



## **STEP\_UP BRIEFING PAPER FOR ADULT EDUCATORS, POLICY MAKERS AND LOBBY GROUPS**

Early 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that COVID-19 remains a global health emergency as the world enters the fourth year of the pandemic. The WHO is hopeful that the number of hospitalisations and deaths will be further reduced, and the pandemic could near its end in 2023. Notwithstanding, this experience has indeed supported earlier voices from the scientific community claiming pandemics to be one of the biggest challenges for the future, and experts are already foretelling that similar pandemic occurrences may return in the future. It is precisely for this reason that the STEP\_UP project and materials (initially born as a strategic response to the present needs of COVID-19 struggle as a communicable, respiratory and influenza-style disease) should now become essential tools for the management and prevention of similar health crises into the future.

After the emergency state, a collaborative leadership approach will be essential and working together as a collective, investing in a participatory citizenship, will be key.

It is not possible to consider this is a time with no consequences and that no other emergency situations will occur. The use of teleworking, the social distance and the increased health and care needs implied uncovering new methods of work, understanding society's biggest fragilities and will imply changes in work and training, tools and routines that will only be clear in the next months and years.

Apart from all the innovations that are being developed and the new ways services are now being delivered, there is the need to prepare bottom-up initiatives that build-up the competences of social care professionals, community leaders, informal caregivers and volunteers so that these are prepared to deal with such emergency situations in the future.

This is why the STEP\_UP game has been developed and is successfully delivered as a result of the Erasmus+ project STOP EPIDEMIC GROWTH THROUGH LEARNING.

### **Co-creation with target groups**

STEP\_UP focuses on offering learning experiences with COVID-19 for specifically care professionals, community leaders, informal caregivers and volunteers.

During the building of the scenarios of the game, the design, the workshop methodology and testing, these target groups were actively involved to ensure that the educational game is realistic and fits into the daily practice of the target groups. Co-creation in different stages of game development was the base for the successful delivery of the STEP\_UP game and learning materials.

### **STEP\_UP individual learning and workshops**

Policymakers, adult educators and lobby groups play an important role in facilitating and empowering citizens to face health emergency situations such as COVID-19 or pandemics in the future. To support them, the project team of STEP\_UP makes publicly available several learning materials, which are free to use and to adapt for local purposes.

All of STEP\_UP results are available in an online learning platform (link) that hosts the game but also several dedicated tabs with the project information, results, materials and resources:

- **STEP\_UP game ([link](#))**  
The STEP\_UP game brings the player to the STEP\_UP island where COVID-19 is being introduced. The game offers to play scenarios with different characters to jointly solve challenges regarding COVID-19. Challenges such as lockdowns, preventive measures, contact tracing and hospital beds. The game can be played on an individual basis or as part of a workshop.
- **STEP\_UP Trainers area ([link](#)).**  
The trainers area offers several learning materials that can be used for individual or group learning activities. The [Workshop methodology and curriculum](#) is built upon the acknowledgement that participants of adult education already have qualifications gained by formal, non-formal or informal education or life experiences. It uses a multi-step methodological approach that is broken down into four points: Personal approach, Analysis, Dealing with conflicts and Positive outcome.

Pandemics normally go through several stages: early detection, preventive measures, health and social care interventions, exit strategies. Per stage policy decisions have to be taken, such as decisions on lockdowns, mobilization of hospital wards, and contact tracing. STEP\_UP's trainer area provides five short hand-outs that can be used in trainings.

After completion of the workshops or playing the game, participants can receive a certificate or proof of participation. The trainer area provides the templates.

A draft agenda, assessment form, rewards and giveaways complete the trainer area to support everyone who wants to organise a workshop on the theme of COVID-19.

## STEP\_UP Policymaking and advocacy

Policymakers and lobby groups play an important role in facilitating and empowering community workers, social care and healthcare workers and volunteers to face health emergency situations such as COVID-19 or pandemics in the future. To support them, the project team of STEP\_UP makes publicly available a Manual with social and policy intervention measures and a virtual library.

- **Manual of social and policy intervention measures ([link](#))**  
The Manual aims to offer EU countries targeted guidelines and insights on health and social care as well as policy and social measures. It shows which measures are suitable for prevention and containment of transmittable diseases in different contexts and pandemic phases and to what extent communication is decisive for their successful implementation. The measures are divided into Communication, Social, Care and Political measures.
- **Virtual Library ([link](#)):** STEP\_UP performed an extensive review of available measures in managing pandemics, such as COVID-19, in English, Portuguese, Spanish, German and Dutch languages. The library can be accessed on geographical coverage, measures or expected outcomes.

## Results and contact information

The results of STEP\_UP publicly available and have open access. The learning materials of the Workshop methodology can be adapted for local usage.

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