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## INVITE AN EXPERT

**ACCORDING TO THE EDSA „INVITE AN EXPERT “- PROGRAM THE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION IN KOSOVO ASKED FOR SUPPORT FOR A THREE DAY SEMINAR PROGRAM.**

*Report by Cora Halder*



Down Syndrome Kosova (DSK) organized the seminars in cooperation with the ministry of education. The project was financially supported by the „Safe the Children “- organization (rent location, simultaneous translation) and by EDSA (travel costs for lecturer; no fee for the lecturer). Having been in Kosovo already twice before (2010, 2015), I was very pleased to be invited again by the board of DSK.

#### Situation in school classes

Teachers in three different cities, Gjakova, Gjilan and Pristina needed a first introduction or an update about Down Syndrome. Since some years children with DS visit regular schools, but teachers and support teachers have had nearly no education

on the topic Down Syndrome and feel very challenged. Also, because the situation in the school classes are far from ideal. Often 40 children are in one class, plus 2 or 3 with a disability, some of them with DS. But teachers do not get any help at all, they are mostly alone with all these children. There are no or hardly any assistants.

25 to 30 teachers were present in Gjakova and Gjilan. In Pristina the group was smaller but the 12 teachers here were very interested and active. I was impressed about their motivation to attend a full-day seminar on a day off. It was weekend and the beginning of the summer holiday. The participating teachers were mainly chosen by school directors.

#### Program

The day started with a presentation of the results of the EDSA survey on school-inclusion in 20 European countries (2017). Further on the program was a general introduction about Down Syndrome, medical problems and specific DS-learn and behaviour aspects.

Best practices and experiences with inclusive education were discussed. One topic was how to adapt material in different school subjects. Some extra time was set aside for mathematics and the numicon material. There was time for questions and answers. The simultaneous translation functioned well, all three days the same translator accompanied us, which was an advantage.

#### Certificate of participation

Participants were very happy with the informative day. As a proof of participation, they all became a certificate.



# NEWS FROM THE PROJECT WITH EDSA MEMBERS IN THE CONSORTIUM – ALDOCET (ROMANIA)

## LEISURE TIME OF PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Report by Liana Vislan – Aldo-Cet, Romania

### PREFACE



Asociația Langdon Down Oltenia Centrul Educațional Teodora, ALDO-CET coordinates the European project DS LEISURE, which is a training program to improve the quality of life of people with Down syndrome through inclusive leisure time.

The DS LEISURE program aims to train the competences in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge of people with Down syndrome, their families, specialists and volunteers regarding the implementation of inclusive leisure activities.

[www.dsleisure.eu](http://www.dsleisure.eu)

During October 2017 - September 2019, the DS LEISURE project is implemented by an European Consortium, consisting of six partner organizations:

- four NGOs working in the field of Down Syndrome as follows: ASOCIATIA LANGDON DOWN OLTENIA CENTRUL EDUCATIONAL TEODORA, ALDO-CET, Romania; Associazione Italiana Persone Down Onlus, AIPD, Italy; Stichting Downkidsinternational, DKI, the Netherlands; Down Sendromu Dernegi, DSD, Turkey.
- two universities: The University of Craiova, Romania is participating as leisure expert and the Aristotelio Panepipstimio Thessalonikis, Greece as expert in the development of ICT Tools adapted to people with disabilities.

DS LEISURE is a project funded by the European Commission within the ERASMUS+ 2017 Programme.

The partners together with people with Down syndrome, their families, support and leisure sector professionals have designed, tested and validated a training package, a series of practical experiences and an online platform for implementing the training methodology



## INTRODUCTION



The DS LEISURE training program is targeted towards people with intellectual disabilities who can perform leisure activities with or without support from the system. The program offers

learning tools for leisure time planning and for the implementation of the personal plan designed.

## PROBLEM

Following the studies performed in each partner country, regarding the habits of people with Down syndrome to spend their leisure time, in which 883 people with Down syndrome participated, in three age categories: 11-14 years; 15-22 years old; over 23 years; several common conclusions in the five partner countries have been drawn:

- Most of the people with Down syndrome in the analysis sample spend their leisure time at home or in activities organized by the associations to which they belong, together with their peers and professionals.
- The people with Down syndrome in the analysis sample who have a habit of going in leisure environments are always accompanied either by operators in the organizations they belong to or by support people, and never just by friends.
- Most of the people with Down syndrome in the analysis sample do not have the habit of going to concerts, theatre, cinema, exhibitions or library; do not organize anniversaries or parties in club/disco; do not go for picnics neither football/handball/volleyball matches; nor do they visit state, administrative and political institutions.

## DS LEISURE SOLUTIONS

- Each partner organized a workshop, in which adults with Down syndrome, parents, volunteers, support people, educational professionals and representatives of leisure environments participated.
- The participants with Down syndrome analysed and voted the leisure time activities for which they chose to train and to experience.



- As a result, the DS LEISURE Consortium designed the methodological guide for the training program and organized working sessions for its validation together with the same participants.
- Based on the results obtained and the identified needs, the materials for training the skills required to designing and organizing the own leisure plan were produced.

## DS LEISURE INTELLECTUAL OUTPUTS



The DS LEISURE consortium has designed and published four categories of intellectual outputs:

1. **COMPENDIOUS** – a synthetic presentation of the DS LEISURE training concept made through a summary of the goals, the contents of training and lessons, the teaching methods and competences pursued. <https://www.dsleisure.eu/public-documents>
2. **WORKBOOK FOR TRAINEES WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES** - five lessons that invite the trainees:
  - a. to think about leisure time activities, they want to experience;
  - b. to design a personal leisure plan based on own choices and important support factors;
  - c. to draw up the weekly schedule highlighting personal leisure time;
  - d. to identify the steps required for carrying out a leisure activity and the support persons;
  - e. to transform the personal plan into an activity plan; and to practice and present the activity plan.

The learner self-evaluates his/her activity, answering with the help of icons to a series of questions. <https://www.dsleisure.eu/public-documents>

3. **SET OF GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALS:** support tools for leisure professionals and support people. A set of guides: methodological, train the trainer, trainers, learning by doing; practicing the experiential activities; as well as the evaluation forms. <https://www.dsleisure.eu/public-documents>

4. **E-LEARNING PLATFORM** - built in separate sections for learners and trainers or instructors. The online courses are based on electronic exercises, virtual



scenarios and didactic information and can be accessed through direct registration.

<http://learn.dsleisure.eu/>

## VALIDATION OF TRAINING MATERIALS

The validation of the training materials was carried out in all the 5 partner countries, in three dimensions:

1. **Face to face** through practical exercises and role play;
2. **Learning by doing in leisure environments** of the main competences pursued: awareness of one's own person; social skills, assertivity, creativity and solving power, asking for help and using the system, ability to make choices, communication and guidance;
3. **E-learning** through electronic games, virtual scenarios and online exercises for personal development, increasing self-awareness and independence, increasing confidence in personal choices and intrinsic motivation.

The working model is based on the dialogue technique, in the context of self-determination theory and person-centred planning, with an emphasis on inclusive leisure activities like any other person, with goals of increasing self-awareness and ensuring the environment of mutual learning.

The approach is based on questions built around the learner's wishes and needs; personalization with a focus on empowering to finding a creative solution for everyone; self-directing and establishing contacts for self-development; identifying the own system (family, neighbours, friends) that can create inclusion and open up new opportunities.

Lessons are designed in easy language, learning by repetition, exchange of knowledge and experiences within the group, mutual support and empowering as group coordinators the participants with Down syndrome who already know or do certain activities and exercises.



Learning is done through group dialogue, support work, individual work, role play and communication exercises.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The DS LEISURE training program trains respect, recognition and acceptance of differences in vision; active listening, expressing one's inner voice, asking questions, involving in the topics of dialogue and serious consideration of the contribution of each participant.



**The DS LEISURE Consortium thanks users and collaborators for their involvement and dedication!**

**WE SHARE KNOWLEDGE IN ENJOYING LEISURE TIME!**

## NEWS FROM THE PROJECT WITH EDSA MEMBERS IN THE CONSORTIUM – ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO DE SANTARÉM (PORTUGAL)

### #TVT21 COMMUNITY E\_SKYLLS, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EMPLOYABILITY

Report by Giorgia Scivola – Aipd, Italy



The project, ended last august 2019, was born with the aim of promoting and facilitating the social inclusion and the employability of European Down Syndrome youth citizens through Tourism and e-skills. The project also aimed to foster, safeguard and promote European Cultural Heritage (via the promotion of Touristic activities), as well as requalification in terms of cultural, audio-visual and e-Skills diversity in cross-sectorial areas.

Four main activities have been carried on by the partnership, made of the **project leader, Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém (Portugal)** and three European partners, such Associazione Italiana Persone Down (Italy), Aajednica za Down (Croatia) and Viatecla (Portugal).

1. E-Skills educational contents based on the basic digital competences (Information, Communication, Content creation, Safety and Problem Solving) and with innovative elements like gamification.
2. Pedagogical and methodological guidelines to train/teach the target group (learners with Down syndrome), available through an e-book that will serve as a guide for stakeholders, teachers, trainers and parents to accompany the Down Syndrome learners in their learning process.
3. Innovative web based plat form to support the promotion of the contents generated in the project
4. Collaborative creative writing eBook on touristic and thematic short stories (romance, adventure, nature, monuments, arts, gastronomy, fun, ...) written by



learners with Down syndrome involved in the project. The e-book is based on the learners life stories and experiences during the project, such as the educational contents learned, the workshops where they participated, their hobbies and likes, as well as the travels during the project or done in previous moments.

In April 2018, learners with Down syndrome from Italy, Croatia and Portugal have been directly involved for a week, in Santarem. During the week abroad they took part in various workshops about entrepreneurship, sports, cooking, painting and sculpture, how to behave in an interview, how to create an Europass CV and other areas.

For more info : <http://t21.ese.ipsantarem.pt/index.html>

## NEWS FROM THE PROJECT WITH EDSA MEMBERS IN THE CONSORTIUM – AIPD (ITALY)

### VALUE-ABLE – NEW LAUNCH OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT FOR JOB PLACEMENT



#### **A brand for companies that hire workers with intellectual disabilities**

The alliance between associations and companies is strengthened with Leader Aipd, supported by associations, universities, training institutions. 103 companies, 6 European countries, 400 workers with Down syndrome. “With the third edition we aim to reach 200 companies and 8 countries. And we will succeed!”

Rome, 16 September 2019 – “Valueable”, the European project created to promote and encourage the professional integration of workers with intellectual disabilities within hospitality companies, is restarting and growing. After the first and second editions (2014-2017 and 2017-2019 respectively), the third “season” of the initiative officially started on 15 September and will close on 15 January 2022. The leader is AIPD (Italian Association of Down People), with the support of prestigious partners: associations, universities and other educational institutions (see Annex).

#### **WHAT IS VALUEABLE: BRONZE, SILVER AND GOLD**

“Valueable – handing opportunities” is the international certification for companies in the hospitality world that offer people with intellectual disabilities opportunities for professional development. It is a trademark registered with the European Union Office for Intellectual Property (EUIPO).

The mark is released for 2 years, in three different versions, depending on the commitment made by the company.

- the bronze one is intended for employers hosting internships;
- the silver one requires an additional commitment: a fixed-term (minimum 3 months) or permanent contract for at least one worker;
- finally, the golden one is granted to those employers who hire at least one worker and act as ambassadors of the Valueable brand. These commitments are contained in a code of conduct, which is signed by the members

#### **THE NUMBERS SO FAR**

Thanks to the support of the European Union and the Erasmus + program, the work of many people and the excellent response of the entrepreneurial world, the Valueable

network today counts 103 companies from six countries: **Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary and Turkey. About 400 people with intellectual disabilities work in hotels, restaurants, B & Bs, bars, fast food restaurants, as trainees or as workers. INCLUDING IS CONVENIENT!**

According to reports by some employers “with the Valueable brand” interviewed, the advantage is of a productive and relational nature: workers with Down syndrome are reliable, constant, very present and assiduous, because for them work has a value that goes far beyond the contract. Furthermore, they benefit the working group, making it more compact, less conflictual, more supportive, collaborative and close-knit.

### **THE NEW “SEASON”**

The third edition of the project will be in continuity with the previous two and will use the same tools: the brand, an app to make trainees and workers with disabilities more independent on the job, video tutorials for the training of company personnel and a remote training course for managers. In addition, four new tools will be developed:

- a protocol aimed at hotel chains and restaurants
- an accreditation protocol for training agencies that intend to operate within Valueable.
- a HACCP course in highly comprehensible language
- an e-learning course for tutors of training agencies who intend to be accredited to operate within the Valueable and multimedia resources database.

In order to test the four new tools, the project provides internships in their own country and abroad, with members of the network. “Our goal – says Paola Vulterini, project manager – is to involve eight countries and 200 members by the end of 2021: we are confident, considering the success achieved so far”.

### **ERASMUS+ “VALUE-ABLE” PROJECT-PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATE PARTNERS**

1. Associazione Italiana Persone Down onlus (IT)
2. Associacao Portuguesa de Portadores de Trissomia 21 (PT)
3. Down España. (ES)
4. Axis Hoteis & Golfe (PT)
5. Solmelià Italia srl (IT)
6. Down Alapitvany (HU)
7. Hamburger Arbeitassistenz (DE)
8. Down Sendromu Dernegi (TR)
9. NH Italia (IT)

#### **Associate partners**

1. European Hotel Managers Association (IT)
2. European Down Syndrome Association
3. Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta (IT)
4. Associazione Italiana Confindustria Alberghi (IT)

## MAKE THIS NEWSLETTER REALLY YOURS!

Have you got any news that we could publish in EDSA newsletter? Please send us any information you would like to announce and we shall be happy to disseminate it all over Europe!

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