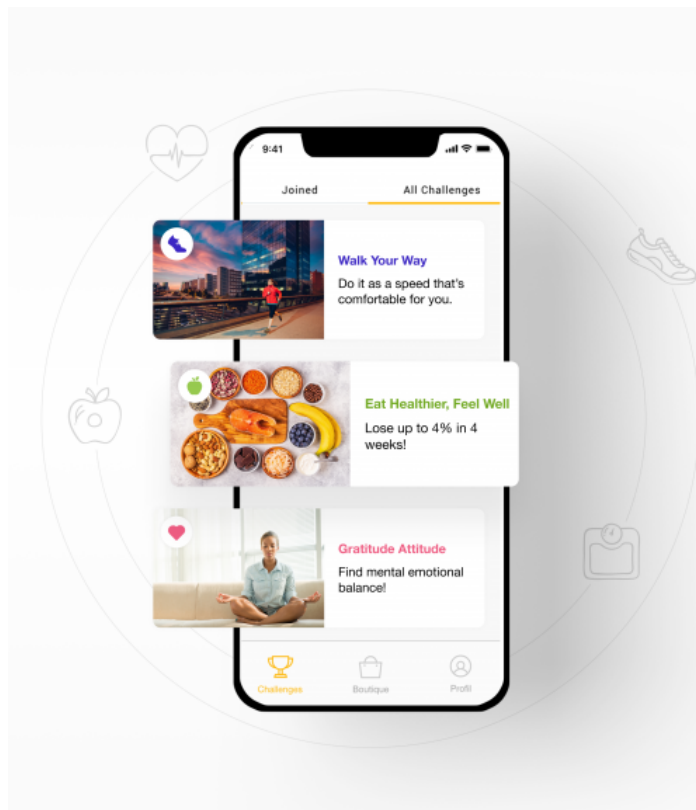






Food4Health project- EIT funded project



BeYou joins the Catalan Institute of Oncology in the Food4Health project to develop a digital tool that cancer patients can use to access nutrition and lifestyle solution



Support Cancer Patients Wellness

An innovative initiative co-founded by EIT Food and EIT Health

Barcelona, Spain Dec 31, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Cancer patients undergoing treatments tend to encounter challenges in one or more aspects of wellness, particularly nutrition, physical fitness, and emotional well-being. These are secondary effects of the disease or its treatment, which ultimately impair the patient's quality of life. As such, cancer patients need specific support that would help them minimize, if not completely avoid, the undesirable aftereffects of cancer treatment.

Often, cancer patients suffer from unhealthy weight loss, reduced muscle strength and mass, nutritional deficiencies, loss of motivation, and other significant problems that corrode their sense of well-being.

Wellness apps are aplenty in the market. However, none of them were intended to specifically help improve cancer patients' diet, physical condition, or emotional happiness. In 2020, BeYou studied the mobile app landscape and confirmed that existing apps meant for cancer patients were either general purpose or primarily focused on just medical support.

“During treatments, nearly all cancer patients encounter health issues related to nutrition, physical fitness, and emotional well-being. Treating cancer is a long-term process, and during this time patients need special support to relieve or prevent common problems that affect their wellness, which may be triggered by either the disease or its treatment itself. Such special support may come from healthcare professionals, but it would be difficult for them to attend to such patient concerns on a daily basis, especially if they do not see these concerns as urgent. This is where digital tools may help improve the quality of support that cancer patients are able to receive during their fight.”

[Claudia Torras](#) - Content Manager & Dietitian, [BeYou](#)

Funded by EIT, the Cross KIC Food4Health is a joint consortium by EIT Food & EIT Health. The Food4Health project MuscleCancer [**Tackling Muscle Mass Loss in Cancer Patients Through Nutrition Solutions and Lifestyle Interventions**], aims to define various solutions for muscle mass preservation, which involve considering the physical activity, eating habits, and the development of mobile applications that respond to patients' needs. In 2020, BeYou started getting involved in developing one such solution, endeavouring to create digital tools or services that empower patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs). EIT provided the needed co-funding. [BeYou](#) then ideated and prototyped a mobile application that would help cancer patients manage their wellness concerns while undergoing treatments.

Since 2020, [BeYou](#) has been conducting market research on mobile app options for cancer patients. It discovered that there is a dearth of digital tools for cancer patients, which can provide personalised support in areas of nutrition, physical exercise, and emotional coaching. As EIT continued to fund the MuscleCancer project in 2021, BeYou produced a prototype of the easy-to-use mobile app that it thought cancer patients needed and used it to facilitate a co-creation process. In collaboration with the Catalan Institute of Oncology (ICO) in Barcelona, BeYou engaged cancer patients and HCPs, aiming to help better define how the mobile app should work. In this process, BeYou obtained app user feedback as well as experts' advice in treating cancer patients.

The app involved the use of gamification algorithms, incentives, coaching features, and social community involvement. It provided users with interactive support. There were four gamified challenges within the app, related to diet, physical exercise, emotional well-being, and body image. Each challenge presented users with reliable wellness-oriented information that can alleviate or prevent common symptoms triggered by cancer or by treatments for the disease. Such information came in the form of infographics, recipes, video exercises, motivational messages, etc.

App usability testing was integral to the co-creation process. This was done in order to gather qualitative and quantitative inputs from users, who participated in person at the co-creation workshop. Users tried out the digital tool, responded to a questionnaire, and articulated their insights regarding the mobile app. The co-creation workshops with cancer patients and interviews with HCPs were key to understanding user behaviours, needs, and preferences by identifying the pain points that they had to go through in managing health issues encountered during cancer treatments.

62.5% of participating users confirmed that receiving rewards for progress reinforced their motivation and commitment to using the app. Examples of progress achieved include posting a photo of a healthy meal or completing a day's steps activity objective. Users also reported that the variety of reliable content and social community support were among their favourite app features.

[BeYou](#) makes use of attitudinal and behavioural user experience research methods, analysing key metrics that help ensure that future app improvements will solve users' problems and fulfill their needs.

All the cancer patients who participated in the co-creation process expressed their high satisfaction about the digital solution, and that they would download and install it when made available. Participant insights revealed their desire to have this digital solution be offered as a service within healthcare

organisations. Thus, the logical next step for BeYou would be to integrate its digital solution in hospitals, insurance companies, and other healthcare organisation environments.

"It is critical to identify human factors and ergonomics before jumping to conclusions and designing solutions. Following such a path will result in the creation of bespoke experiences for people. Both the business and the people would then benefit from the resulting product solution." [Merehan Elamrosy](#) - Product Designer, [BeYou](#)

[Abir Mehawej](#), co-founder and director of BeYou, indicated: "At BeYou we are excited to be part of the EIT Food network, and to work in the future with healthcare organisations, transforming the quality of support cancer patients get in areas of wellness."

We thank EIT and our project partners for trusting us at [BeYou](#) and allowing us to continue improving our innovative digital platforms in personalised nutrition, physical activity, and emotional well-being, which have always aimed to enhance the health and well-being of users. More information about the project and partners can be found here: [li](#)

Media Contact

BEYOU

business@beyouapp.com

business@beyouapp.com

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