



Erasmus+



The magic to communicate

31.07—09.08.2015

Kranevo, Bulgaria



Context: Globally, autism is estimated to affect 21.7 million people as of 2013. The number of young people with autism in Europe is constantly increasing. All social and ethnical groups are affected.

Autism spectrum disorders affect the normal brain function and impair development of communication, social and behavioral skills. Autistic youngsters look like people who live in their own world. Often they tend to privacy and self-isolation. They suffer from violations of verbal and nonverbal communication, impaired social interactions, repetitive and unusual behaviors.

Each autistic youngster has a unique personality. It is necessary to work with each person on an individual program suited to his/her specific problems and needs, in order to have a chance for normal development and successful integration into the educational system and society. Unfortunately, in the rural areas of Eastern Europe, youth workers often continue to work with autistic youngsters using outdated methodologies. The main reasons for this are the relatively limited access to quality information on the latest working methods and lack of international interaction and exchange between organisations involved in this mission.

“The magic to communicate” was an international training course for youth workers who are engaged in activities supporting autistic young people in rural areas of Eastern Europe. It was held from 31.07.2015 to 09.08.2015 r. in Kranevo, Bulgaria. The training brought together 50 youth workers and experts from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania and Bulgaria.

The participants were speech and language therapists, youth advisors, social workers, psychologists, project managers and volunteers who work actively with young people with autism in the rural areas on their countries.

The training was conducted by an **international team of trainers**, including one trainer from each participating country.

The main aim of the training course was: Improving quality of work of the youth workers through their professional training and development of their cooperation for innovation and exchange of experience, skills and best practices.

The objectives were:

- 1) To raise participants’ awareness about the essence and applicability of the latest methods and working systems supporting the personal and socio-educational development of autistic youngsters;
- 2) To provide a space where the youth workers to exchange ideas and experiences and to acquire practical skills for encouraging inclusion of rural young people with autism into the educational system and labor market;
- 3) Generating ideas for further interaction and cooperation among the participants and their organisations, aiming professional development and better quality of the services offered by them in benefit of young people with fewer opportunities.



Activities

Each day of the training course had a specific working topic:

- ⇒ Opening and Group building activities;
- ⇒ Assessment of impairments and specific needs of autistic young people;
- ⇒ Improving of their verbal and non-verbal communication skills;
- ⇒ Visit to Karin Dom Varna for observing of good practices;
- ⇒ Inclusion of young people with autism into the social life and labor market;
- ⇒ Inclusion and retaining of autistic children and youngsters in the mainstream schools;
- ⇒ Working with families and surroundings of rural young people with autism;
- ⇒ Follow-up planning and evaluation.

The training activities were fully based on the methods of non-formal education and contained:

- ◆ Input to the working topics;
- ◆ Get to know each other;
- ◆ Training sessions on essence and applicability of the latest methods and systems for work with young people with autism;
- ◆ Exchange of ideas and experiences among the participants;
- ◆ Field visit for observing of good practices for work with autistic youngsters;
- ◆ Presenting and promotion of “Erasmus+” Programme and planning of follow-up activities;
- ◆ Intercultural learning and exchange;
- ◆ Project evaluation.



Outcomes

The participants:

- ◆ Acquired various professional competences for practical work with rural young people with autism;
- ◆ Learnt about new and innovative systems and methods for work with autistic youngsters, used in different countries;
- ◆ Improved their understanding of the interrelationships between prevention, therapy, formal and non-formal education regarding to young people with autism;
- ◆ Increased their capacity to support inclusion and retaining of autistic children and youngsters in the mainstream schools;
- ◆ Improved the quality of their work for inclusion of young people with autism into social life and labor market;
- ◆ Made many new professional contacts that will be used for further cooperation and exchange of information;
- ◆ Improved their foreign language competences in an interesting and dynamic international environment.

The partner organisations:

- ◆ Improved their way of work as were acquainted with new working methods used by their colleagues in different countries;
- ◆ Increased the qualification and professionalism of their members who work with youngsters with autism in rural areas.
- ◆ Integrated good foreign practices in their everyday activities with autistic youngsters;
- ◆ Intensified their interaction and cooperation with institutions active in various social, educational and labor fields;
- ◆ Increased their capacity to work at international level in partnership with organisations from different countries;
- ◆ Acquired motivation and competences for management of European projects in benefit of young people with autism;
- ◆ Confirmed the long-term strategic cooperation in this partner network and applied with a new joint project to the “Erasmus+” Programme.



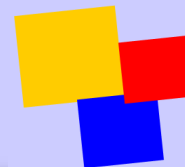
Partner organizations:

Asociația Specialiștilor în Terapia Tulburărilor de Limbaj din România - www.asttlr.ro

Logopedinės Pagalbos Centras - www.logopedasipc.lt

Latvijas logopēdu asociācija - www.logopedi.lv

Eesti Logopeedide Ühing - www.elu.ee



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