**"MeTURA-Back to the Roots", a therapy-based family gardening and cooking further education program, which aims to promote further independence for adults with learning disabilities**

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**SUMMARY OF THE SYTHESIS REPORT**

**Activity 02, A study of what competencies are required for educators and what learning tools they may need to provide further learning programmes to families and adult family members with learning disabilities with the hope of bringing further education into the household.**

Gathered by Zveza Sozitje (Slovenia) together with Education Centre Geoss (Slovenia), Danilo Dolci (Italy), UOSIKAZU (Croatia) and Thrive (United Kingdom)

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

“MeTURA - Back to the Roots” is a project under the Erasmus+ program, Key Action 2 (KA2), aiming to improve the lives of adults with learning disabilities by encouraging family therapeutic gardening and family therapeutic cooking as a way of supporting ongoing further education (LL) and promote the further independence of adult family members with learning disabilities (AFMID). Lifelong learning refers to all purposeful learning activities undertaken on an ongoing basis throughout a person's life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies.

The project will run for 35 months in cooperation with non-profit organizations from Slovenia, UK, Croatia and Italy. The participating organizations are: Education Centre Geoss (Slovenia), Zveza Sozitje (Slovenia), Danilo Dolci (Italy), UOSIKAZU (Croatia) and Thrive (United Kingdom). Within the Family Education MeTURA project, partner organizations aim to increase and expand further education opportunities for their participants - vulnerable adult learners. The project aims to develop toolkits and resources to enable educators and families to make the most of the further education that therapeutic gardening and therapeutic cooking can provide. It will also give insights into the social and functional competences gained and any other therapeutic benefits achieved through gardening and cooking activities.

The questionnaire was divided in two parts; the first part consisted of general information about educators (age, gender). The second part consisted of 9 closed and 6 open ended questions about competencies required and andragogical tools used by educators who work with the learning disabled (ID).

The aim of questionnaire was to assess what areas of competency were required of educators and gain their opinion on how they might acquire new knowledge and skills. We also wanted to gain the educators opinions on how they might achieve further learning for families and adult family members with ID through bringing the programme to their home. We wanted to find out what educators thought was currently missing in way of resources and knowledge that would help them carry out their work to a higher standard.

# 2. SUMMARY FOR THE NATIONAL REPORT OF SLOVENIA

## 2.1. ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education has become an important topic within European Union policy making over the last two decades. In 2000, a "Memorandum of Lifelong Learning" was published in order to formulate a more concrete European strategy and language in the field of adult education and promote debate on lifelong learning. It states that adult education will take over as terminology in place of lifelong learning as the principal way of describing adult education and learning in European policy documents.

In Slovenia, adult education centres were started through public universities- Adult Education Centres in the period between the First and Second World War. They provided lectures and other educational forums, running cultural and sporting events and excursions, whilst also publishing literature and giving citizens access to their libraries.

In 2018 the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia received a draft of the new Adult Education Act. This was the result of several years of work by professional bodies to update the old laws from 1996 and to bring about changes to legislation that reflected current attitudes.

The Act provides a clear definition of what public systems are in place including public services, public providers, activities and programmes. It ensures long-term financing and ongoing projects for those in adult education from vulnerable target groups. The definition of public interest and public service is clearly based on the Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education and operationalisation of the Annual Adult Education Programmes. Local communities are now obliged to prepare annual adult education programmes on a local level.

The new Adult Education Act recognises and offers insight only into non-formal education, this is educational programmes that will not lead to officially recognised qualifications and are not included in other sector-specific educational legislation. The only exception is the elementary school programme for adults, which is recognised by the new Act.

## 2.2. RESOLUTION ON THE MASTER PLAN FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FOR 2013–2020

The Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia for 2013–2020 outlines the strategic plan to develop adult education in Slovenia from the period of 2013 to 2020. It represents an important starting point in the planning and implementation of educational programs and activities in support of adult education at both a national and regional level.

An analysis of what results arose from the Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in The Republic Of Slovenia by 2010 showed that providing activities with specific goals led to improvements in standards of practice for providers of adult education and developed skills in social functioning, personal development and increased employability for those taking part.

## 2.3. ACHIEVEMENTS IN SLOVENIA

Rates of enrolment in all general adult education programs have increased.

The development and implementation of publicly available programs for less educated and vulnerable groups, such as life-long training, has proven to be an important factor in improved literacy development.

Adult training is active in the local training network in all statistical regions in Slovenia within 14 Adult education Centres and in 60 places outside their headquarters. Training centre services are used by at least 19,000 adults annually. Strategic (municipalities, chambers of commerce, employment services, trade unions, institute units and regional development agencies) and professional partners (schools, libraries, societies, centres for social work, health institutions and others) participate in local training networks. To a lesser extent, public universities also offer other forms of training and information, such as training for older adults, Roma and immigrants, vocational information and training in cooperation with regional units of the Employment Service, entrepreneurial training, energy efficiency training, etc.

In the interests of promoting lifelong learning, the annual Lifelong Learning Week event has been nationally established.

Fairness in the education system is measured by indicators of adult participation in education and the degree of knowledge gained by the participants. Poorly educated and vulnerable groups have little involvement in education. In addition, if they were to hope to gain the same depth of knowledge as more capable counterparts, they would need to spend more time in a learning environment.

The Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education In The Republic Of Slovenia for 2013–2020 is, among other goals, committed to:

* Start-up motivational programs, develop new approaches, information and training activities for vulnerable groups to learn fundamental capabilities through access to education and training;
* Allow for education programmes to take place at home.

## 2.4. KEY COMPETENCES FOR EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH FAMILIES AND ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

The educators should inform parents about their personal rights and the code of conduct on the project, those which apply to them personally, as well as those that relate to members of family. It is also up to the educator to assess the how much the parents wish to take part in the project (individual, group work), and to be aware that some issues of practice could cause offence.

An educator must be able to listen to the family, understand their needs and consider their values, attitudes and strengths. Only in this way can the educator establish a partnership where both parties are working towards the same goal.

Educators have listed the following issues that can provoke disagreements with parents while working with families:

* parents ignore or inappropriately respond to educators’ suggestions,
* parents are overprotective their adult children,
* parents are often overly demanding,
* parents limit their son’s or daughter’s independence,
* question the educator's assessment of their adult child's abilities,
* do not perceive that their children are adults and their needs are appropriate to the project,
* fathers do not cooperate well,
* They don’t want outside input into the future of their child.

Parents usually expect the educators to:

* consult with them regularly and listen to their views,
* be more open to the views of others,
* acknowledge if they do not know something,
* treat all children with respect,
* consider individual differences between family members and participants taking part.

## 2.5. GOOD PRACTICES IN SLOVENIA

The Association Sožitje has run programs aimed at providing lifelong education to families of people with learning disabilities every year for the last 56 years. The programs provided by the Sožitje Association are designed for training in, education, empowerment and as well as providing health benefits to adults with ID as well as their family members.

The aim of all family programs is to enable functionality within families for the future and prevent the social exclusion of families with members with ID.

The **Programs “Four-year cycle”** includes educating and training of families in four stages/years. The program includes families who have children with ID who are younger than 15 years old.

The program runs over a Four-year cycle, and the activities are prepared to suit the individual participants involved, as each group is unique with specific needs to address. In the course of four years, experts and specialists give lectures and workshops which enable families to cope with the challenges faced by ID more easily and promote a more positive harmonious atmosphere within the home environment. Groups are formed in the first year and stay together with the same leaders for the rest of the four-year program.

The whole family must be involved in the program. The program takes the form of a weekly program or two weekend seminars a year. Most of the costs are covered by the Sožitje Association. Parents or carers only partly contribute towards the cost of accommodation and meals.

The **Program “Maintaining the psychophysical health of families”** is aimed at families with adult members with ID (AFMID). The program has experts from different fields giving lectures and workshops. Themes are usually Legislation, Social security rights, Relaxation techniques and Family communication…

Again, the whole family must be involved. Each family partly contributes towards the costs of accommodation and meals, and the cost of additional activities (lectures, professional guidance and assistance) is covered by the Sožitje Association.

The Sožitje Association also offers **“Weekend seminars” –** to provideeducation and training to family members (weekend seminars for grandparents, weekend seminars for siblings, weekend seminars for those who lost children with ID.)

## 2.6. QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

In total 29 educators filled out the questionnaire. 12 questionnaires were filled partially, 17 were filled completely. All 29 questionnaires were deemed statistically relevant, so all were analysed.

According to the results, most educators that work with adult family members with learning disabilities have 10 or more years of experience in the field of work. Most educators would like to gain more knowledge and skills from good exchanges of practice. Educators think that the most important proficiencies are empathy, patience and professional knowledge. Stress management, good communication and knowing the group dynamics are the proficiencies that some of the educators feel they could further develop in order to improve their work.

Most educators think that it is important for families of adult members with learning disabilities to have access to lifelong learning in their home environment. This could be encouraged with increased promotion within different communities, good practices, joint organization events and more information available about lifelong learning.

The methods and tools most commonly used by educators are communication, good practice, a person-centred approach and teamwork.

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# 3. SUMMARY FOR NATIONAL REPORT OF ITALY

In the national report of Italy, we present what formal paths of education exist for adults, what skills are desirable for educators working with families and family members with learning disabilities and existing good practises of lifelong learning for families and family members with learning disabilities within Italy.

## 3.1. ADULT EDUCATION IN ITALY

Andragogy is a theory of learning and adult education which started in 1980. The term was developed in correlation to the theory of pedagogy. Which derives from the Greek παῖς pais, child, and ἄγω needle, lead. Instead of focusing on children it as a model of learning focused on the needs and interests of adults (which in general are different from those of children), which found its greatest exponent in Malcolm Knowles *(Wikipedia).*

According to Italian law, lifelong learning involves "any activity undertaken by people in a formal, non-formal, informal way, in various stages of life, in order to improve knowledge, skills and competences, in a personal, civic, social and occupational perspective"(Law 92 of 06.28.2012, article 4, paragraph 51). Among the strategies set up to implement lifelong learning, the Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning (RETAP) play a fundamental role. The CPIA, as the Territorial Service Network of the Education System, responsible for carrying out both educational activities for the adults and RS&S activities in the field of adult education, is the public subject of reference to establish regional networks for lifelong learning.

Adult education is promoted by the CPIA (Provincial Centres for Adult Education) established by the Decree 263 of the President of the Republic on 29 October 2012. They constitute a type of autonomous educational institution with its own staff and a specific educational and organizational structure. The CPIAs carry out the following programmes: Adult Education Paths, Educational Offer Extensions, Research, Experimentation and Development Activities in Adult Education.

The CPIAs, as autonomous educational institutions, carry out Research, Experimentation and Development (RS&S) activities in the field of adult education, pursuant to Article 6 of the Decree of the President of the Republic 275 of 8 March 1999. The Directorate-General for Schooling and Evaluation of the National Education System (DGOSV) has set up a Regional Research, Experimental and Development Center (CRRS & S) on adult education in a CPIA of each region. Each CRRS & S is coordinated by a technical-scientific committee which includes, among others, representatives of regional school offices and universities.

The transition to the new system of adult education is accompanied by "national system measures" for updating the managers, teachers and administrative, technical and auxiliary staff of the provincial centres for adult education (decree of the President of the Republic 263 of 29 October 2012). The Directorate-General for Schooling and Evaluation of the National Education System (DGOSV) promoted the Adult Education Innovation Activities Plan (P.A.I.DE.I.A.) from the 2014/2015 school year. The Plan is aimed at acquiring managerial, organizational and didactic skills, required at various levels, to support and encourage the application of new organizational and educational structures.

## 3.2. KEY COMPETENCES FOR EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH FAMILIES AND ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

National legislation requires that for educators to perform professionally, they are in possession of either:

1. A Degree of Professional Educator Animator (triennial regional course)

2. A University Degree of Professional Educator

3. A Degree in Science of the Education or Sciences of Education with specialization in Professional Educator, or other qualification recognized as equivalent by the State and the Veneto Region.

The list below shows some of the socio-educational activities that can be started in the various services. These are dependant on availability and the specific needs of the service user in the “Personalized Project” as every person with any disability needs a “personal training plan”. These are essentially occupational activities or activities aimed at learning techniques that can be linked to work placements or paid employment. The enterprises can be run by either educators if they have the necessary skills, or professionals within the trade (technicians, art masters, experts, artisans):

* Ceramics workshops
* Computer labs
* Animated reading and creative writing workshop
* Weaving workshop
* Wicker and wicker basket production workshop
* Other thematic workshops, depending on availability and artisan vocation of the territory (ex: binding, marbled papers, masks...)
* Gardening and cultivation of vegetable gardens
* Hippotherapy
* Swimming
* Assisted therapy with animals (Pet Therapy)
* Trips in the country

The survey "The use of 'non-verbal languages' in Day Centres for people with disabilities", carried out by the Veneto Region in collaboration with the University of Venice Cà Foscari, is important, as it highlights four activities that can best accommodate those that use non-verbal languages:

* Psychomotricity
* Music therapy
* Graphic-pictorial activities
* Theatre

Most of the activities listed above involve the participation of an external expert. However, the role of the educator is essential to enable connection between the expert, the participants and any other professionals within the project. Furthermore, the educator oversees the evaluation and documentation of work done. This is done so that a network of organisations offering the same or similar services, can produce a body of work that demonstrate conclusive evidence of how the method of practice is beneficial for those involved.

The professional educator acting in a facilitatory role within a project for the learning disabled:

* creates and initiates projects with purposeful goals and continuity of work;
* observes and analyses needs, supplies resources, manages and checks educational facilitation to enable full integration of participants;
* works with participants to develop and maintain both interpersonal relationships but also ingoing interaction with the project (helpful and empathic approach).

## 3.3. GOOD PRACTICES IN ITALY

In individual Italian regions, there are many different initiatives with various methods of working aimed at achieving action plans for adults with learning disabilities. These projects can have dissimilarities, such as the outline of what they aim to achieve, when viewed across the country, as resources available to one region, can change in another. Here are some examples of projects from different Italian regions:

In Tuscany, the "Community Farm" project, created by the Agrabah Association in 2009, aims to work with the farming community in the province of Pistoia, with the idea of providing adults with autism the tools to develop the essential skills to work in nursery schools. Service users are selected based on: nature of condition, age (over 18 years), residence (Pistoia and the province of Pistoia). Once selected service users are engaged in work for 5 days a week. Groups are run by a group of experienced workers (specialists in horticulture) and professionals from various fields. The work involves professional training through a variety of: workshops (sports, theatre, autonomy, communication, cooking), activities (carpentry, market, assemblies, equestrian and / or pet therapy, ceramics, découpage, music, orchestra) and outside visits to select and purchase materials for activities.

The Autism and agricultural work project which takes place at the House of Ventignano (CdV) (Casa di Ventignano) was established in February 2003. The 2014 Work Plan includes the “Autism and Agriculture” project which is aimed at five young people with autism, 4 days a week (for a total of 10 hours). Activities are related to: garden work, harvesting and cleaning vegetables, and selection and placement in the containers. Work activities are carried out in both the greenhouse surrounding areas. Daily activities within the project are recorded in the “Agenda with images” (photo diary) of each user.

In the Lazio Region, the recently established association "Insettopia", also deserves to be mentioned. It has the features of a social non-profit organization with its headquarters in Rome. Its founder, journalist Gianluca Nicoletti, father to an autistic son, designed a scheme in which a group of seven or eight families with autistic members organize themselves as a small business, pooling public and personal resources and properties available, as well as educational staff. With this they could start a community aimed at creating an "ideal city for autism", while also utilising technologies that allow for improved interaction between people using digital media. Insettopia aims to work within projects, representing both for family associations and institutions, to create the possibility of research, design, adaptation to uses of electronic devices, computer or application, systems or 'emotional prostheses', which can make life easier for people within the autistic spectrum. The hope being they are offered feasible opportunities in job placements and training, social interaction and life. Insettopia has gained the confidence of important Italian and foreign companies in a short time.

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## 3.5. QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

With the questionnaire we wanted to assess competencies of educators and gain their opinion on how to acquire new knowledge and competencies. We also wanted to get the educators opinions on how to implement lifelong learning for families and adult family members with ID through the idea of bringing projects closer to their own home. We wanted to find out what educators are missing in their work with families with ID in sense of competencies, tools and additional knowledge.

In total 21 educators filled out the questionnaire. Below is the analysis of the collected results and data

According to the results most educators that work with adult family members with learning disabilities have 10 or more years of experience in their field. 76% of the respondents were female. Most educators would like to gain more knowledge and competencies via formal education and be able to exchange methods of good practice with other educators. The majority think that families are interested in LL activities, especially in their home environment. This could be encouraged with introducing the project to various communities, good practices, joint organization events and more information about lifelong learning. Gardening and cooking are two activities which can be of interest to families with AFMID. Educators think that the most important competencies are empathy, patience, good communication, relationship skills and knowing the characteristics of the AFMID. Stress management, good communication and grasp of group dynamics are the proficiencies that some of the educators feel they could gain in order to improve their work. The methods and tools most used by educators are role-playing, following good practice, art therapy and creative writing.

# 4. SUMMARY FOR THE NATIONAL REPORT OF CROATIA

In our national report we study the growth of adult education in Croatia, the Adult Education Act, guidelines and goals of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science and Education for the period 2019 - 2021, examples of good practice of lifelong learning of families and their adult members with learning disabilities, and the necessary competencies of educators who work with them. Last, we present the questionnaire results for Croatia. The questionnaire was conducted amongst educators working in lifelong learning (20 questionnaires).

## 4.1. DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is an important component of an inclusive education system. It enables adults to acquire formal and nonformal education in various areas. For example, in nature, technology, social, humanistic, artistic as well as others subjects of choice. Adults acquire education through

* formal (formally structured, curriculum, teacher / educator guidance, gaining formal certification)
* non-formal (intentional learning from a person's point of view to gain knowledge, develop abilities and skills, but without a public document)
* informal learning (not organized or structured according to goals, learning time, or support)

Lifelong learning is needed for all generations to ensure quality of life and further opportunity.

The concept of adult education and learning in Croatia goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the initiators of adult education, Basal and Štampar, began their work. Their work and activities later served as the basis for the development of adult education, which flourished in the 1960s. At this time, Croatia was one of the most eminent centers of andragogical expertise and science in Europe. Throughout history, adult education institutions have reflected a strong cultural aspect to their work, in addition to providing education. Adult education in Croatia is today recognized as part of the unified education system in Croatia (Adult Education Act (OG 17/07, Article 1). Adoption of the Adult Education Act in 2007 created the preconditions for an institutional and legally regulated adult education system. The law was preceded by the Adult Education Strategy released by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2004.

In Croatia, a significant number of citizens have not had a primary school education (62 092 persons over the age of 15 according to the 2011 census). The number of citizens that have had a primary school education is only (773 489). In addition, 283 867 citizens have not completed primary school. In the working-age bracket of the employed and unemployed population, most people have completed secondary education, mostly in vocational disciplines (more than 1.9 million citizens). Thus, overall, there is a large number of citizens without qualifications, with low level qualifications or with a low level of education, i.e. without acquired key competences for lifelong learning.

Today, adult education programmes take place at the Agency for Vocational Education and Training in more than 500 different institutions that run adult education programs. Most institutions run adult education programs that meet the needs of the learning-disabled users taking part in them, others may seek to improve the prospects of those looking to work in the of most sought-after occupations in the job market. Few of them carry out programs that achieve knowledge and skills in specific areas of ​​work. In the last 10 years, the rights to live in the community and the reduction of social exclusion of those with disabilities and the promotion of social innovations have been more vehemently talked about. This has led to a need to develop educational programs for adults which also provide community and social services to people with both learning and mental disabilities. As well as the need to develop educational programs for families and their adult members with learning disabilities.

Every year, adult learning and education is promoted through a "Lifelong Learning Week". The main goal of the campaign is to promote the culture of learning and encourage interest and motivation.

## 4.2. THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT AND MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2019 – 2021

What is provided by the Adult Education Act through Articles 1 and 2 is shown below:

* Article 1

(1) Adult education encompasses the entirety of the adult learning process intended to:

- exercise the right to development of the individual,

- train for employability: acquire qualifications to secure initial occupational role, retrain, acquire and deepen professional knowledge, gain skills and abilities,

- train for active citizenship.

(2) Adult education is part of the unique education system of the Republic of Croatia.

* Article 2

(1) Adult education is based on the principles of:

- lifelong learning,

- reasonable educational opportunities dependant on locality and accessibility to all on equal terms, in accordance with their abilities,

- freedom and autonomy in the choice of ways, contents, forms, means and methods,

- respect for diversity and inclusion,

- professional and morally sound andragogical staff,

- quality assurance of the educational offer,

- respect for the individuality and dignity of each participant.

(2) Adult education within the meaning of this Act shall be performed as a public service.

The main task of the Ministry is to ensure that education is accessible to all on equal terms. The development of a more accessible, adaptable, higher quality and efficient education system will enable the development of potential within Croatian society, as well as help to stimulate sustainable innovation and scientific and technological activities. Therefore, the Ministry will continue to further improve the education system to ensure a quality within it - from pre-school, primary, secondary to higher education, as well as adult education - including the acquisition of lifelong learning competencies for personal, social and economic development aligned with labour market needs. The specific objective of the Strategic Plan is 2.2, which relates to improving the quality and relevance of adult education programs.

## 4.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE OF LIFELONG LEARNING OF FAMILIES AND THEIR ADULT MEMBERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The largest organisational network providing support for those with learning disabilities and their families in Croatia is the Croatian Federation of Associations of People with Intellectual Disabilities. Their mission is to protect the rights of those with learning disabilities, the quality of life of their families, and to develop a sustainable network of available social services and programs in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Croatia there has been a rise in the number of services that provide those with learning disabilities with community support programs (housing, daily activities, employment). The development of community-based associations, clubs, and programs is the result of a shift in thought on social awareness concerning the rights of people with learning disabilities. It is precisely these changes in attitude that have helped shape the development and quality of community services, as well as what activities are available within programmes. The clubs are voluntary and are inspired by European and international developments to find non-institutional support services for young people and adults with learning disabilities.

Clubs are set up to provide half-day programs that focus on developing users' potential, gaining life experiences, developing and improving social competency skills (practical, creative, social, interest, etc.). In this regard, clubs aim to promote the interests, well-being, independence and creativity of their users in many aspects of day to day life. Today, there are 42 clubs in Croatia, offering a minimum of 3-4 hours and a maximum of 20 hours per week. The unique nature of each club program reflects the needs of its users and governs the number of workshops, their work dynamics and user-friendly content. The abundance of content, cultural differences, ethnic customs, historical events and geographical surroundings of a program dictates the nature of content used within it. The various forms and levels of support that service users need are decided by the workshop leaders.

People with learning disabilities often drop out of school and do not continue their education because of discriminatory attitudes and lack of person focused programs and support. Because most lifelong programs and materials are not accessible, adults with learning disabilities are systematically denied the opportunity to continue developing skills and competencies throughout their lives. The exclusion of people with learning disabilities from lifelong learning significantly reduces their chances of competing in the job market. For this reason, the Pathways 2 project was created by the Self Advocacy Association to ensure that people with learning disabilities can actively participate in adult education programs. The Pathways 2 project makes learning information available to adults with learning disabilities and teachers in other European countries by including Inclusion Europe members from: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Spain as partners in the project. To ensure that more people with learning disabilities have access to lifelong learning programs, many European countries place particular emphasis on circulating shared knowledge. There are numerous positive examples of the results of people with learning disabilities who, as self-advocates, are increasingly involved in all areas of the community.

The Association of Persons with Disabilities of Karlovac County through its work advocates and promotes the welfare and interests of those with disabilities, children with disabilities and their families, and operates in the area of ​​Karlovac County. Members of the Association themselves have different types of disabilities such as cerebral palsy, neuromuscular diseases, para / tetraplegia, etc., but multiple impairments accompanied by learning disabilities are not uncommon. In addition to its core business and social services, it also organizes services that contribute to social activation, socialisation, creative expression, and various models of community care that contribute to independent living and the social inclusion of those with disabilities. A positive example of the Association is the project "Practical House of Knowledge" - strengthening the social inclusion of people with disabilities in the community, which is recognized in the local community and beyond as having positive results. The project was implemented under Priority Axis 2 - Strengthening the Social Inclusion and Integration of Disadvantaged Persons of the Operational Program “Human Resources Development” 2007-2013, funded by the European Social Fund. The aim of the project was to increase social skills and competences to improve the chances of employment and independent living for people with disabilities. This was achieved through the launch of "Practical House of Knowledge" in Duga Resa, where individuals could acquire new knowledge, skills and competences, as well as use what they had learned with the professional support of working therapists, social workers and other professionals within the project.

## 4.4. BASIC COMPETENCES OF EDUCATORS WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND THEIR ADULT MEMBERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The quality of life for families with adult members with learning disabilities in the community largely depends on access to education and support. The way society views adults with learning disabilities is a common topic of discussion that looks at models and quality of support. In addition to focusing on supporting people with learning disabilities, support should also be directed to parents and the wider family. The families of the learning disabled will confront greater stress levels than other parent groups. Often, parents are stigmatized in society, which is something they could do without. Support for these families enables people with learning disabilities to further develop their existing abilities, whilst their families are allowed time and access to learning about procedures and decision making concerning their choices of therapeutic or educational activities. This way the whole family is better integrated into local communities and society. As the development of community support services and services for people with learning disabilities has become an international responsibility and a strategic commitment of the Republic of Croatia, there is a need for experienced educators to provide support. Because of this situation educators in the field should also have access to lifelong education. The skills these educators already possess or would hope to develop are: an open approach, outstanding adaptability, flexibility, creativity, patience, consistency, good communication skills and a high level of responsibility. All of which are crucial.

Educators working with families and their adult members with learning disabilities should have basic skills that allow them to:

- identify and define the needs of the individual with learning disabilities and their families,

- carry out an assessment of ability, create and develop an individual work plan and program for those with learning disabilities and their families,

- select, apply and adapt different methodological approaches in dealing with people with learning disabilities,

- identify the needs of parents and advise them adequately,

- adequate response to unforeseen situations when dealing with people with learning disabilities,

- knowledge of assistive technology,

- understanding of legal frameworks and protection of human rights.

## 4.5. REFERENCES

<https://www.zakon.hr/z/384/Zakon-o-obrazovanju-odraslih>

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## 4.6. QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

In total, 20 educators filled out the questionnaire. 7 questionnaires were only filled partially and 13 were filled completely. All 20 questionnaires were deemed statistically relevant, so all were analysed. In the analysis of each question, the number of educators that answered each specific question is stated in the bracket.

According to the results, most educators who work with adult family members with learning disabilities have 10 or more years of experience in their line of work. Most educators want to gain further knowledge and proficiencies within their work by sharing good practice with other educators. Educators believe that the most important proficiencies are patience, communication skills and empathy. Work experience, formal and non-formal education are things that some educators feel could improve their work.

Most educators believe it is important for families with adult members with learning disabilities to continue lifelong learning in their home environment. This could be encouraged by engaging in training and workshops, good practice, motivation, roundtables that promoting sharing experiences.

The methods and tools commonly used by educators are conversation, one to one communication, and educational brochures.

# 5. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT OF UNITED KINGDOM

## 5.1. BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE UK

Within the UK, education for adults with a learning disability has been offered in both mainstream and specialist educational settings. For people with a moderate and severe learning disability accessing mainstream settings has been less frequent, although increasingly this is becoming an available option. Currently everyone with a disability, including learning disabilities will have an Education, health Care (EHC) Plan. (https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

The point at which someone becomes a 'young person' within the UK is when they have completed the academic year in which they turn 16.

The provision of post 16 education within the UK is devolved to national assemblies and so difference exists in the way education is provided across the different nations of the UK. However, all nations have a department for education that overseas all education within each country. Funding for these educational settings is also distributed differently in each country. All to a differing extent will fully fund courses and training taken up to the age of 25 for people with learning disability. After this age functional skills education and training could be free or is provided at lower subsidized rates.

This is when they traditionally move from secondary education into further education.

Young people in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales might decide to leave education at this stage, but in England they must stay in education or training until the age of 18. Increasingly all countries within the UK seek to ensure no person between the ages of 16 and 18 become NEET (not in education, employment or training). (gov.uk). Currently the main government guidance in relation to the education of people with learning disabilities is the SEND Code of Practice January 2015. (gov.uk)

## 5.2. AVAILABLE EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES WITHIN THE UK

The UK Government’s white paper Valuing People asserts that people with learning disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else with regards to post 16 education. Objective 7 of the Valuing People paper states,

"To enable people with learning disabilities to lead full and purposeful lives within their community and to develop a range of friendships, activities and relationships."

It also states that Learning Disability Partnership Boards, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as well as colleges should support choices and ambitions of people with learning disabilities, and that they should be able to realise their potential.

In terms of inclusiveness in education, this means providing adequate support services for people with varying degrees of learning disability that wish to enter into further education. This can include support such as helping a person with learning disabilities use public transport services and other services that they will need to use frequently in order to continue into independent further education.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Learning and Skills Council must:

* Have regard to the needs of people with learning difficulties (Section 13)
* Have due regard to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people (Section 14)

and from 2002 learners with disabilities and learning difficulties have had additional rights as per the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4, which states that education provides must:

* Not treat disabled learners less favourably than other learners for a reason related to their disability
* Provide reasonable adjustments for disabled learners

It is felt that by supporting more learning-disabled people into mainstream education, they may have more access to further education opportunities than they would through specialised schools. However, this still reveals that those in specialised schools tend to lack inclusion. There are many learning difficulty organisations working to encourage person-centred planning and cross-agency interaction in helping people with learning disabilities in their transition from post-16 education.

MENCAP the largest learning disability charity within the UK describe the options available to adults with learning disability in the following way:

Most further education takes place at colleges, training facilities or sixth form in school (although sixth forms tend to provide academic options meaning few people with learning disabilities take this offer). There are lots courses and options available, including study programmes and tailored packages of support five days a week.

Within the UK people who have accessed the Special Educational needs and disabilities provision within the school system before 16 will be provided with support up to the age of 25 if they are still in education or training.

There are also training options available to young people with a learning disability, which can help build skills and confidence to help get a job.

These options usually involve doing a course that also includes a placement in a workplace.

There are three main training options available in England for young people with a learning disability - apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships.

## 5.2.1. Apprenticeships

If a young person is over 16, they can apply for an apprenticeship. There are various levels of apprenticeship you can undertake depending on your current skills and qualifications, including:

* intermediate apprenticeship
* advanced apprenticeship higher apprenticeship
* degree apprenticeship.

Entry requirements differ depending on certain factors such as the apprenticeship level and the age of the apprentice.

All apprenticeships are real jobs, so all apprentices earn a salary, at least at £3.30 per hour in the first year if the apprentice is under 19. Full details on apprenticeships' pay and conditions are available elsewhere.

Apprentices should work for at least 30 hours per week and an apprenticeship takes between one and five years to complete, depending upon the level of apprenticeship and the industry sector.

Most of the training is delivered in the workplace and the rest of the training is given by a training organisation, either at the workplace, off-site (perhaps at college) or via e-learning.

## 5.2.2. Traineeships

Traineeships are education and training programmes with work experience, designed to get young people (aged 16-24) ‘work ready’.

Sometimes people take traineeships to help them get prepared for an apprenticeship.

A traineeship often provides:

* a high-quality work experience placement with an employer
* work preparation training, provided by the training organisation
* English and maths support, if required, provided by the training organisation.

Traineeships last up to a maximum of 6 months.

## 5.2.3. Supported internships

A supported internship is a study programme for young people aged 16 to 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan, who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

They support people to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.

A Supported Internship is based primarily at the site of the employer, with much less classroom study and less of a focus on English and maths support. Instead, it aims to equip young people with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

Supported Internships are unpaid and normally last for a minimum of 6 months.

## 5.2.4. Other options

There are a range of other options young people with a learning disability can access in further education, including tailored study programmes. Many of the options are provided by the charitable sector and may include gardening and cooking as mainstay activities. (https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/children-and-young-people/education-support/further-education)

These other options are likely to be accessed by people with moderate to severe learning disabilities with a combination of care and development opportunities being offered. Within mainstream and specialist education the teachers will be educated specifically but may be supported by teaching assistants that may not have the benefit of specialist education. Similarly, those who provide educational, developmental and care services outside of the statutory services may not have specialist education and training in working with or providing education to people with learning disabilities.

## 5.3. TEACHING AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITY WITHIN THE UK

Teaching people with Learning disabilities in the UK is considered a specialist teaching occupation in mainstream schooling. Teachers in Colleges may also have specialist education particularly if leading a SEND specific class or course and the SEND Code of Practice demands colleges do have within their staff people with specialist skills. However, those providing the various apprenticeships and training options mentioned are less likely to have specialist education although many will have completed shorter training.

Expertise within and beyond the college that people with learning disabilities should expect access to according to the SEND Code of Practice are:

 The governing bodies of colleges should ensure that all staff interact appropriately and inclusively with students who have SEN or a disability and should ensure that they have appropriate expertise within their workforce. They should also ensure that curriculum staff are able to develop their skills, are aware of effective practice and keep their knowledge up to date. Colleges should make sure they have access to specialist skills and expertise to support the learning of students with SEN. This can be through partnerships with other agencies such as adult social care or health services, or specialist organisations, and/or by employing practitioners directly. They should ensure that there is a named person in the college with oversight of SEN provision to ensure co-ordination of support, similar to the role of the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) in schools. This person should contribute to the strategic and operational management of the college. Curriculum and support staff in a college should know who to go to if they need help in identifying a student’s SEN, are concerned about their progress or need further advice.

 Colleges should ensure they have access to external specialist services and expertise. These can include, for example, educational psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), specialist teachers and support services, supported employment services and therapists. They can be involved at any point for help or advice on the best way to support a student with SEN or a disability. Specialist help should be involved where the student’s needs are not being met by the strong, evidence-based support provided by the college. Where, despite the college having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the needs of the student, the student is still not making the expected progress, the college or young person should consider requesting an EHC needs assessment. (gov.uk)

Although providers of alternative provision for people with learning disability may also follow the guidance of the Code there is less legal requirement or expectation for them to do so. Although local authorities may make compliance or part compliance part of their approval criteria for these services to be signposted or even advertised to people with learning disabilities.

The salary range for teachers within Further Education provision will vary from £22,500 for newly qualified staff rising to upwards of £35,000 for experienced teachers and specialist duties. For activity providers in alternative provision salaries could range from £17,000 to £30,000 with similar uplift to those with experience and specialist roles.

There are a range of supporting organisations who provide guidance, continuous professional development and resources to educators and activity providers who support adults with learning disabilities.

## 5.4. QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

Through the questionnaire we wanted to understand the current competencies of educators/activity providers and find out how they prefer to gain new knowledge and skills. We also wanted to get their opinions of how lifelong learning could be implemented for adults with LD and their families by enabling them to take part in shared learning activities at home or in their local environment. We wanted to understand what kinds of skills, resources and knowledge educators/activity providers feel they are currently missing in their work with adults with LD and their families.

In total 20 educators/activity providers completed the survey.

The majority of the respondents to the survey were female which may be because activity providers are often in the community or charity sector where wages are low as opposed to those educators in formal education sector. The majority were in the 45-55 year age range and about 1/3 had over 10 years experience, 1/3 5-10 years and 1/3 under 5 years. The majority work directly with adults with LD and only 10% work with families.

Most are gaining knowledge and skills informally although 70 % have also attended formal education. 84% thought that families with AFMID were interested in lifelong learning but that access to it may be difficult, and it depends on whether the learning is seen as important and to have benefits to the AFMID. 85% considered that it was important for AFMID to continue learning.

Educators suggested that to engage families with lifelong learning at home it needs to be easy to access and not time consuming. Small projects were preferred and the benefits of these needed to be clear. Vocational and independent living skills were seen as being most important. Both gardening and cooking were also seen as being important skills/topics for LL.

Key competences were primarily in soft skills such as listening and communicating and having patience and empathy, which were seen to be extremely important whereas practical skills such as stress management and organisational and management skills were seen as very important. None of the competences were considered to be slightly or not at all important suggesting that educators need a wide range of different skills.

# 6. CONCLUSION

With the questionnaire we wanted to assess competencies of educators and gain their opinion on how to acquire new knowledge and competencies. Also, we wanted to get the educators opinions on how to implement lifelong learning for families and adult family members with learning disabilities through the concept of bringing the educational offer close to their home. We wanted to find out what educators are missing in their work with families with intellectual disabilities in sense of competencies, tools and additional knowledge.

Most respondents are educators who have worked with adult family members with learning disabilities for 10 or more years.

According to the results, most educators would like to gain more knowledge and competencies via good practice exchange.

Educators think that the most important competencies are so called soft skills: empathy, patience, communication skills, and professional knowledge.

Stress management, good communication, knowing the group dynamics and work experience are the competencies that some of the educators could gain in order to improve their work.

The methods and tools mostly used by educators are communication skills (custom communication), active listening, following good practice, personal approach, educational brochures, team work, role playing and tutoring.

Most educators believe it is important for families with adult members with learning disabilities to continue lifelong learning in their home environment. This could be encouraged by engaging in training and workshops, good practice, motivation, roundtables and sharing experiences.