theme of sustainability. (...) It makes you think critically about your own field of work.”*  
— Course participant

### **Lessons learned and results**

The initiative demonstrated that sustainability education becomes meaningful when directly connected to everyday clinical practice. By embedding the concept within a realistic patient journey, students better understood prevention as a cornerstone of sustainable healthcare and recognised the organisational and societal dimensions of their professional decisions.

The co-creation process revealed differences in healthcare organisation across countries, particularly during early scenario development. Through collaborative review and adaptation, partners developed a generic care pathway applicable across systems, strengthening European alignment on sustainability education.

The course has produced measurable impact. It has been tested by 124 students and 70 professionals in five countries and is now structurally embedded in the second-year nursing curriculum at Saxion, reaching approximately 250 students annually. The initiative has strengthened European collaboration on sustainability in health education and delivered a transferable learning activity available throughout the EUVECA network.

## 3.5. Norway

### 3.5.1. Good Story 1 - Bringing Healthcare Training Home: How EUVECA Strengthens Regional Collaboration in Western Norway: The Nordhordland Story



#### Overview

Through the EUVECA project, the RVEH from Norway is working to strengthen collaboration between the education and the healthcare sector, ensuring that healthcare students and professionals receive continuous training throughout their careers. One of the key approaches is bringing simulation training directly to workplaces, making it accessible hands-on learning opportunities regardless of location.

#### Key initiative

In May 2025, a mobile simulation trailer brought higher education directly to Nordliheimen in Western Norway as part of the EUVECA project. This innovative setup improves access to advanced training for local healthcare students and professionals; it reduces the need for long-distance travel and creates new opportunities for professional growth. By using the mobile unit, healthcare students and professionals practiced realistic scenarios. Students gained deeper insight into patient care, while healthcare assistants were empowered to take on expanded roles, helping relieve pressure on nursing staff.

#### Innovative Elements

The mobile simulation trailer has introduced a new way of learning that combines accessibility with quality. By traveling to remote and rural communities, it ensured that healthcare professionals who would otherwise struggle to attend training could benefit from advanced educational opportunities. The initiative not only strengthened clinical skills and boosted confidence among students and healthcare assistants, but also fostered collaboration between municipalities and schools, encouraging them to share resources and expertise. At the same time, by decentralizing education and providing professional development close to home, the project helped make rural healthcare jobs more attractive for young professionals.

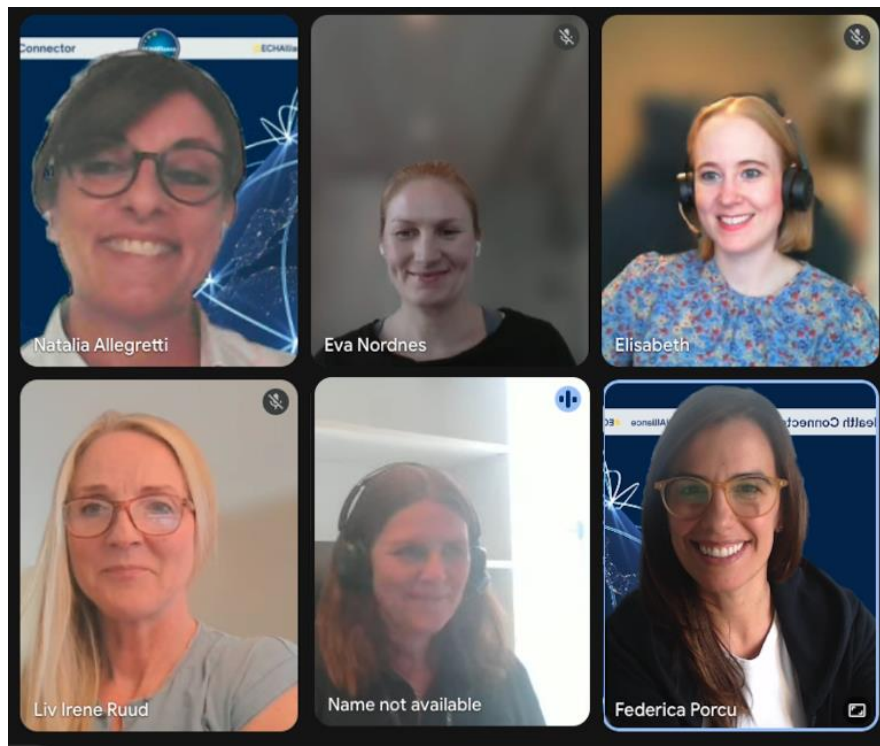
#### Voices from the field

Reflecting on the value of simulation-based training and professional development, one healthcare assistant who took part in the mobile simulation exercise organized by the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences shared: *“It’s incredibly valuable learning and professional input that everyone needs.”*

Highlighting the importance of decentralizing training to meet regional needs, Liv Irene Ruud, academic coordinator at SimArena, explained: *“We know it can be difficult for people to travel all the way to the city for courses and training. That’s why we come to them.”*

## Lessons learned and results

The EUVECA initiative in Western Norway has demonstrated that bringing training directly to rural communities can transform professional development in healthcare. The mobile simulation unit has made education more accessible, reduced barriers linked to distance and time, and created opportunities for lifelong learning within the local workforce. Healthcare assistants, in particular, reported feeling more confident and capable of handling advanced scenarios after the training. The initiative also strengthened collaboration between municipalities, schools, and healthcare professionals in the Nordhordland region, while supporting recruitment and retention efforts by showing that high-quality training and professional growth are possible without leaving one’s community.



### 3.5.2. Good Story 2 - Connecting regions for a digital hub in healthcare excellence

#### Overview

The EUVECA project brings together partners from seven countries to strengthen Centres of Vocational Excellence across Europe. In Western Norway, three regional partners collaborate within this Erasmus+ initiative, contributing in particular to the development of governance models for CoVEs and the establishment of a digital platform for learning and mobility. With a clear focus on lifelong learning for healthcare students and professionals, the Norwegian hub plays a central role in developing a digital infrastructure that connects regional and international partners. EUVECA provides the framework that links governance innovation with digital transformation, ensuring that collaboration across regions results in concrete tools and shared standards. As a result, the inter-regional cooperation has delivered a structured platform that supports information sharing, learning delivery and mobility opportunities within a growing European network of healthcare vocational excellence.

## Key initiative

The key initiative for Norway has been leading the development of the EUVECA digital platform as a shared European hub for lifelong learning in healthcare. The platform is designed to connect regional hubs and enable collaboration, mobility and knowledge exchange across Centres of Vocational Excellence. Two core objectives guided this work: establishing governance models for CoVEs and building a digital solution capable of supporting both information management and structured learning delivery. This dual approach ensured that organisational coordination and technological infrastructure evolved in parallel.

## Innovative elements

### Governance and digital integration

The initiative combines governance model development with digital platform creation, ensuring that organisational structures and technological tools reinforce one another.

### Centralised digital hub

The platform serves as a shared space for learning resources tailored to healthcare and for mobility opportunities across regional and international CoVEs.

### Inter-regional technical collaboration

The Norwegian hub partnered with Fondazione Bruno Kessler in Trento, Italy, drawing on FBK's expertise in design, user experience and web applications to deliver a coherent and user-friendly solution.

### Dual-system architecture

The solution integrates a robust Content Management System for information sharing and a dedicated Learning Management System for structured learning delivery.

## Voices from the field

*“EUVECA demonstrates that vocational excellence is strengthened when governance innovation and digital transformation are developed together within a European partnership.”*— Participant from the Norwegian delegation

## Lessons learned and results

The Norwegian experience highlights the regional benefit of structured inter-regional collaboration. By working within EUVECA, Western Norway's partners were able to connect local ambitions for vocational excellence with European expertise and shared standards. The cooperation with Fondazione Bruno Kessler ensured that the digital platform was not only technically robust but also designed with strong attention to usability, integration and user experience. The project shows that combining governance development with digital infrastructure creates stronger and more sustainable Centres of Vocational Excellence. Rather than treating coordination and technology as separate processes, EUVECA integrates them into a coherent strategy for lifelong learning, mobility and innovation in healthcare. This collaboration has resulted in a functioning digital hub that supports information sharing through a Content Management System and structured learning delivery through a Learning Management System. It connects regional and international CoVEs, strengthens mobility pathways and contributes to a European network dedicated to empowering healthcare students and professionals with green skills and lifelong learning opportunities.

### 3.5.3. Good Story 3 – Culturally-attuned and knowledgeable healthcare professionals: How Edu4Health is enabling relevant and high-quality care for diverse populations

#### Overview

Through the EUVECA project, and particularly the Edu4Health platform, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences has been able to offer up-to-date, accessible and relevant training to students and practitioners on a variety of healthcare related topics, including migrant health. With international conflicts increasing global migration, culturally responsive healthcare training is more important than ever for practitioners addressing the unique needs of displaced populations.

#### Key initiative

The Section for Global Health and Rehabilitation at Western Norway University for Applied Sciences has created educational resources for students, practicing healthcare professionals and other interest holders with a special focus on providing culturally sensitive healthcare to vulnerable populations such as migrants, refugees and older persons. The mini course Migration Health provides insights into how voluntary and forced migration impacts health outcomes and fosters greater cultural sensitivity among students, healthcare professionals and interest holders. The Global Perspectives on Healthy Ageing-course focuses on factors impacting healthy ageing across different national and cultural contexts.

#### Innovative Elements

While traditional healthcare training often focuses on the burdens of aging and migration, our courses flip the script. We empower professionals to look beyond pathology, focusing instead on the resilience, resources, and positive outcomes inherent in these life transitions. By replacing a "deficit" mindset with one of opportunity, we provide a versatile, digitally-led learning experience tailored for students, educators, and busy practitioners alike.

#### Voices from the field

Reflecting on the learning outcomes of our courses, a nursing student shared the following: *“These courses replaced my stereotypes with a focus on resilience. I’ve stopped seeing migration as a ‘problem’ and started looking for patient strengths. It’s given me the real-world cultural confidence that standard textbooks miss”.*

A practicing healthcare professional who took our courses shares the following, *“Finally, a course that’s actually applicable. By focusing on my patients’ resilience rather than their limitations, I’ve moved from ‘treating a case’ to ‘building a partnership.’ It’s made my job more fulfilling.”*

#### Lessons learned and results

The EUVECA initiative in Western Norway has demonstrated that offering updated and relevant knowledge as mini-courses can increase students’ engagement and remove barriers to continuing education for healthcare professionals. In addition, offering the same resources to multiple interest holders creates common language enhancing interprofessional learning and bridging communication gaps.

## 3.6. Slovenia

### 3.6.1. Good Story 1 - Learning to care, together: A Journey into simulation and interdisciplinary practice - The Ljubljana Story



Meeting on May 20th, 2025

#### Overview

As proud partners in the Erasmus+ EUVECA project, the Community Health Center Ljubljana and the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ljubljana have joined forces to establish the Regional Vocational Excellence Hub (RVEH) Ljubljana. This hub is dedicated to fostering innovation in lifelong learning across the health and social care sectors, bringing together professionals and students alike.

In May 2024, the hub hosted its first round of interdisciplinary simulation training, welcoming 45 students for two-day immersive courses designed to build collaboration skills, foster empathy, and enhance competence in the sensitive field of palliative care.

#### Key initiative

The first training sessions organized by RVEH Ljubljana marked a new chapter in healthcare education in Slovenia. Held in May 2024, these two-day simulation-based sessions in palliative care aimed to offer a hands-on, realistic learning experience to 45 students. The training highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in end-of-life care and sought to equip participants with the ability to address not only physical needs, but also emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of patient support. By focusing on a patient-centered approach, the training encouraged students to experience firsthand the value of teamwork and integrated care.

#### Innovative Elements

The educational design of the course was notably enriched by the inclusion of six health and care disciplines: nursing, medicine, social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and engineering, both radiological and sanitary. This diverse participation brought a wide range of perspectives and expertise into the simulation space.

Real-life care challenges were recreated through detailed simulation scenarios. Students engaged in role-play and team-based responses, practicing communication and ethical decision-making in a controlled and supportive environment. The simulations served as a powerful bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The training emphasized collaborative learning, encouraging participants to reflect on their actions and decisions as part of a functioning care team. The aim was to instill a culture of shared responsibility, mutual respect, and continuous adaptation to patient needs.

## Voices from the field

The feedback from participants was both enthusiastic and insightful. Many students expressed how the training allowed them to gain practical experience in a realistic setting. Several noted that each professional discipline involved added significant value to the quality of care and enriched their learning. The sentiment of working together with the patient at the center of attention resonated throughout their reflections.

*“It was a great experience to step into someone else's role and see how important every team member is.”*

*“Teamwork in this training wasn't just a word—it became a real, lived experience.”*

## Lessons learned and results

The training reaffirmed that teamwork and mutual respect are fundamental to delivering high-quality care. By working together, professionals can offer more holistic and responsive care to patients and their families. Simulation-based education emerged as a particularly effective method for strengthening both technical skills and interpersonal communication, helping participants transition more seamlessly from classroom theory to clinical practice. The interdisciplinary approach also proved essential in fostering adaptability, resilience, and empathy—qualities that are increasingly vital in complex care environments like palliative care.

Students left the training with a renewed sense of confidence in their ability to work in interdisciplinary teams. The course promoted reflective learning and created an environment where peer collaboration could flourish. Most importantly, the experience laid a strong foundation for the further development and expansion of simulation-based education across the Slovenian hub, ensuring that this innovative, human-centered approach continues to shape the future of healthcare training.



### 3.6.2. Good Story 2 - Stronger together: Advancing education innovation through collaboration

#### Overview

In Central Slovenia, the Regional Vocational Excellence Hub (RVEH) in Ljubljana has strengthened its role as a platform for innovation in health sciences education by expanding simulation-based learning activities. Building on the foundations of EUVECA, the Hub introduced an interdisciplinary workshop for students of the University of Ljubljana, aimed at enhancing collaboration, communication and practical competence in complex care situations.

In May and June 2025, 35 students participated in short workshops focused on challenging interactions involving patients and family members. Implemented for the second consecutive year, the initiative was refined through structured debriefing sessions, improved role-play scenarios and increased faculty mentor involvement. These adjustments significantly enriched the learning experience and reinforced the Hub's contribution to excellence in healthcare and lifelong learning.

#### Key initiative

The central initiative consisted of immersive simulation sessions held at the Simulation Centre of Ljubljana Community Health Centre in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences. Students from six disciplines—nursing, medicine, social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and engineering (radiological and sanitary)—engaged in realistic scenarios reflecting the complexity of modern clinical practice.

Participants prepared in advance through targeted activities designed to strengthen teamwork and communication strategies, particularly in emotionally demanding situations involving patients and informal caregivers. The training promoted a patient-centred and holistic approach aligned with Slovenia's Long-Term Care Act, which emphasises integrated care and shared decision-making.

#### Innovative elements

##### **Interdisciplinary collaboration in practice**

Students from six different health and care disciplines worked together, gaining first-hand insight into diverse professional perspectives and the interconnectedness of healthcare delivery.

##### **Realistic and emotionally complex scenarios**

Simulations recreated ethically and emotionally challenging situations, such as managing distressed family members or high-stress emergencies, requiring collaborative problem-solving.

##### **Alignment with societal needs**

The initiative addressed challenges linked to Slovenia's ageing population and workforce shortages, emphasising integrated care and support for informal caregivers.

##### **Structured reflection and improvement**

Based on feedback from the first year, the second cycle introduced more structured debriefings and refined scenarios, strengthening reflective learning and educational quality.

## Voices from the field

*“It was a very interesting experience that placed us in real-life situations.”*

*“We learned how to react and work in a team—something we don’t get from regular lectures.”*

*“I gained insight into how other health professionals think and approach patient care.”*

*“It was mentally demanding but incredibly useful.”*

*“We were forced to step out of our comfort zone and truly collaborate.”* - Students described the experience as demanding yet transformative

## Lessons learned and results

The Slovenian experience demonstrates that simulation-based, interdisciplinary learning significantly enhances vocational excellence in healthcare education. Working in diverse teams strengthened mutual respect and reinforced the importance of holistic, patient-centred care. Participants developed greater confidence in navigating complex situations and engaging both patients and family members in shared decision-making. The iterative refinement of the workshop confirmed the value of structured reflection and faculty-supported debriefing. Simulation emerged as a powerful bridge between theory and clinical practice, enabling students to translate classroom knowledge into practical competence. At the same time, the interdisciplinary format fostered resilience, adaptability and empathy—qualities essential in long-term and integrated care contexts.

The initiative delivered tangible results: increased student confidence in teamwork, improved communication skills in high-pressure scenarios, stronger alignment with innovation agendas and Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S), and a solid foundation for further expansion of simulation-based education within the RVEH. Through collaboration and shared learning design, the Hub strengthened its contribution to a more integrated and responsive healthcare education system in Slovenia.

### 3.6.3. Good Story 3 - EDU4Health as an opportunity for internationalisation of nursing education with interprofessional perspectives

#### Overview

Master’s students of nursing will enter a dynamic working environment upon graduation, as today’s health systems are increasingly complex, digitalised, and interconnected. Future healthcare professionals are expected to understand the roles of different health disciplines, collaborate effectively in interdisciplinary teams, and follow development priorities set by regional strategies and European trends.

To provide students with a modern and internationally oriented perspective on working with people in need of care, we introduced the use of the EDU4Health HUB within an elective course at the master’s level of nursing at the University of Ljubljana. This European platform brings together high-quality, professionally validated learning materials created by experts from various health disciplines. By integrating it into our teaching, we opened the classroom to the wider European educational community and offered students a genuine opportunity for interprofessional and international learning.

The implementation of the EDU4Health HUB is an example of good practice, demonstrating how digital learning resources—aligned with the innovation agenda and Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S)—can

enrich traditional teaching, enhance classroom-based learning, and strengthen European cooperation in nursing education.

## Key initiative

As part of the course *Advanced Technologies in Nursing*, we introduced master's students of nursing to an EDU4Health course as a starting point for analysing the importance of interprofessional collaboration. Instead of a traditional lecture, students were invited to independently explore the digital materials and examine how the same clinical case is approached by different professionals – from physiotherapists and occupational therapists to public health specialists and nurses.

Because the platform's content is professionally validated, developed in collaboration with European experts, and organised in a modular format, it can be seamlessly integrated into the educational process without additional logistics or the need to invite guest lecturers. This gave students direct insight into diverse professional perspectives that reflect current health needs across regions as well as broader European priorities. At the same time, the learning experience was enriched by greater dynamism and a distinctly international perspective.

## Innovative Elements

The innovative nature of this practice is based on three key elements:

### Digitally supported learning

The course offers a structured overview of various health professions without requiring complex logistics or the organisation of interprofessional meetings. This allows for immediate comparison of perspectives and strengthens students' ability to think and work as an important member of a team.

### International component

Students have access to European experts without the need for these experts to be physically present in the classroom. This enhances the internationalisation of the curriculum and supports EPVE objectives related to interregional exchange of ideas and best practices.

### Alignment with the regional innovation agenda and 3S

EDU4Health content reflects the development priorities of European regions. This enables master's students to understand how their education is integrated within broader strategic goals, from digitalisation to strengthening the competencies required for working with people in complex health systems.

## Voices from the field

Students highlighted several key aspects following the activity:

- *"It was interesting to see how other professions approach and explore the care of people with specific health conditions."*
- *"It felt as though an international guest lecturer was presenting, even though the contribution was entirely digital."*
- *"When something was unclear, I could rewatch the video – this helped me better understand the holistic approach to care."*

The students' reflections confirm that the EDU4Health HUB functions not only as a digital learning resource but also as a tool that supports deeper professional understanding, enhances insight into different health perspectives, and strengthens the development of interprofessional identity within an international context.

## Strategic Perspective

The use of digital learning platforms such as the EDU4Health HUB aligns with the strategic directions of higher education in the health professions, which include:

- strengthening interprofessional collaboration through standardised and evidence-based content,
- integrating international approaches without administrative, financial or logistical barriers,
- supporting the regional innovation agenda and the Smart Specialisation Strategies (3S) by incorporating content that reflects the priorities of digital health,
- and developing learning approaches that respond to the habits and expectations of new generations.

This enables the sustainable enhancement of curricula and supports stronger connections between the academic environment and healthcare institutions.

## Lessons learned and key results

The introduction of EDU4Health content has shown that digitally supported education:

- enables regular, structured interprofessional learning,
- strengthens regional alignment between educational institutions and the healthcare system,
- integrates nursing students and learners from other health-related programmes into the wider European healthcare education space,
- supports personalised learning tailored to each individual's pace, prior knowledge, and interests,
- promotes lifelong learning,
- provides high-quality, validated content that enhances teaching standards and reduces educators' workload.

Looking ahead, expanding the use of the platform and developing locally adapted modules in collaboration with European partners will be valuable. This would further improve the quality of education and contribute to comprehensive and safe care for people within the healthcare system.

## 3.7. Spain

### 3.7.1. Good Story 1 - Building a skilled and resilient healthcare workforce: Valencian Hub



#### Overview

The EUVECA Valencian Hub has emerged as a dynamic collaborative platform that strengthens the regional healthcare workforce. By bringing together universities, hospitals, policymakers, professional associations, and NGOs, it has established itself as a reference point for reskilling, upskilling, and lifelong learning in healthcare. The hub addresses the pressing challenges of aging populations and chronic diseases, while building a scalable model that can inspire other European regions.

#### Key initiative

The hub's central initiative is to create a collaborative ecosystem where training is co-designed, shared, and continuously improved. It integrates academic expertise, clinical experience, and policy guidance to ensure that learning activities are practical, relevant, and aligned with regional and European healthcare priorities.

#### Innovative Elements

- Multi-stakeholder engagement: universities, hospitals, ministries, and professional associations co-create training programs.
- Focus on real-world challenges: addressing aging and chronic diseases as priority areas.
- Strategic approach: use of the Kirkpatrick model to measure results, benchmarking against European best practices, and adapting existing resources to local needs.
- User-centred learning: feedback loops, satisfaction surveys, and pilot testing ensure high quality and continuous improvement.
- Scalability: a bottom-up model that is adaptable and transferable to other European contexts.

The innovative strength of the Valencian Hub lies in its ability to bring together diverse stakeholders—universities, hospitals, ministries, and professional associations—to co-create training programs that truly reflect the needs of the healthcare sector. By focusing on pressing real-world challenges such as aging populations and chronic diseases, the hub ensures that its initiatives address the priorities most relevant to both professionals and society. A clear strategic approach underpins this work, with the Kirkpatrick model used to measure results, continuous benchmarking against European best practices, and the adaptation of existing resources to local contexts. Central to the model is a strong user-centred orientation: training activities are continuously refined through feedback loops, satisfaction surveys, and pilot testing, guaranteeing both quality and relevance. Above all, the hub demonstrates scalability, offering a bottom-up, collaborative model that can be adapted and replicated across other European regions.

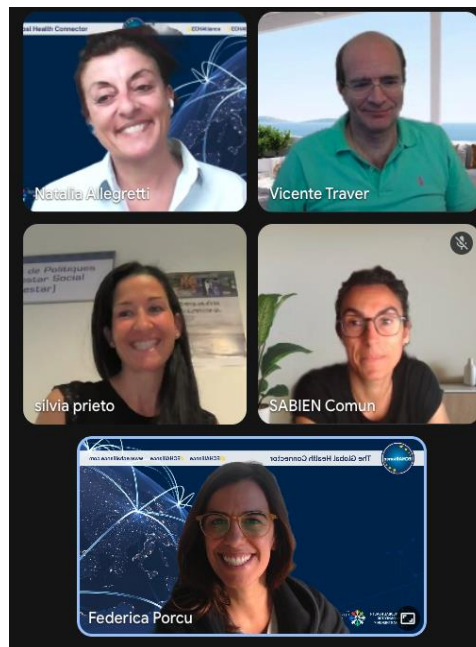
## Voices from the field

*“EUVECA’s collaborative approach has transformed our training—what we learn is practical, up-to-date, and directly relevant to our daily work.”* — Nurse, Hospital Clínico Valencia

*“For the first time, I feel that our input as professionals shapes the training we receive.”* — Healthcare Professional, La Fe Hospital

## Lessons learned and results

The Valencian experience demonstrates that collaboration across sectors enhances training quality and fosters resilience. In its first year, the hub successfully trained over 250 healthcare professionals, actively engaging more than five universities and three major hospitals. This collaborative approach resulted in a 90% participant satisfaction rate, confirming both the impact and the relevance of the training. Beyond individual outcomes, the initiative strengthened partnerships between academia and healthcare providers, consolidating a culture of co-creation and continuous improvement. Most importantly, the Valencian model has proven to be replicable and is now recognized as a reference point for vocational excellence in healthcare education.



### 3.7.2. Good Story 2 - Exchanging knowledge to strengthen healthcare education

#### Overview

The European project EUVECA aims to strengthen the education and training of professionals and students in the health and social care sector. Beyond developing an online platform with courses addressing key megatrends, the project actively promotes knowledge exchange across Europe through professional mobility and study visits. Within this framework, the Universitat de València became the first Spanish partner to take advantage of the mobility opportunities offered by the project. Dr Olga Navarro, from the

Faculty of Nursing and member of the EUVECA team, completed a professional stay in Trento, Italy, engaging directly with colleagues from the regional hub. This initiative aimed to foster professional exchange, strengthen collaboration between hubs and translate shared knowledge into improved educational and research practices within the Spanish context.

## Key initiative

The international professional stay carried out by Dr Olga Navarro in Trento during 2025, gave her the opportunity to collaborate with local partners, exchanging experiences on teaching methodologies, innovation in healthcare education and approaches to vocational excellence.

The visit enabled in-depth dialogue on working methods, educational innovation and research collaboration. It also provided first-hand insight into how other European regions organise vocational excellence in healthcare, linking governance, education and practice. Through this immersive exchange, knowledge moved from abstract discussion to practical understanding, reinforcing inter-regional cooperation within EUVECA.

## Innovative elements

### Structured European mobility

The exchange was embedded within the EUVECA framework, ensuring alignment with shared objectives on vocational excellence and innovation.

### Inter-regional professional dialogue

Direct collaboration between Spanish and Italian partners facilitated the transfer of good practices and innovative approaches.

### Integration of education and research

The visit combined teaching reflection with research collaboration, strengthening both academic output and practical relevance.

### Catalyst for long-term cooperation

The mobility experience laid the groundwork for future joint projects and sustained professional networking.

## Voices from the field

*“This type of professional stay allows us to learn from other European contexts, rethink our own practices and build lasting collaborations that go beyond a single project.” - Olga Navarro*

## Lessons learned and results

This initiative confirms that structured international exchange significantly enriches healthcare education and professional development. By engaging directly with colleagues in another European hub, the Spanish partner gained insight into alternative working methods, innovative teaching strategies and governance models that can inform local practice.

The experience also strengthened intercultural and professional competences, including adaptability, communication in international contexts and collaborative problem-solving.

Concrete outcomes included a six-month professional stay, the development of joint publications and the exploration of new collaborative projects. The exchange facilitated the creation of professional networks that can support future European initiatives.

### 3.7.3. Good Story 3 - Training of trainers: Students will train professionals in the field of communication with older people and those with dementia

#### Overview

The training of students and future professionals is a strategic priority for ensuring the sustainability of the healthcare system. In this context, Polibienestar, a research institute at the University of Valencia, has launched an innovative educational initiative aimed at students and professionals in the social and healthcare sector.

A new course entitled “A Common Language: Communicating with Older People and People with Dementia” has been developed, and a single-topic session has been delivered to third-year social work students to enable them to learn new skills and also to act as trainers for professionals, specifically their future colleagues. This focuses on healthy ageing and improving communication with older people, people with dementia and their families. The course takes a theoretical and practical approach to the major current challenges facing the healthcare sector, such as an ageing population, chronic diseases, digitalisation and the impact of climate change. This initiative combines technological innovation, pedagogical reflection and guidance within an applied training environment.

#### Key initiative

The course was designed and delivered by Crealzheimer (State Reference Centre for the Care of People with Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias) of the Spanish Government’s Ministry of Social Rights and the Polibienestar Research Institute at the University of Valencia, within the framework of the European EUVECA project, as a training initiative aimed at strengthening professional skills through active methodologies.

The course offers an introductory and general overview of international approaches to healthy ageing. Aimed primarily at students in the social and healthcare sector (medicine, nursing, healthcare social work, occupational therapy or social and healthcare support), the course enabled participants to link the communicative dimension with health promotion in different sociocultural contexts. After completing the training, the students took part in an evaluation process that facilitated the continuous improvement of the pedagogical design.

The objective they have set themselves is to become trainers of professionals. In other words, this involves training trainers so that, during the practical placement each of them will undertake in the coming months, they can put what they have learnt into practice and promote the course amongst their colleagues at their respective workplaces. In this way, the multiplier effect of knowledge regarding communication techniques with older people and those with Alzheimer’s, as well as with their families and carers, will spread exponentially amongst healthcare and social care professionals.

## Innovative elements

### Technology at the service of humanising care

The training combines digital tools with the development of interpersonal and communication skills, reinforcing person-centred care.

### Alignment with global megatrends in health

The course strengthens students' ability to respond to structural challenges such as population ageing, the rise in chronic diseases and comorbidities, the digitalisation of the healthcare system, and the impact of climate change on health.

### Promotion of key cross-cutting skills

Essential skills for current professional practice are enhanced, such as empathetic communication and active listening, collaborative work in multidisciplinary teams, creativity in problem-solving, and information literacy to critically evaluate scientific evidence.

### Flexible and modular design

The course structure facilitates its integration into tight academic and professional schedules, promoting flexibility in terms of time.

### Training of trainers

Training students so that they can subsequently train professionals (their future colleagues) provides them with extraordinary motivation.

## Voices from the field

*“A useful, well-structured course that is relevant to professional practice”* — Social care student.

*“I found the programme very useful, as it provided knowledge and strategies applicable to communicating with older people and those with dementia, helping to improve empathy and understanding of their needs. I like that there are practical tools that simulate real-life communication situations with older people and those with dementia”* – Social care student.

## Lessons learnt and results

The experience demonstrated that specific training in communication helps to boost students' confidence and preparedness when facing real-life situations related to ageing and dementia.

The results reflect a positive assessment in terms of content quality, practical usefulness, interactivity and visual design. Furthermore, students perceived a clear improvement in skills aligned with the main challenges of the healthcare sector. Accessibility for people with specific needs, such as visual or hearing impairments, received a lower score, highlighting the priority of this area for improving the course in future editions.

Furthermore, the proposal to share the course at the workplaces where they will be undertaking their placements in the coming months has been motivating for them, as they believe they can offer value to their colleagues on a subject as essential as that covered by this course: knowing how to communicate with older people and those with dementia.

In short, this initiative demonstrates how the combination of technology and communication training can enhance professional excellence and contribute to care that is better prepared, more humane and better adapted to the challenges of healthy ageing.

## 4. Conclusions

The Good Practice Stories collected within the EUVECA project clearly demonstrate that the Regional Vocational Excellence Hubs (RVEHs) have moved beyond coordination into concrete, transformation across Europe. Through a structured methodology and a shared template, each region has documented how EUVECA has strengthened regional ecosystems, deepened interregional cooperation and delivered tangible benefits for healthcare students and professionals.

Across Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Spain, a consistent pattern emerges: when education providers, healthcare institutions, research organisations and policy actors are connected within a structured framework, innovation becomes operational.

These stories are not isolated success cases; they represent systemic shifts. At regional level, EUVECA has reduced fragmentation by creating durable collaboration structures. At interregional level, it has enabled knowledge transfer, co-creation and joint project development. At individual level, it has strengthened competences in sustainability, digital health, intercultural care, interdisciplinary teamwork and reflective practice. The evidence shows increased student confidence, new joint curricula, embedded digital modules, strengthened professional networks and new EU project applications.

From a sustainability perspective, as described in Deliverable 6.1, these outcomes are particularly significant. Sustainability within EUVECA is not understood merely as maintaining activities after project closure, but as embedding new ways of working into institutional practice. The Good Stories provide proof that this embedding is already underway. Several initiatives are now structurally integrated into curricula. The Edu4Health platform is operational, multilingual and actively used. Governance innovations, such as Scientific Committees and structured hub cooperation models, create institutional ownership beyond project funding.

The stories also reinforce the sustainability pathway through three mechanisms highlighted in EUVECA deliverable D6.1:

- **First, institutional anchoring.** Many initiatives have been incorporated into formal education programmes, long-term regional projects or strategic agendas (e.g. STEM4Health in Denmark, sustainability modules in the Netherlands). This reduces dependency on temporary funding.
- **Second, network consolidation.** The RVEH model has strengthened trust-based relationships between institutions. Joint study visits, mobility exchanges and co-created courses have generated professional communities that are likely to continue collaboration beyond EUVECA. Sustainability is therefore supported through social capital and shared strategic direction.
- **Third, digital infrastructure as enabler.** Edu4Health functions as a long-term European asset, hosting learning resources, supporting mobility and enabling ongoing knowledge exchange. Its co-designed and scalable architecture ensures adaptability for future projects and regional needs.

Importantly, the Good Stories also serve an external sustainability function. They provide replicable models that can attract new partners, inspire additional regions to join the network and support dissemination efforts. By documenting measurable outcomes and authentic stakeholder voices, they strengthen EUVECA's credibility and policy relevance.

In conclusion, the Good Practice Stories confirm that EUVECA has translated strategic objectives into operational change. They demonstrate that the RVEH model, the Edu4Health platform and the culture of co-creation have generated improvements in healthcare education and vocational excellence. Most importantly, they show that sustainability is not a future aspiration but an ongoing reality.