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COGNITION & INCLUSION

NEWSLETTER 1

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF ADULTS CHALLENGED BY A LEARNING DISABILITY!

Introduction:

This is the first newsletter of the “Cognition & Inclusion” project. In this first newsletter we’ve interviewed the project coordinator, Johan Warnez, he helped us understand what this three year’s project is about, what the project partners will develop and what the rationale behind this project was.

Further on in this newsletter, you’ll find:

- a brief description of all the project partners p. 4;
- first meeting Round-up p. 11;
- Project's , partners' and EU partners' news p.13;

ENJOY THE READ!

INTERVIEW WITH PROJECT COORDINATOR



Interview with, Johan Warnez Project Coordinator of “vzw 'den achtkanter” a Flemish non for profit organization supporting ca. 200 adults challenged with a learning disability or TBI-traumatic brain injury.

Johan, what is the project about, what is the challenge, what are we developing?

C&I addresses the themes of inclusion and employment, and the development of necessary transversal skills for active and successful participation into society.

Society supports its citizens to be and to become active participants: conditions are created by adapting the physical and social environment, to overcome motor or communicative hindrances. But also, to be an active and successful participant and contributor to society, people have to adapt to the environment, taking into account what society expects of citizens. The environment is ever changing and expectations change, according to (e.g.) age or new roles someone plays (student or employee) or due to a changing economic context. Flexibility, problem solving and other transversal or adaptive skills need to be acquired to be able to deal efficiently with this changing societal expectations. These skills are rarely part of the curriculum or a supports plan, although they are critical for successful societal participation and adaptation. In addition, when someone is challenged by a learning disability, these transversal learning, thinking or problem solving skills are determining significantly the outcome of training or educational programs.

Although ‘cognitive’ methodologies have been elaborated to foster transversal skills, also in adults, they are often not well known, not well implemented or not effective. This C&I-project wants to disseminate cognitive approaches as used by the members of the partnership, and looks for critical factors of success , especially in the domain of employment.

Research reveals that the impact of these cognitive approaches, implemented within adults with a learning disability, is significantly influenced by the mindset of the social worker, therapist or trainer working with the adults and by the mindset, vision and values of the supporting service.

This C&I-project wants to disseminate cognitive approaches as used by the members of the partnership and looks for critical factors of success.

The project develops tools to assess these factors on the level of the professionals the client and the organisation, especially in the domain of employment.

A 'growth' mindset on the level of the 'teacher', the service and the 'learner' is critical for success. Therefore, in addition to the publication of the results of the analysis of the cognitive methodologies, the partnership will develop assessment tools to evaluate this mindset prerequisite. The tools will be useful within all HRM-functions, but, in particular, will be the starting point for VET-actions that are focusing on the professional who is expected to implement cognitive approaches within adults. Consequently, by fostering this condition, the adults of the target group will reach a higher level of cognitive, transversal competence and will develop a 'growth' mindset themselves: this is a perfect starting point for successful citizenship.

During the next three years, the partnership will meet 8 times. During the first year, cognitive approaches will be shared and evaluated (critical factors of success, impact on inclusion and employment). The information collected, will help us develop three assessment tools: assessment of the mindset of the professional, of the mindset of the organization, and of the mindset of the learner. By the end of the project, national conferences will be organized to disseminate the tools.



Why this partnership?

The partners have been chosen among Authorities that have and will share knowhow on cognitive approaches, Organizations that used these approaches, like the Feuerstein method; Universities and research institutes for scientific analysis of the methods and for 'test' construction, Organizations that represent a significant number of professionals working with adults with learning disabilities in order to try out the assessment tools. Organizations that are active in the field of education and/or VET and/or organizational support and an active Network active to disseminate and communicate at European level the analysis of the cognitive methodologies and the tools developed by the project.

FOCUS ON THE PARTNERS AND THE LOCAL EXPERT GROUPS

BELGIUM

vzw 'den achtkanter' is a Flemish non for profit organization supporting ca. 200 adults challenged with a learning disability or TBI-traumatic brain injury. The support services for the group of clients with a learning disability (LD) are focusing on 'work'/employment and on living. Quality of life, full citizenship, full exercitation of rights, autonomy and inclusion are the main themes of the mission statement, policy, goals and activities. Community based support is the standard, relying on the competences and strengths of the client, the social network of the client, informal care givers and mainstream services.

For clients with LD, from the very beginning the educational policy of the organization focused on a concrete implementation of the 'people with disabilities have abilities'-theme. This was done in a very consequent way, not only by giving opportunities to the clients to work and/or live independently, to work in and live in society, but also by developing intentionally their transversal skills. Based on positive and cognitive psychological models, the organization developed a cognitive oriented methodology (as LD clients with learning disabilities are challenged by a lack of learning and thinking/problem solving skills.)

The Local Expert Group

The Local Expert Group members are from a university and two university colleges (researchers and teachers), professionals from others services for adults with learning disabilities, a Flemish employment agency (GTB) and professionals from their organization expert in cognitive methodology.

PORTUGAL

University of Évora

The University of Évora was founded in 1559. The specific unit involved in this project is the School of Social Sciences, through the Department of Psychology. It trains bachelor & masters & PhD and organizes post graduate studies (total 2000 students) in the field of Education, Psychology, Special Education and Psychomotor rehabilitation.



The University of Evora also provides continuing education in the domain of disability with rehabilitation professions, special and regular teacher training, educators & other support staff, project development in the domain of social inclusion and inclusive education.

Short testimony about living in autonomous residence from APPACDM:

"Many people do not know or can't even imagine how important a home is for the human being. A home is so important that, usually, it is the very first thing we draw, the one we dream with and fancy throughout our life. The APPACDM of Évora has two Autonomous homes. Their general aim is to host people with disabilities, aged or over 16, who, benefitting from a minimum support, are able to live autonomously".

The local expert group

The university of Evora will collaborate with a local expert group that has been set up thanks to its formal partnerships with institutions that work with adults challenged by intellectual disabilities or a traumatic brain injury. Among its members there will be:

- The department of Psychology which collaborates with a group of organizations and schools that will participate in this project as local partners.
- The APPACDM DE ÉVORA, Associação Portuguesa de Pais e Amigos do Cidadão Deficiente Mental, A therapeutic, residential, and training institution with humanistic values and actions, that works actively in social inclusion, employment - professional integration and social rights of persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Casa João Cidade - Montemor o Novo - with inspiration in socio-therapy and artistic expression improving the self management and self regulation in all domains of life.
- Institut of Social Security (Regional Center from EVORA) - public entity that regulates and give support to institutions that works actively in social inclusion, employment - professional integration and social rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and traumatic brain injury .

FINLAND



Tampere University of Applied Sciences, TAMK is one of the biggest and most popular higher education institutions in Finland. TAMK is oriented towards working life and RDI co-operation placing special emphasis on technology, wellbeing services, business administration, and culture. TAMK's strengths are multidisciplinary education, creativity, and a strong international dimension.

The local expert group

The members of the Finnish local expert group are:

- Pirkanmaan ammatillisen erityisopetuksen koordinaatiokeskus, PAEK
- Tampereen Sarka Ltd.
- Silta-Valmennusyhdistys ry
- Tampere Vocational College, Tredu
- Luovi Vocational College
- Kiipula Vocational College

BULGARIA



NARHU is a non-profit NGO in public service comprised of a National representative body of all professionals who are working with people with disabilities in terms of their education, employment and social inclusion. Its main activities are directed to employment, professional orientation, consulting and training of PwDs.

The team of NARHU comprises of well-known experts in the field of inclusive education, psychology, social work and games based learning.

The local expert group



The Bulgarian expert group comprises of psychologists with long term clinical experience and practice in the support of PwDs with regards to their cognitive development, self - determination and personal development. It involves cognitive-behavioural therapists, university professors teaching on the subject of cognitive psychology, as well as occupational psychologists.

All members adopt the concept of C&I project and are eager to contribute to the project activities.

SWEDEN



Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan, SV, is an association for education, training and culture for adults. They elaborated an effective methodology to empower people (by developing self-regulation and other transversal skills), referring to the general concept of 'folkbildning', with study circles as a tool. SV is one of the leading non-formal adult education associations in Sweden. The organizations they co-operate with are the FUB (The Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability), the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, the National Society Autism and a few more. Kulturcentrum Väst is a partner to SV and consists of professional artists along with intellectually disabled actors. Respond Dets Performing Arts is the educational method and the approach that is used in Kulturcentrum Väst, and is their specific contribution to the project.



The local expert group

The members of their local expert group are Mia Ekegren the head of SV Väst. Targeting Learning people with disabilities: Annie Pettersson, Eva Lantz, Marie Pettersson and Anna Anteryd who are business developers. The artistic director of Kulturcentrum Väst, Marie Lindblad. A representative of FUB: the Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability. The Manager of social services. Professionals from organizations in the field of adult support, workspace and school. Two or three persons with learning disabilities.

SPAIN



IVASS is a public organization, having its own legal personality and placed under the auspices of the Regional Ministry for Equality and Inclusive Policies. The most important IVASS' responsibility is the care of more than 1100 people with intellectual disabilities in residences, occupational centers and sheltered houses.

The local expert group

IVASS' Local expert group is made by three independent groups which meet in Valencia, Elche and Castellón. The participant organizations belong to several working fields such as Universities (Universidad Cardenal Herrera, Universidad Católica de Valencia and Universidad Miguel Hernández); organizations related to disability (Artes, CEE El Somni, C.O. La Costera-Canal (ASPROMIVISE), Plena Inclusión Comunidad Valenciana, CEEME, AFANIAS, El rinconet and Fundación Roig Alfonso de la Comunidad Valenciana); private companies (Pixel XL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM and coordina); a vocational/training center (Escuelas San José) and a research Institute (IDOCAL).





Asociación a Favor de Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual "Vale"

VALE is a Spanish non-profit NGO based in the Lecrín Valley, a rural area of the Province of Granada (Andalucia). It was founded in 1982 by a group of families of people with disabilities to palliate the lack of resources. Nowadays, the organization works for more than 200 clients and the work team is comprised of 75 professionals that in the six different services of VALE. The main goal of VALE is the full inclusion of people with disabilities through the achievement of their full citizenship.

The local expert group

The local expert group they have set is made by psychologists from some organizations that take part in "Plena Inclusion Andalucia" (Organization representing persons with disabilities). In addition, psychologist and professors with many years of experience in researching and teaching from the University of Granada will add their knowledge to the project.

ITALY

IRECOOP VENETO

Irecoop Veneto, legally recognized association, is a training organization promoted by the Confcooperative - Regional Union of cooperatives of Veneto and Federation of Cooperative Credit banks as a support to social development in the Veneto Region. Irecoop Veneto is accredited by the Veneto Region for Life-long learning and Superior Education and it has UNI EN ISO 9001:2000 certificate. Irecoop promotes and manages initiatives of vocational basic and follow-up training, professional qualification and staff re-qualification, as well as trainings for job seekers, employees, disadvantaged people, emerging professional profiles. It collaborates with Employment agencies for the promotion of employability of disadvantaged groups.



The Local expert group

The local expert group of Irecoop Veneto will count with the contributions of Daniela Moro - Expert of social inclusion policies for persons with disabilities, Stefania Porchia - Expert in the assessment and evaluation of Welfare systems, Maristella Zantedeschi - Expert in policies for social inclusion of persons with disabilities, Marco Tirabosco - Regional Coordinator for the Commission on Disability of Federsolidarietà Veneto, Enrico Miatto - Professor of Pedagogy l'inclusione (IUSVE- Istituto Universitario Salesiano, Tiziana Boggian - President of the Cooperative "Nuova Idea", Eugenio Anzanello - President of the Cooperative "Madonna dei Miracoli".



Furthermore this expert group will also gather the coordinators for housing and inclusion services of people with disabilities: Lucia Cavallin – social carer from “Cooperativa Solidarietà of Treviso”, Lisa Cedron psychologist of the “Cooperativa Solidarietà” of Treviso, Federica Silvestrin –psychologist “Cooperativa Fratres”of Padua, Andrea Trevisani – psicologost and President of the “Cooperativa Giovani Amici di Padova”, Salmaso Silvia – educator Foundation Irpea of Padua, Strano Giuseppe – President of the “Cooperativa Piano Infinito” of Vicenza



ENSA is a network of cities and European Regions that has the aim to promote international cooperation in the social field. ENSA was established by the Veneto Region in 1999. Since then the network has developed and supported solid partnerships between a wide range of European Regions and has carried out seminars, conferences, study visit programmes and exchanges of operators .

The co-operation between partners has brought about the opportunity to carry out several projects financed by the European Commission. ENSA represents an excellent opportunity for local and Regional Authorities to participate actively in European policy making and programmes.

Collaborating with ENSA is a way to increase the dialogue with the European institutions and to become part of an international platform to implement shared projects. Organisation: The network organises its work in five subject areas of intervention. Each has its own “thematic network”: elderly, youth and families, child issues, disability and social inclusion.

The theme of inclusion and employment will be on the top of the agenda of the disability working group.



Associated partner

The Veneto Region is one of the associated partner of this project. It is host organisation to the ENSA administration placed in the Veneto Region's Brussels Office.

First international meeting round-up: Valencia 6th and 7th November 2017



The Valencian Institute of Social-Health Care (IVASS) organized in collaboration with the partnership and hosted the first meeting of the "Cognition & Inclusion" project. It involved all the project partners and took place in "Las Naves", a social innovation hub belonging to Valencian Municipality. The meeting was opened by the General Director of IVASS, Ángel Bonafé, who stressed the importance to work on cognitive methodologies to improve the quality of life of persons with learning disabilities.

"In this matter there is the full commitment of IVASS" he quoted, showing a great satisfaction for the role and responsibilities of IVASS in this project. "This project is an excellent opportunity for sharing experiences and learning about the cognitive methodologies that the partners are already developing" He stated. During its presentation, IVASS put forward the cognitive methodology called "Stimulus" which is planned to be implemented in oncoming months. During this meeting Adelinda Candeias, professor of the University of Evora held a magisterial lecture on the concept of cognition which was crucial to allow partners to discuss and agree on the five key transversal competences that are going to be the focus of the project: problem solving, self-regulation, self-direction, flexibility and creative thinking. Petya Grudeva (NARHU-Bulgary) concluded the first day with an exhaustive quality management proposal. Minna Seppälä and Teemu Jokinen (TAMAK-Finland) guided the partnership towards one of the outputs of the project: an overview of successful methodologies to train transversal skills in learning disabled adults. Cristobal Juarez (VALE-Spain) presented the cognitive methodology (GRADIOR) implemented by VALE to improve the transversal competences of people with intellectual disabilities. The contributions of the European Network of Social Authorities ENSA and the work of the local expert groups will contribute to give an impact at European Level to the tools and methodologies that the partnership will implement for adults with learning disabilities.



"Cognitive methodologies: in this matter there is the full commitment of IVASS".

"This project is an excellent opportunity for sharing experiences and learning about the cognitive methodologies that the partners are already developing".

Some quotes about the meeting

"Great coordination work" "Good program" "Wonderful hosting", "great hospitality", "Fantastic Paella and wonderful innovative Valencia" "Excellent commitment of IVASS" "we came from extremely different backgrounds and got to learn from each other" "This meeting has been extremely important to clarify the concept of cognition" "We could improve our knowledge about the project" "Amazing quality of Bulgarian participation".

PROJECT'S NEWS

Information on Cognition and inclusion is available on a leaflet with a description of the project is available in each participating country

Get ready !

Second international
Cognition and Inclusion

20th, 21st March 2018, NARHU,
PLOVDIV Bulgaria



PARTNER'S NEWS

ENSA

INVITATION: YOUTH CARE PLATFORM

16 - 17 APRIL 2018 IN BRUSSELS

Ms Christine Gaschler-Andreasch and Mr Stefaan Van Mulders are pleased to invite you for the next meeting of the European Youth Care Platform and ENSA thematic working groups:

Date: 16th and 17th of April 2018
(10:00 - 16:00)

Venue: Flemish Agency for Youth Welfare
Ellips Building, Koning Albert II-laan 35, 1030 Brussels

It still has to be decided which ENSA thematic Working groups will take place, but most likely the Child and Youth & Family groups will meet. The Youth Care Platform meeting will be on Monday 16th of April and the ENSA groups the day after. The 17th of April will also be the kick off meeting for the partners in the 'A Way Home' project, funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).

Main topic: Training and employment: strategies for guidance of NEETs. Why and how NEETs ('youngsters Not in Education, Employment or Training') are more affected than other youth, what is already happening at regional/national level, can Europe help with its actual policies

- Follow up on Europe's social policies (with special focus on the 'European Pillar of Social Rights'-strategy).

Calling already on key note speakers for the main theme 'Training and employment: strategies for guidance of NEETs. Invitation to suggest specific content, research, good practices,... as input for the debate.

Call 2017 Erasmus+ KA2 ABOVE: "Abilities on the mOVE": Running project just funded. Aim: sharing good practices in the field of support of people with mental health disabilities. Leader Conseil Départemental du Val de Marne.

EU NEWS

The Commission is launching a series of public consultations covering all the major spending areas to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

The current Multiannual Financial Framework – the EU's long-term budget – runs until the end of 2020. In 2018, the Commission will put forth comprehensive proposals for the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and for the next generation of financial programmes that will receive funding. These programmes/funds provide financial support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries such as regions, towns, NGOs, businesses, farmers, students, scientists, and many others.

The Commission's proposals will be designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. What should the priorities be for future policies and programmes/funds? And how can they be designed to best deliver results on the ground? As an integral part of this process and following on from the Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances, the Commission is launching a series of public consultations covering all the major spending areas to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

Among these public consultations, they wish to attract your attention to one particularly relevant ones:

- Public Consultation on EU funds in the area of Cohesion: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/2eec41ff-e859-c4c9-1b47-86c508612517>

more information at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations_en

The consultations will remain open until 8 March 2018.

Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth- April 27th 2018 Brussels: "the European Pillar of Social Rights: on the road to implementation"

The Commission's political agenda, the 2018 ACIG will focus on the following topic: "The European Pillar of Social Rights: on the road towards implementation". As you all know, on 17 November 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights was solemnly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. At this occasion, President Juncker said: "The Pillar – and Europe's social dimension as a whole – will only be as strong as we allow it to be. This is a joint responsibility and it starts at national, regional and local level, with a key role for social partners and civil society. Therefore, while fully respecting and embracing the different approaches which exist across Europe, we all now need to turn commitments into action. Europeans deserve nothing less".

The program of the event will include: European Pillar of Social Rights exhibition- 1st Pillar anniversary

The official opening will be done by Commissioner Marianne Thyssen. There will be parallel workshops, Side events and a speed dating session dedicated to best practices/ concrete projects linked to the implementation of the EPSR, proposed by national civil society organizations and selected by the Commission

EaSI

The EU's financing programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) will receive an additional €100 million for its Guarantee scheme from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the Investment Plan for Europe.

VP/2018/005 EaSI-PROGRESS - Call for proposals on social innovation and national reforms: Innovative work-life balance strategies to facilitate reconciliation of professional and caring responsibilities



The latest edition of our Social Agenda magazine explains how the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed by EU leaders last November, is on line
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_agenda/books/50/en/#2

**Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter:
IVAS Valencia for the success of first international meeting!
vzw 'den achtkanter' to Johan Warnez coordinator of this project**

For further information: <http://www.ensa-network.eu/>