

Kickoff Meeting Workshop "ABILITY AGAINST DISABILITY EUROPEAN PROJECTS RESULTS"

Project ENEVA

ENhance Efficacy through Valorisation

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME

KA4 Multilateral Project Agreement n. 2007-1996/001-001

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Introduction

This booklet is reporting the contribution of partners of the project ENEVA in the field of Life Long Learning Programmes applied to disability. They are coming from a deep experience in innovation development in the framework of Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates initiatives: this publication is just reporting a brief information about the obtained results. This dissemination action represents "*in nuce*" the aim of the project ENEVA itself: proposing the enlargement of the information database available in the field of the initiatives already developed in the sector of disability.

ENhance Efficacy through Valorisation - ENEVA

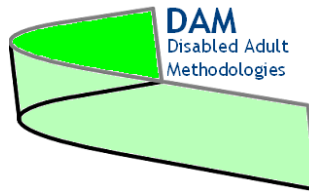
Under Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig initiatives, several projects were developed to favour education and training of persons with disability in a direct or indirect way (by providing new services, qualifying educators...): the efficacy of these actions is often limited in time and space, cause their effects are in place just for the duration of the project (lack in sustainability) and limited to the consortium partner contexts (lack in dissemination and exploitation). A fact is that after each project end, the availability of its results is rapidly ceasing (some information repositories, like web sites, are not more sustained) and (apart of summaries) most of information are lost. This situation limits the efficacy of the work done just to the partnership entities, "forcing" all the other stakeholders in Europe "to reinvent the wheel" each time for a new proposal or just for introducing a change in regional or sectorial contexts.

The project **ENEVA** proposes a thematic action in the field of LLL initiatives toward persons with disabilities. It provides a valorisation of the results achieved in the framework of EU LLL programmes (Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates) by means of a strategy aimed to contact most important stakeholders involved in the integration processes at regional/national and European level. This strategy consists in promoting the results about the specific issue organising a kind of "logical framework" to help researchers as well as decision makers to analyse and compare solutions, experiences, methods and proposals. Basically this work will be accessible via a devoted portal, conceived as a support service linked to the Commission databases: the aim is to gather well documented results (original documents, final reports..) in order to let them explored and exploited by the stakeholders.

The stakeholders (main target group of this project) are intended in a largest meaning of this term: cause the innovation presented by each project would influence in a wide sense the social relationships around the person with disability, his/her expectations, the quality of the services and all the type of "barriers" each person is facing to participate to the society.

The workshops proposed in the project are directed to a vertical and horizontal mainstreaming: in order to boost innovation adoption/adaptation and transfer at level of associations, third sector, technical operators (educators, trainers..) working in field as well as at level of decision makers about services, rules and policies. This process is provided as peculiar of each regional/national contexts as the frame of policies and rules w.r.t disability (as well as opportunities, provisions and cultural attitudes) are very different in the EU countries.

At EU level a "centralised" action is provided in order to involve EU associations, institutions and services in the exploitation of results, thought as a permanent habit and place for critical discussion about. At the end of the project, the elaboration of a set of indicators is expected as the product of a "capacity building" process of all partners around the evaluation of the valorisation strategies.



EU-Grundtvig project DAM - Disabled Adult Methodologies

The project deals with the methodological approach to the education of adults with acquired disability due to accidents and pathological events. The elaboration of methodologies in order to help educators, trainers, social workers and in general persons involved in re-qualification policies in favor of people with acquired disability will represent therefore at European level an innovative aspect. In order to reach this aim we divided our work in two steps: the first was related to the collection of existing material and the second to the elaboration and suggestion of an useful methodology.

During the preparation phase of this project particular attention was devoted on the recognizing and facing the problems coming from the disability. So, the overall outcome of the project was supported by documentary research and a collection data of the number of persons injured in Europe, typology of physical impairments, strategies of tools/techniques at European level. The analysis was taking into account different "point of view" of disabled situation in Europe as they are related to the regional/national laws and rules. What was evident it that at European level no a common method could be envisaged but a adaptation strategy (including local opportunities and lacks) could be the best way to share a framework of activities (guidelines). The guideline document starts from a "common" description of the problem related to re-socialisation (identity recover) of people with disability, exploiting ICF classification as a way to "see" to the problem, in terms of: rehabilitation, participation, access factors and barriers.

This approach could be considered open for the development of local solutions (w.r.t. different legislations) but implying a common understanding of the problem, foreseen re-qualification as a part of a complex process around and with the participation of the disabled person. The trainers and, in general, the stakeholders involved in this process are asked to interact in the framework a complex rehabilitation project in order to participate, share and manage a networked solution toward a possible occupational re-introduction as part of a re-building of own identity of each person. It means the interaction of "learning networks" among different institutions, professionals and family/friendship contexts.

The transnational contribution to the research (review) phase helped the participants to access to different project results coming from the national experiences. Each partner has been asked to produce a contribution to be jointly analyzed and discussed. This process assured a wider view of the problem and the related issues. Then the transnational activity has produced a wide discussion about the feasibility of a strictly targetised methodology with respect to the differences in legislations and praxis in EU countries about the acquired disability. A comparative analysis (reported as annex in Background review document) carried out in the participating countries has reported great differences in responsibility sharing (among institutions), allowances, processes and common praxis already operating in the different countries. The guidelines should be oriented to re-define a "high level" approach in designing an intervention (including re-qualification) starting from the person and his/her needs. From the contributions coming from workshops and internal discussion, it was clear the need to define an approach leaving to the operators (this term is understanding different professional figures in EU), the chance to exploit the national/regional provisions (laws, special laws, services, specific services..) to put in place the programme.

At level of dissemination the transnational added value was assured in terms of contribution coming from different countries, stimula produced by the project (they are still running) and in general enlarging the chances to inform the stakeholders (different networks in different countries) about the project products and their implementation, following the statements of the Madrid declaration in which was established that the disables must integrate in the normal life avoiding unnecessary segregation in education, employment and other spheres of life.

Partnership

The partners present in this Consortium are in part association or national center for the reeducation of disables, and therefore interested to utilise the results of the project and to implement them either by dissemination or by developing new tools starting from this point.

The coordinator is a consortium including many Universities, enterprises and a local authorities (Provincia and Regional and Associations). Its European network will favour the dissemination and a new project (ENEVA) was presented in collaborations with other coordinators of similar projects in order to disseminate the results obtained. The ASL3 (Italy) intends use the methodology indicated by the project and the university of Molise intends to insert this experience as a module of its courses for teachers and social workers.

The Spanish partner FELEM intends to use our didactic approach for the operator of Centro Especial de Trabajo in Barcellona. Similar approach is intended by NMSC which is a national centre for neurological rehabilitation affiliated with the University hospitals of Leuven in Belgium. Another organisation devoted to the assistance of person affected by multiple sclerosis is IMSO ,non profit organisation created in 1980 and in Italy COAT which is a center for technological aids for handicapped people. The dissemination will be made also by the University of Wroclaw and Bonn.

Products

1) Booklets:

the first entitled "Background Review", is an analysis at European level of different disabilities and the system available for helping these persons to be reintegrated socially and in the work market;

the second entitled "Guidelines for education and training of persons with acquired disability": intends to suggest an appropriate methodology for trainers of disable persons. It includes a) a general presentation of aims, the target people, and rehabilitation phases, b) acquired disability as a problem of identity recovery c) the assessment of disabled person, family and social context as a first step to begin a training project, d) the ideal curriculum of trainers, e) training program steps and evolution.

2) Workshops

During the first, organised in Foligno (PG) at Hospital with presence of external evaluators local trainers, disabled persons and exponents of Health Associations, the background document was discussed. During the second workshop held in Melsbroek the rehabilitation methodology used in this centre was compared with our guidelines. At this meeting not only doctor and personnel of the centre, but also person with acquired disability, who present their experience and participated. In the workshop in Wroclaw participated experts' team of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, experts of rehabilitation of disabled people, and the president of the Wroclaw regional Council of disabled people. The final workshop (University of Perugia) was realized with the participation of exponents of local authorities, national health associations, disabled persons trainers, and the responsible of Socrates National Agency.

3) Meeting reports:

7 meetings were organised during the project, the first kick-off meeting established the work plan to be followed and the time table. The other meetings were organised in different countries and the last 4 were accompanied by workshops to open the discussion.

4) Evaluation: an internal and external evaluation was made during the project.

5) Leaflets: (n. 4)The leaflet of the project provided in English is translated in IT, PL, Flemish and ES.

6) Publications: (2 publications in Polish language) related to the treatment and needs of disables.

7) web-site: The web site of the project www.designforall.net

8) CD ROM: of presentations at workshop.

9) Videotape: Videotape RAI Television of the final workshop.

Project Partnership

Consorzio TUCEP

National Multiple Sclerose Centrum v, z,w NMSC

International Multiple Sclerosis Organization IMSO

Federaciòn Espanola para la Lucha contra la esclerosi Multipla FELEM

Associazione COAT-Centro Orientamento Ausili Tecnologici Onlus

Pragma Engineering S.r.l. PRAGMA

Akademia Medyczna we Wroclawiu WMU

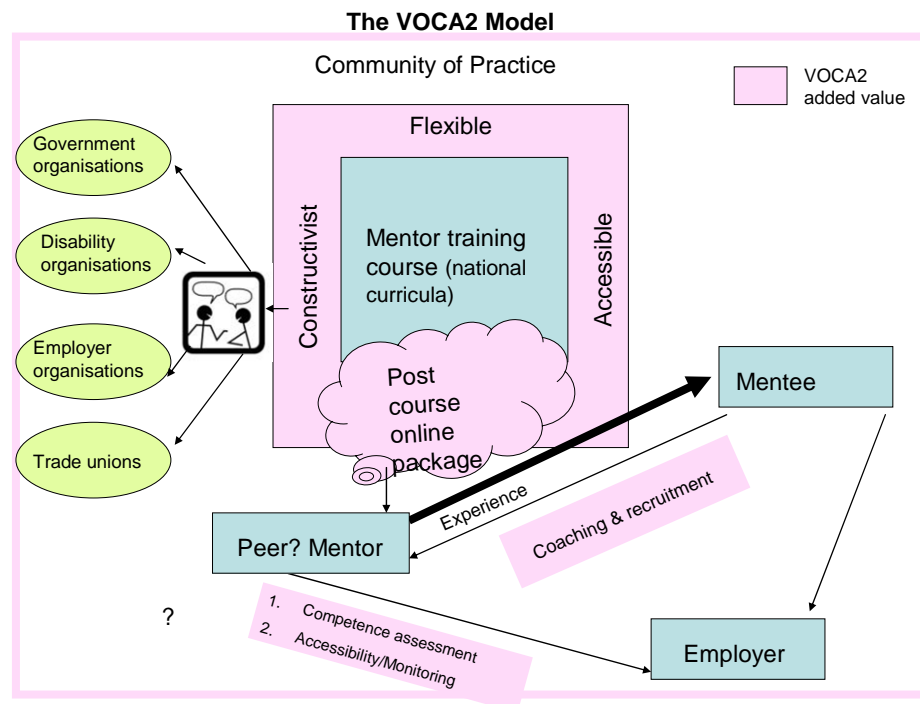
The Voca2 project, Leonardo da Vinci (2005 -07)

The specific aim of the VOCA 2 project was to develop and test a training model, complete with tools and templates, aimed at qualifying teachers to become mentors, who can assist individuals and companies in the recruitment process or ensuring that disabled people stay in their jobs. The mentors also needed to acquire the competences necessary to assist companies and individuals in the process following the recruitment through a coaching process which ensures that the individual and the company engage in long lasting working relationships.

The model developed and tested in this project was aimed at teachers in institutions of vocational training and education as well as those in institutions training or educating disabled persons, but the model is a general model, comprising curricula description and adaptation as well as descriptions of the new teacher roles and supporting tools. This makes the model transferable to other sectors or areas concerning persons who have difficulties maintaining a relationship with the labour market or to general HRD activities.

The model contains a training plan consisting of tools developed in the project and of selected and adapted tools developed by private companies. The model recommends tools but is open, ensuring that tools can be substituted without jeopardizing the model as a whole.

The VOCA 2 project establishes a model for training mentors to have a holistic view of the employment process. The model developed by this project will enable future "VOCA" mentors to detect and solve problems arising in the work place during the recruitment process and for a long period after the recruitment of a disabled person in a company. Furthermore, the holistic view of the employment process will help build a genuinely inclusive labour market where all groups are viewed as important resources in the economic growth of European countries.



According to Wikipedia a mentor is 'a trusted friend, counsellor or teacher, usually a more experienced person. Mentors provide their expertise to less experienced individuals in order to help them advance their careers, enhance their education, and build their networks.' A mentoring relationship can arise spontaneously and informally but in the VOCA2 project we were concerned with setting up mentoring relationships in a structured and professional manner. The VOCA2 mentor training course therefore needed both to train specific mentoring skills such as active listening and

questioning but also needed to include guidance on how to set up and recognise the formal boundaries of the mentoring relationship.

At the heart of the VOCA2 model is a mentor training course which trains mentors to help disabled people obtain and maintain employment. The mentor therefore has the traditional relationship with the mentee but under VOCA2, the mentor also has a relationship with the employer. The VOCA2 mentor applies accessibility and readiness tools to the work place to ensure the readiness of the workplace to receive disabled employees. In this way it is hoped that small obstacles will not grow into reasons for the disabled person abandoning the job.

Under the VOCA2 model, the training course does not end once formal training is completed but continues in the form of a post-course package which enables the new mentors to continue the dialogue begun with their peers and trainers even after the official end of the course. Since the mentors may themselves be disabled the VOCA2 mentor training course aims to be accessible and flexible to ensure maximum inclusion (as developed in the VOCA Europe project). The training course is also built on social constructivist principles where people learn from engaging in conversation with each other. This dialogue extends to external but interested persons such as those working in relevant government, voluntary organisations or trade unions.

This dialogue takes part in a community of practice which can be online to allow maximum participation of all interested parties.

To increase the effectiveness of the mentoring, a suite of tools was developed to support the work of the mentor in systematically finding out the suitability of the proposed workplace, monitoring progress in adaptation and monitoring the milestones and goals of the new disabled employee as they settle into their new work routines.

An (other) overview:

I. The Concept of mentoring

- a. What is mentoring?
- b. Where does the concept come from?
- c. Who were your mentors?
- d. What do mentors do?
- e. Why mentoring?

II. Being disabled

- a. Reflection on participants' own experiences
- b. Issues facing disabled people

III. Qualities and skills of a mentor

- a. Communication - verbal and non-verbal
- b. Active listening
- c. Barriers to communication
- d. Problem-solving
- e. Questioning
- f. Basic knowledge of legislation affecting disabled people

IV. The role of a mentor

- a. Building a relationship
- b. Setting objectives/action plans
- c. Facilitating change
- d. Recognising success
- e. Empowering/encouraging/motivating disabled people
- f. Expectations/commitments
- g. Record keeping/monitoring

V. Boundaries and responsibilities

- a. Attachment
- b. Disclosure
- c. The Mentoring contract

VI. The World of Work

- a. CV and job application
- b. Interviews
- c. Induction
- d. Work routines
- e. Rights and responsibilities

VII. Implementing the VOCA2 tools

- a. Competence Assessment
- b. Monitoring
- c. Recruiting and Coaching

VIII. Other potential training topics

- a. Diversity/challenging discrimination
- b. Local agencies/services for disabled people
- c. Paperwork that mentors need to keep

Note that sections 2, 6, 7 and 8 are specific to the target group while the rest are generic and apply to all mentor training.

And a specific example of one of the tools developed:

Voca Europe 2

Increased accessibility to vocational training and increased attachment to the labour market for disabled people through the VOCA Europe 2 mentor model (2005-2007)



COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT MODEL

Instruction handbook

During the first meeting with the General Manager use:

FORM 1.1
CHECKLIST 1.1
FORM 1.2
CHECKLIST 1.2

During the interview with the foreman use:

FORM 1.3
CHECKLIST 1.3

To test the employee feeling and to brief the result of the anonymous questionnaire use:

FORM 1.4
CHECKLIST 1.4

During the final interview with the General manager use:

FORM 1.5

To have a final assessment report in activities, facilities and motivations use:

CHECKLIST 1.5

Figure 1: Competence Assessment entry page online

Mentor training is only one part of the VOCA2 approach and is supported by the use of structured assessment tools.

The template mentor training course can be adapted to fit cultures with both weak and strong legislative backgrounds and also to different cultural environments.

Mentor training can be offered online, face to face and as a blend of the two. The key to effectiveness in each case is to have a clearly defined cohort of participants both starting and finishing at the same time to enable the critically important reflective discussion.

Participants gain enormously from contacts with relevant third parties through communities of practice whether these are online or face to face.

The future mentors can be able-bodied, physically disabled or mentally disabled.

The VOCA2 tools add an objective and structured way of assessing and monitoring the workplace and its progress towards accommodating disabled employees.



EBIFF - European Passport on Professional Training in Early Childhood Intervention

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Project Web Site:	www.ebiff.org

Project Number:	A/04/B/F/PP-158.125
Project Duration: 2004 - 2007	
No. of month:	36
Start:	01.10.2004
End:	30.9.2007
Status	Finalized, products available

Project Description

1) Background

1.1 Challenge

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) for disabled children (400.000 children in the EU) is a holistic method of early intervention and prevention of long term impediment. (Age: 0-6 years).

ECI was implemented in the late 70ies in whole of Europe – with a variety of legal, organisational and educational approaches.

Professionals working in early intervention are coming from different fields, such as e.g. pedagogy, (AT, DE), Medicine and nursing (LT, IT, EE), psychology, paramedical sciences (physiotherapy, speech therapy) or are working in combination with psychosocial services (NO).

There is no single European country having a standardized training for this profession. Therefore the missing comparability of educational careers requires a joint European concept of necessary basic qualifications regarding ECI.

ECI requires lifelong individual learning and further education, because of the individual needs of the families and because of the continuous increase of knowledge (neuro-science, systems, developmental psychology, genetics,..) and ECI in future might be based on a Master-Level. To make training in this area comparable, it is also necessary to introduce the concept of ECTS.

1.2 The method

EBIFF is based on an individual portfolio approach, introducing ECTS in a training field which is characterized by high heterogeneity. Individual portfolio means, that based on the individual professional training situation each participant or training institution is able to assess its position regarding a common European Curriculum. This Curriculum is based on empirical analysis with the

relevant stakeholders (parents, professionals, training institutions) and refers to EQF and a "learning outcome-model".

The Curriculum-creation process is validated by the Scientific Community.

Within a pilot run more than 100 professionals and 4 training institutions took part, enabling assessments of the individual and/or institutional portfolios.

The final products of the project (a European Educational Passport on Professional Training ECI) systemizes and complements individual forms of access to training and necessary qualifications and – at long term – increases the quality of services in Europe.

1.3 The partnership

The major strategy to create the partnership was based on the necessity to reflect the main stakeholders in the field:

- a) parents of children with disabilities or at the risk to be disabled or representatives of the target group
- b) cooperative professionals in terms of ECI-Centres
- c) Training Institutions
- d) Research institutions
- e) Political Decision makers
- f) Marketing experts to enable sustainability

Partner	Country code	Position in the field
a) Operative Partners		
S.I.N.N.	AT	Coordinator, Research institutions
SHFI	AT	Training Institution
VINCO	AT	Operative ECI Centre
3s	AT	Research Institution
University of Liege	BE	Training and Research
University Ramon LLull Blanquerna	ES	Training and Research
University Tallinn	EE	Training
Social Support Centre	GR	Operative Centre
University of Patras	GR	Training and Research
Casa die Cura San Raffaele	IT	Research and Operative Centre
Fundatia H	RO	Training Institution
AOZPO	SK	Roof organisation for People with Disability
University of Siauliai	LT	Training and Research
Rom Euroconsult	RO	Consulting

b) Strategic Partners		
BOSK	NL	Parent Organisation
Styrian Government	AT	Political Decision Making
Sorlandet Centre	NO	Operative Centre and Training
Berufsgruppe Kindergartenpädagogik	AT	Professional Association
University of Madrid	ES	Training and Research
EAEI	EU	European Roof Organisation Early Childhood Intervention

2) Aims and products

EBIFF has two major goals:

- to make formal and informal national training systems (ECI) **comparable** – taking into account the individual and national training situation in the field. This comparability was reached by an evidence-based European Curriculum (on the level of a full Master degree).
- and to **improve the access** to professional training in terms of introducing ECTS and in terms of validation of individual portfolios. Those individual portfolios or training institutions which match to the European Curriculum were certified.

Both goals should be reached by the following **products**:

Product	Language	Availability
1) Comparative analysis of the current professional training situation in the field of ECI	EN, DE	www.ebiff.org
2) European Curriculum for Professionals in the field of Early Childhood Intervention	EN, DE, GR, FR, SK, EE, RO, ES, TR	www.ebiff.org other languages please contact the coordinator
3) ECTS Handbook for the specific usage in the field of ECI	EN, DE	www.ebiff.org
4) Professional profile for professionals in the field of ECI	EN, DE, GR, IT, EE, ES, SK, RO, LT, FR	
5) Online Self-Assessment-Instrument for the evaluation of formal and informal learning for professionals in early intervention and for educational institutions.	EN, DE, GR, SK	www.ebiff.org The assessment is still accessible for professionals or training insitutions
6) European Educational Passport "Early Intervention"	EN, DE	Regarding the concrete procedure please contact the coordinator

3) Finalized goals

All products were produced by the partnership, enabling online certification processes for the participants of the pilot run. For about 25% of the participants the individual and or professional portfolio matched to the framework of the European Curriculum. For all other participants the assessment procedure showed necessities of further (basically) continuous training.

The Curriculum itself was assessed highly valid by the Scientific Community and published in various peer-reviewed journals.

4) Impact and sustainability

EBIFF showed remarkable impact in different areas on various national levels:

On European level EBIFF increased discussion processes regarding the necessity of high level (tertiary based) training in the complex field of Early Childhood Intervention. A European consensus can be observed, that the professional profile should be based on a full Master-level (120 ECTS). First steps towards this goals were already undertaken within the project: Regarding Lithuania the curriculum was introduced in the study year 2007/2008 at University of Siauliai. Furthermore parts of the curriculum were introduced at University of Tallinn. Especially the learning outcome-model was assessed helpful in terms of curriculum creation in comparable professional fields (speech therapy, occupational therapy..)

In Romania promotion of ECTS increased the awareness of the stakeholders regarding this necessary (Bologna-based) instrument.

In Belgium an application for a university course was presented. In Austria a future university course will be based on the EBIFF-Curriculum. In Germany newly created courses integrated contents and methods of EBIFF (Fachhochschule Gera). In Spain EBIFF showed an impact on the issue of certification. In Slovakia for the first time working groups with all stake holders (including Ministries) were implemented. In Turkey EBIFF initiated a discussion process about the necessity of early preventive systems for vulnerable children.

5) Future development

EBIFF showed the necessity of comparable (tertiary) professional training efforts in the field of Early Childhood Intervention. Especially for the new member states show a substantial lack of interdisciplinary training in ECI.

Next steps will have to focus

- resource building (e.g. in terms of identification of best practice examples)
- innovation transfer, especially towards the new member states
- creation of a European Master (especially based on ODL and ICT)

6) References

- Pretis, M. (2006). Professional training in Early Intervention: A European perspective. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 3.1, 42-48
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- Alisauskiene, S (2007). Early Childhood Intervention in Lithuania in European Context. *Special Education*, 1.16, 17-26.
- Pretis, M. (2008). In Richtung gemeinsamer Basis in der Frühförderung in Europa. In: Chr. Leyendecker (Ed), *Gemeinsam Handeln statt Behandeln. Aufgaben und Perspektiven der Komplexeistung Frühförderung*, 364-374. München: Reinhardt.



EQM-PD - European Quality Management for Professionals Working with Persons with Disabilities

General Information

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Project Web Site:	www.eqm-pd.com

Project Number:	A/03/B/F/PP-158.027
Project Duration:	2003 - 2006
No. of month:	36
Start:	01.11.2003
End:	31.10.2006
Status	Finalized, products available

1) Project Description

1.1 Challenge

EQM-PD defines in cooperation with relevant partners (research, financing bodies, services and persons with disability) quality criteria for five basic modules. These modules reflect key processes of assistance within the fields of education, living, work, leisure-time and counselling for persons with disability. Main target group for the curriculum (in terms of further educational programs) are professionals who are directly working with persons with disabilities. The definition of QM-criteria and the creation of an evaluation instrument (online - questionnaire) is an important instrument for the self-assessment of the institution including participative processes of persons with disabilities themselves.

The partnership includes 18 partners from 8 European countries (BE, DE, ES, AT, BG, PL, RO, SK). The European roof-organisation EASPD supports the dissemination process of the project.

2) Aims and goals

The issue of quality in social service provision experienced increasing interest throughout the last years. There are a lot of different approaches, which have different motivations (increasing quality for the sake of the clients, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, increasing transparency of services,...) It is not our issue to discuss these different motivations. In fact the discussion of quality has been entered a few years ago and in most cases reached in a top-down process the operative level (the behaviour of the professionals working with people with disability).

And this is exactly, what Eqm-pd is about: There are hardly any attempts existing to describe and define quality criteria for the concrete behaviour of a professional working with persons with disability in different settings.

3) Results and Products:

3.1 EQM-PD - Online Assessment-Instrument

The EQM-PD – online assessment instrument assesses the quality of key-processes within the assistance for persons with disabilities both for the professionals and the person with disability. The assessment instrument provides comparable indicators for the following assistance areas:

LIVING, WORK, LEISURE TIME; COUNSELLING; EDUCATION

This assessment instrument is available for both professionals and clients at www.eqm-pd.com and provides an online-feedback of the assessed quality of the assistance.

3.2 EQM-PD – Curriculum

The curriculum for professionals focuses on issues of quality management in terms for further education for professionals directly working with persons with disability. The material which contains

- self guided learning units
- face-to-face learning units
- practical transfer units
- is based on a linked CD format.

Furthermore didactical materials and guidelines for trainers are available

3.3 Certification Handbook

The certification handbook is a guideline for service-providers to enter certification processes in the field of assistance for PwD.

4) Impact

The major impact of the project consisted in awareness raising regarding quality management processes in the field of assistance for PwD.

Furthermore in Austria and in Hungary the project results showed an impact on training courses for frontline-professionals. In Spain a wide spread usage of the online assessment instrument is planned. Within the field of assistance for PwD regarding "work-assistance" the pilot run showed major impacts regarding the issue of gender mainstreaming.

5) Future development

EQM-PD – for the first time made available an instrument to measure the quality of assistance processes for PwD themselves. This is a major step towards participation in the field of assistance.

In future further development steps might include persons with higher degrees of dependency and include new areas of assistance (e.g. care processes) in terms of quality management.

6) References

Pretis, M. (2006). European Quality Management for frontline professionals working with persons with disability. *Special Education*, 2.15, 166-173.



European Certification Of Ict Skills For People With Mental Disabilities

Acronym:	EasyIT
Project N°:	133948-LLP-2007-PL-LMP
Coordinating Organisation	Spółeczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Zarządzania
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Duration of Agreement:	months 24
Start:	1.12.2007
End	30.11.2009
Status	In process

Background

ICT skills are gateway to today's world. To the world of education, entertainment, business and social life. If one does not possess e-skills which enable to enter this world, is likely to be excluded from information society. In this way the "e-gap" is increasing which is not a good indicator of the society development. This problem was raised number of times. A lot of reports concerning the profound influence which has Internet access and ICT skills for social, economical and cultural development on different target groups might be quoted here. To name some of them: E-Business & ICT skills in Europe (2002 ICT Skills Monitoring Group), New Perspectives on ICT skills and employment (OECD 2004), The Report of Ministry of Education (2006, Turkey). But unfortunately there is considerably small number of research and publications referring to the use of ICT by disabled people and the exclusion of mentally disabled from information society. That is a pessimistic symptom since this particular target group may take advantage of the ICT skills in double (as a gateway to the world and as a rehabilitation tool), and still there is less attention put to it.

Booy & Vanbruggen (2000) has revealed that individuals with a disability consider the ICT and internet to be gateway to the rest of the world. This is also confirmed by Polish scientists who underline the great impact computers may have on rehabilitation process of the disabled (including mentally disabled) Also report published by University of Hamburg (Probst P., Hilling S. "Training of skills by computer") emphasized facilitating role of computers on daily life skills of disabled.

The problem is also well illustrated by Italian research made by Nielsen and Smau (2002) who tried to quantify the number of disabled people that is cut away because of the lack of competence in using computers and Internet: explaining that only in the best of the cases 80% of disabled has a bad attitude to navigate on Internet! The same situation may be tracked in majority partner countries, lack of ICT skills prevent disabled from taking part in web society. The problem becomes

even more complicated if we take under consideration the use of ICT by mentally disabled. Small amount of information is available. This shortage of data is noticeable and may support the argument on the urgent need to undertake activities which aim at this particular target group.

Desk research conducted by the project leader revealed one thing – there is almost no attention put to the structures supporting the acquisition of ICT skills by mentally disabled. That is why the estimation of needs is purely empirical. Field research based on the formal and informal interviews and observations was conducted in partner countries. It identified three types of needs:

The need of educational system - education system should have possibility to assess acquired skills in the way which will be suited to all members of the society, regardless of their age, gender, nationality or disability. The equivalent of 'computer driver license' - recognizable certificate should be applied in the sector of disable people too, to have possibility to achieve next stages of ICT literacy and therefore gain more motivation to develop their skills.

The need of educational institutions and teachers - mainly ICT teachers – having ICT education guidelines and tools to assess ICT skills of their learners. The need of people with mental disability –having the option to undergo assessment process which would be recognizable in many countries and having positive motivation towards acquiring new skills or advanced skills.

Goals and objectives

The overall aim of the project is to include mentally disabled people in the information society and in this way decrease skills gap (digital divide) which is being particularly noticeable among this target group. To include mentally disabled people in the information society means also to make the society aware of such a possibility. Average society members are not aware of the fact, that people who do not read, do not speak, do not hear, and have touch-based or motor-based limitations are still able to use computer and Internet. Obviously it takes time, sometimes special software is needed but in majority of cases some basic usage is reachable. Nowadays more and more websites and special educational platforms are developed which might be use to practice ICT skills (wai-not.be). The main overall objective will be achieved by number of specific objectives. To name the most important ones:

- **Setting up certification framework for assessing ICT skills of youngsters with mental disability**
- **Developing online testing tool for testing digital skills of youngsters with mental disability**
- **Developing online administration tool for managing the testing and certification process**
- **Providing ICT teachers, therapists with guidelines for preparing learners to take the examination**

By achieving all these aims and objectives specific needs enumerated in the point D1 will be addressed. The educational system will have certification framework which will not exclude people because of their disability thought Europe. This framework will also influence quality of ICT education (either formal or non-formal) by proper assessment of the learners' special needs. Institutions and ICT teachers will possess the testing tool to access e-skills of disabled people, apart form the testing tool they will also have an administration platform to mange the certification and testing process. And in the end people with mental disability will have possibility to undergo the certification of their ICT skills. In this way they will become more motivated to achieve next stages of digital literacy.

Results and outputs

State of the art report

It is crucial to analyze the market and define how ICT skills description relevant to PwD could fit in existing structures. The report will cover the subjects of: how the problem of ICT use is linked to mentally disabled, how usually ICT skills are defined (in other similar solutions all over Europe). The report will be followed by the template which is going to be filled while describing each skill.

Creation of an online tool

Main objective: to develop testing tool which will be used by teachers assessing ICT skills of people with intellectual disabilities as well as for those being in charge of administration of certified

examinations. The pedagogical part is a base for technicians to develop the tool which will act as a support in assessing ICT skills. Testing portal will work as an interactive assessment tool, while administrative portal will be used by assessors to handle the individual screening and certification process. It will be needed to register new clients (youngsters, teenagers), create tests, assign tests to clients, making reports. Activities involved in the work package focus on:

(1) development of different sections of the testing tool (using Flash files, audio files etc)

(2) development of an administrative portal

(3) pilot testing of the tool (necessary to proof whether the online tool is suited to the needs of youngsters with intellectual disabilities)

(4) peer reviewing

Testing tool

This tool will have following options: definition of competences, creation of test-questions, assign test-questions to a competence test (a competence test consists of several questions, testing a specific competence), assign the competence test to a candidate. The competence test will be supervised by a coach. The coach can clarify the test to be performed if the candidate has trouble understanding the screen. Each test-question can be skipped when the coach evaluates that the candidate cannot answer the test-question in the right manner. After the test termination, the coach will get a result, showing the list of passes/failed test-questions.

Template for describing ICT skills relevant for PwD

Set of described skills

Administrative portal – This portal will be developed in order to facilitate administrators and teachers work with examinations and testing procedures. The portal will allow all organizations to register clients, choose clients, assign tests to each client or the group of clients, make examination reports and prepare progress reports of each client. Since Administrative portal will be delivered only in English, that is why basic English knowledge is necessary.

Certification framework

Activities which will have to be conducted within this work package:

- (1) to analyze similar certification frameworks (for instance ECDL),
- (2) to analyze the specifics of the skills which will be measured in the scope of the certification,
- (3) to develop general structure,
- (4) to elaborate paths of certification,
- (5) to define examination procedures,
- (6) to design patterns of documents,
- (7) to analyze the market and identify potential certification bodies,
- (8) peer reviewing. (This work package is dependant on the primary definition of ICT skills which are going to be certified by international examination. Usage methodology of current european learning outcome models and EQF-framework, to be able to integrate certification processes in existing European strategies (especially regarding VET)

Contact in Austria

Partners in Poland, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey. Regarding information in Austria please contact:

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Virtual Incubator For Prequalification Into Resource Tutors For Disabled People

This project was awarded with the "QUALITY CERTIFICATE" from Bulgarian National Agency "Leonardo da Vinci", Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science & Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2006.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project has been financed by the **Leonardo da Vinci programme of European Commission**. It is a programme for implementation of the European Union (EU) policy in the sphere of vocational training;

The project aims to establish a vocational profile and curriculum for the new qualification of **VOCATIONAL RESOURCE TUTOR** for people with disabilities;

The resource tutor will teach, train, guide and support people with disabilities both individually and in a group;

The training and qualifying of trainers will facilitate the vocational integration and reintegration of people with disabilities thus giving them the chance to find employment and self-employment;

The ICT supported learning such as a virtual incubator containing a manual of training modules on line will make it appropriate and accessible for all;

A testing system will examine and evaluate, again on line, the acquired knowledge, skills and competences and will generate a unified certificate, valid in all participating countries (United Kingdom, Greece and Bulgaria) for the new qualification of **RESOURCE TUTOR**.

The project will allow the sharing of experience and best practice among the participating countries.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

BULGARIA

Zgura- M, member of Marie Curie Association (contractor and coordinator)

Faculty of Education, University of Plovdiv

Regional Development Agency, Plovdiv

GREECE

Department of Education, University of Ioannina

Association of parents and friends of disabled people, Ioannina,

Department of Sciences in Preschool Education and Educational Design, University of the Aegean, Rhodes

PORTUGAL

Association of parents and technicians for inclusion of people with disability

UNITED KINGDOM

Edinburgh University Settlement

TARGET GROUPS

Disabled educators

Trainers of disabled people

Long-time unemployed educators

Policy makers, intermediaries, trainers and organisations of disabled people

DIRECT USERS:

People with disabilities who have not had access to education and training

People with disabilities who wish to continue their vocational training

Professional training institutions

PROJECT RESULTS:

National reports on need analysis conducted in Bulgaria, Greece and UK

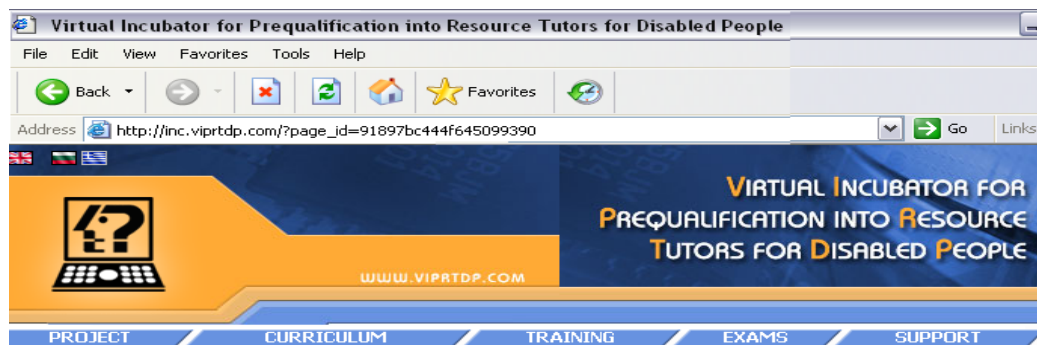
Comparative analysis report

An occupational profile of **RESOURCE TUTOR** for adults with disabilities

Virtual incubator for prequalification into **RESOURCE TUTOR e-learning platform**
Online training and testing in **Braille**
Online training and testing in **Sign Language**
Online training and testing in **Psychological Adaptation of People with Disabilities**
Online training and testing in **Disability Equality Training**
Online training and testing in **Working with Internet**
Online training and testing in **Business English**
Online training and testing in **Start your own business**
Online training and testing in **Management of SMEs**
Online training and testing in **Business Planning**
Online training and testing in **Marketing Researches**

European Union certificate for Resource Tutor valid in Bulgaria, Greece and United Kingdom

NB! All products are available in English, Bulgarian and Greek language.



Welcome to
Virtual Incubator for Prequalification into Resource Tutors for Disabled People

Virtual Incubator for Prequalification into Resource Tutors for Disabled People is a 30-month project in the field of vocational training funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme of the European Commission. The project raises the qualification of unemployed or disabled pedagogues by offering them an opportunity to continue their vocational training. The new qualification, competencies and skills will raise their employment opportunities on the labour market and improve their self-confidence. On the other hand, the resource tutors will make vocational training accessible for people with disabilities or help them continue their education. Thus the project will answer the realized necessity of specially tailored, flexible and more effective approach for education and training of disabled people.

Project web site: <http://www.viprtdp.com>

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Promoting the accessibility to the web for all

Everybody knows that the Internet is a fantastic system for connecting people from any origin. The Internet provides a wide range of opportunities and facilities for communication with institutions or with other people. For some people – geographically distant or isolated because they are handicapped – the Internet can represent a “formidable” help to get “included”. This requires specific arrangements for the “accessibility to the web” whatever the reason why each category of users are excluded. If these specific arrangements are not taken in account, the web becomes an additional factor of exclusion (i.e. the Internet fracture).

People in charge of creating websites (communication managers and web designers) need to be informed and trained on such specificities to be able to set up websites “accessible for all”.

The European Union – that feels very concerned with equality for all – has launched diverse “Recommendations” about the “accessibility of the web for all”.

Each European country has followed these recommendations and developed national regulations aimed at national, regional and local organisations, in order to make their websites accessible for all and specifically for people with handicaps.

Diverse tools exist to help handicapped people use computers.

The most important one is a “screen reader” software (*Jaws* or other) which allows blind people to use computers without screens, but with earphones.

It is obvious that the “screen reader” can read easily only if the text is well organised on the screen. If not, or if the screen display includes images, sophisticated graphs, ... the “screen reader” may get lost.

A wide range of various tools exist for all other categories of physical handicaps. Each of them requires to respect specific recommendations for smooth running.

These are the reasons why an international organisation – the *W3C* (*World Wide Web Consortium*) – has defined a whole set of standards (*WAI*) to follow in order to provide accessibility of the web for all.

With the aim of promoting good practices for communication managers and web designers, the University of *Nice* and the University of *Haute-Alsace* have launched diverse training seminars. The first seminar has been designed for an international audience in Tallin (Estonia) in the frame of *ELLPROFT*, an European *Grundtvig* project. This seminar has been followed by several 2- or 3-day seminars aimed for managers or web designers all over France. (Please refer to the programs in annex).

In order to reach a wider audience, the two universities are designing and realizing a series of 20 videos “*Access-Key, les clés de l'accessibilité*”. In the first part of each video a “handicapped user” describes the difficulties he/she meets using websites which have not been designed according to one of the 14 *WAI* rules. The second part introduces a website in conformity with the corresponding *WAI* rule. And the final part concludes with a small course devoted to web designers with technical information for the application of the corresponding *WAI* recommendation.

For better understanding all dialogues of the movies are sub-titled.

The videos are in free access on the web : <http://www.access-key.org>.

Presently four videos have already been published :

“Ensure that tables have necessary mark-up to be transformed by accessible browsers and other user agents”

“Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's”

“Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element”

“Clearly identify the target of each link”

The further 16 videos will be published step by step in 2008.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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