

**"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**



## **SUMMARY OF THE SYNTHESIS REPORT**

**Activity O4, A study of both the potentials and barriers of a family inclusive further education model of learning, using therapy-based family cooking as an andragogical method of teaching to benefit families of adults with learning disabilities.**

## CONTENT

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR CROATIA</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION AS ADAPTIVE SKILLS OF DAILY LIFE OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES .....	4
2.2 METHODS OF TEACHING COOKING SKILLS AND PREPARING MEALS OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES .....	5
2.3 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN CROATIA AND GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES .....	7
2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY .....	8
2.5 REFERENCES.....	8
<b>3 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR SLOVENIA</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN SLOVENIA.....	12
3.3 GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES.....	13
3.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY .....	14
3.5 REFERENCES.....	15
<b>4 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR ITALY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID.....	17
4.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN ITALY.....	18
4.3 GOOD PRACTICES IN ITALY.....	19
4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY .....	19
4.5 REFERENCES.....	21
<b>5. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM</b> .....	<b>22</b>
5.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID.....	22
5.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.....	25
5.3 AVAILABILITY OF COOKERY COURSES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LD.....	26
5.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY .....	27
5.5 REFERENCES.....	28
<b>6 CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>27</b>

## 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 therapy-based gardening and family therapy-based cooking programs as a way of supporting ongoing further education (LL) and the independence of adults with learning disabilities (AFMID). Further education 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 last for 35 months in cooperation with non-profit organizations from Slovenia, UK, Croatia and Italy. The participating organizations are: Education Centre Geoss (Slovenia), Zveza Sožitje (Slovenia), Danilo Dolci (Italy), UOSIKAZU (Croatia) and Thrive (United Kingdom). Within the implementation of 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 opportunities that therapeutic gardening and therapeutic cooking can provide. It will also give insights into the social and functional competences acquired and other any therapeutic benefits achieved through gardening and cooking activities.

In studies carried out before the project began, project partners discovered that the majority of adults with learning disabilities live at home with their families and that these families would benefit from a more adaptable process of education suited to their own personal needs. The study's aim was to identify: potential; in both personal and organisational interests in the project aims, and what challenges surround these; the technical and financial potential of running permanent day-to-day courses of further education for families and adults with learning disabilities in a safe learning environment. These being either local kitchens or in the kitchens of participating organisations.

The purpose of the study is to provide information, further knowledge and andragogical tools for teachers within further learning. Who will be able to develop, based on the research results, a Family education MeTURA – Back to the roots, therapeutic family gardening and cooking program with the aim of promoting further independence for adults with learning disabilities.

Within the O4 Study, a questionnaire was carried out in all participating countries. The first part of the questionnaire was to find out whether families and AFMID considered engaging in further education at home important and whether they considered cooking and food preparation important skills for day to day living. Next, we found out if there were cooking courses around where the AFMID's lived, and if so, who provided them. Furthermore, we found out what families with AFMID considered to be the positive outcomes of these cooking courses, what are the obstacles in taking part, and what support was needed for families and their AFMID to cook and prepare meals as independently as possible.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first part consisted of some general information about the family and the second part was made up of 11 questions concerning cooking in the family setting, all of which were answered by the family.

In this report we present a short summary on the state of formal and non-formal educational establishments providing cookery classes benefiting those with learning disabilities and the barriers around this. We also examine the results of the questionnaire.

## **2 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR CROATIA**

In the national report for Croatia cooking and meal preparation are presented as adaptive skills that can benefit the lives of adults with learning disabilities. As well as this, teaching methods are explored, followed by a look what Croatia already provides in this field and examples of good practice that already exist. Finally, the results of the questionnaire for Croatia are presented.

### **2.1 COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION AS ADAPTIVE SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE DAY TO DAY LIVING OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

The main long-term goal of educational programs benefiting those with learning disabilities is to maximise their potential to attain visibility and value within society. In order to achieve this, the goal of these programs should be to focus on teaching appropriate abilities needed to function independently as an adult. Adulthood is largely about being able to successfully carry out day to day tasks pertaining to your daily schedule. One of these is being independently able to prepare meals. When significant limitations in adaptive functioning are present in those with

learning disabilities, they often can't fulfil this social role, so they need to be included in an appropriate program to acquire the necessary skills to do so. Lack of ability when performing these activities in daily life create a shortcoming and thus reduce the degree of independence of the individual.

Those with learning disabilities should be encouraged to be as independent as possible and capable of fulfilling their own needs, this will determine their capacity for independence in adulthood. In order to achieve social visibility and to create an image of themselves as a valuable member of the community, they need the help and support of those around them. This support should be person centred in its approach and consider the individual's needs. It is also a basic human right.

Adults with learning disabilities want to be as independent as possible, so it is imperative that they have the necessary abilities required to allow them to live day to day unaided by others. Life skills (use of public transport, meal preparation, personal hygiene, etc.) are considered a priority for further education because they are essential for the increased independence of the learning disabled. Regardless of whether the learning disability is mild or severe, the acquisition of these skills is considered necessary because it increases autonomy and reduces the sense of passivity and helplessness that can arise without them.

Today, there is an increasing emphasis on providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities to participate within communities as much as possible. More recent research highlights the importance of meaningful activities promoting life skills for people with learning disabilities, to enable them to participate within their communities. Taking part in activities pertaining to their daily lives contributes to greater independence and responsibility. Increasing independence makes an individual more likely to take greater responsibility for their own wellbeing. By providing the learning disabled life skills that allow them to connect with the cultural norms of their environment and giving them roles and activities that increase their visibility and value within it, their lives will be changed for the better.

## **2.2 METHODS OF TEACHING COOKING SKILLS AND PREPARING MEALS OF ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

If somebody with learning disabilities is not able to live independently at a young age, with the appropriate access and support, they can acquire the necessary skills during adulthood. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on strategies for teaching life skills to people with learning disabilities. Media and modern technology now play a far larger part in our daily lives, the use of



technology is increasingly more essential for our participation in society as well as many daily activities.

People often want to stay in their homes, but still want to have access to services that will help them learn something new. Nowadays, television has many lifestyle focused programs (physical training, fitness, cooking, gardening, home decor, etc.). Also, many of these programs are available on various websites, such as Youtube. Although technological development is opening many avenues educationally, people with learning disabilities may find they are limited in their knowledge of how to access this relatively new learning tool. This lack of technological know-how can significantly affect the quality of life of these individuals, which is why it is considered essential as part of their teaching. Because instructor / rehabilitator time is limited, technology is a promising alternative to helping teach people with learning and other developmental disabilities.

Numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different procedures when teaching cooking to people with learning disabilities. Different ways of teaching people with learning disabilities can be found in this literature, and in recent times, teaching using video technology (video modelling, video instruction - prompting) and teaching using pictures (pictorial recipes) are the most commonly used. It has been shown that any method of teaching food or meal preparation can be effective when the instructors / rehabilitators use a set of prescribed teaching procedures. There are different ways to use these models, and each one requires the correct applied science.

### **2.3 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN CROATIA PROVIDING COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND GOOD EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE**

Many young people and adults with learning disabilities in Croatia are still heavily dependent on specific institutional programs in the form of permanent or temporary placements (e.g. for the purpose of upbringing, education and training), separating either life skills and vocational led programs. Without adequate support, these individuals can live in isolation within their families, lacking opportunities and incentives to acquire basic life skills, including how to prepare meals.

The preparation and delivery of meals to people with learning disabilities, housed in institutions or self-contained housing, involves a complex network of activities performed by large kitchens at base centres. Thus, people with learning disabilities

are unable to prepare their own meals and develop these skills. For an adult with learning disabilities to have a better quality of life, it is very important to enable them to acquire practical skills and to focus their self-improvement on strengthening their independence and autonomy. Recently, more and more research has been published examining the quality of life of people with learning disabilities, and it is thought that the level of competence is of relevance when assessing what each individual can achieve.

Institutionalization is seen to have a traditionally clinical way of thinking and low expectations for people with learning disabilities. The goals of such systems are not to enable individuals to acquire relevant life skills nor to enable a fulfilling and active life in the community. But instead lead them towards an acceptance of a vague social standing and continued dependency within their own environment.

By examining the quality of life of people with moderate and severe learning disabilities in both family and institutional settings, research has found that most people in care do not take part in everyday household activities, including taking care of themselves and their living space. Only a handful of individuals were involved in preparing the meals, setting the table and doing the dishes, while most of the respondents were involved in cleaning their room and making their beds. The inability to take part in the everyday upkeep of their residential setting is explained by the fact that these are shared households so the responsibility for meals and care of personal property is placed in the hands of paid staff. This confirms that the organizational structure of the care system does not leave enough space for those with learning disabilities to acquire the ability to care for themselves and develop their own potential.

Therefore, promoting life skills using therapeutic cooking as an andragogical method of learning for families and their AFMID living at or near home should provide a positive outcome. Through knowledge imparted through this programme adults with learning disabilities should gain further independence and become more visible and valued by society.

### **Good examples of practice**

In Croatia, adults with learning disabilities are taught cooking and meal preparation by organizations such as the Ozalj Community Service Centre, where organized housing service users participates in work activities in the areas of: agricultural production, agricultural product processing, natural cosmetics production and culinary workshops.

Furthermore, in the town of Koprivnica, the Association for People with learning Disabilities “Lattice”(“Petals”) in cooperation with the Crafts School and Podravka Company organizes a cooking school for those with learning disabilities three times a week to train participants in independent living. The Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Bjelovar hold culinary workshops as part of daily work activities for their members, while the Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Daruvar “Korak dalje”(“A Step Further”) in partnership with the Technical School organizes a “Small Cooking School” in which those with learning disabilities strengthen their practical competences in the form of independently preparing simple meals and drinks.

The “Practical House of Knowledge” project, UOSIKAZU also conducted culinary workshops for people with disabilities, including people with learning disabilities, to strengthen their social inclusion within the community.

## 2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

The questionnaire was completed by 21 respondents (families of AFMID). The respondents who were family consisted of 20 parents (95%) and one guardian (5%). The age of the respondents was between 43 and 84 years, their average age was 59.2 years. The ages of AFMID in the families of the respondents were between 19 and 60 years, their average age being 33.6 years.

According to the results, the majority of respondents believe that it is important for families with adult members with learning disabilities to participate in lifelong education at home, but this is dependent on the needs of the individual with learning disabilities, and how the degree of disability would dictate their involvement in meal preparation. They also believe that cooking and food preparation are important skills for everyday life because they encourage and directly affect the autonomy and social inclusion of an individual with learning disabilities.

We further learned that there were no residential available where families together with AFMID would learn to cook at home.

The positive effects of families learning to cook at home together with AFMID are most often cited as independence, self-realization and greater connection between family members.

Obstacles to families learning to cook at home together with AFMID are mainly the fear of injury when preparing food and meals and other factors affecting



shared cooking, such as: AFMID's interest, AFMID's and parents' health problems (degree and type of disability), parental age and employment or lack of time.

Most families needed support to enable their AFMID to prepare meals as independently as possible. The most common types of support needed by families and AFMID are professional educational support and physical assistance from somebody else while cooking tasks are being carried out.

Most families with adult members with learning disabilities consider cooking lessons important because they affect quality of life in the following areas: social inclusion, independence, family relationships, social and emotional relationships with others, as well as psychophysical health.

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### 3 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR SLOVENIA

In the national report for Slovenia we look at what available education there is for adults with learning disabilities in cooking and meal preparation within Slovenia, as well as good examples that already exist. Lastly, the results of the questionnaire are also presented.

#### 3.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID

A number of studies have been conducted around delivering cooking lessons for those with disabilities. The strategies have included: constant time delay; teaching in small groups; teaching chained tasks in an order to best suit the individual rather than in a functional order; teaching tasks using a backward chaining format; a system of least prompts, and graduated guidance. These studies found each of the procedures to be effective for learning food preparation when the instructors used a set of prescribed prompting and instructional procedures. However, there is concern that without an instructor to provide motivation and prompts the learner would struggle to retain information and independence, that would allow them to successfully complete cooking tasks after a period of time. Decreasing the need for continuous supervision and prompting by others continues to be a focus when designing educational programs for those with learning disabilities.

We can note that people without disabilities use prompts such as written notes and text-based media (cook books and recipe cards) to guide them while cooking. These prompts allow them to follow step by step sequences when preparing either simple or complex meals. Prompts are an established resource in many kitchens, and it is widely accepted that it would be difficult for some to prepare food without them. If a person has a learning disability it is important for them as well that prompts are readily available, so that a many recipes are made achievable, regardless of their length and complexity.

Research into cooking instructions for those with disabilities show that we have to move away from an instructor-based method of learning and commit to the use of printed guidance or specialist tools that can serve to teach or prompt how to undertake and complete cookery exercises. These materials have traditionally been pictorially based, but the use of auditory prompting became the focus of research as well as the emergence of video-based tools. To accommodate for a lack of reading skills, picture prompts (in the form of recipe cards) were introduced. Early picture-based systems relied on hand drawn illustrations and were often paired with written instructions. Those systems then evolved to film-based development of black and white photographs, colour photographs and scanned images onto computer-based systems. Digital photography and downloaded images from internet became the next step in creating picture-based systems. Nowadays there are web sites that offer on-line step-by-step instructions for meal preparation. Apps for smart phones for people with disabilities are also more available.

### **3.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN SLOVENIA**

In Slovenia most AFMID live at home. As mentioned in IO1, there are waiting lists for AFMID to participate in Occupational Activity Centres (OAC), so it is important in the meantime that they continue their lifelong learning at home.

As we mentioned in IO1, the Occupational Activity Centres main tasks are protection, guidance and employment under special circumstances. Staff in the Centres offer help with day-to-day activities. Education of AFMID in cooking and meal preparation is also a part of OAC.

Main tasks of OAC:

1. Protection
  - assistance in maintaining personal hygiene,
  - Assistance with day-to-day activities (change of clothes, putting on shoes...),
  - assistance with movement and walking,
  - guidance and communication assistance,
  - organization and use of transport
  - Organization and implementation of standard services in VDC (holidays, excursions, recreation, interesting activities - sports, music, art expression, etc.)
2. Guidance

- assistance in solving personal and social problems,
  - design, implementation and monitoring of individual programmes,
  - cooperation with the OAC users' relatives,
  - cooperation with other professionals and institutions,
  - organizing leisure activities
  - organization of advocacy and self-advocacy activities at OAC
  - organization and implementation of specific and enriched content
  - Work within the scope of OAC services.
3. Employment under special circumstances
- employment under the OAC program (subcontracting, own programme, service programme, integrative forms of employment),
  - activities for developing and maintaining work skills
  - activities to provide conditions for safe work inside and outside the OAC,
  - monitoring workflow in the OAC,
  - procurement of funds and facilities for the implementation of the OAC programme,
  - activities to sell products and services

There are several programs of lifelong learning for AFMID in Slovenia. Most of them are on a local level and some are on a national level. Local community programmes offer different kinds of lifelong learning, depending on AFMID needs and wishes.

### 3.3 EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

#### Project Druga violina (Second violin)

This project began in 2012 under the Centre for training, work and protection Draga. The Second Violin consists of a restaurant in the centre of Ljubljana, which actively employs individuals with learning disabilities. The Second Violin provides guidance, care and supported employment services, that provide its users with an opportunity to take an active part in social life and working environments and to carry out work which is useful and suited to their abilities. Guidance, care and supported employment are provided in a way that allows the users to further develop knowledge and work competences, as well as social and work abilities, whilst putting their own ideas and creativity into use therefore achieving a sense of value and self-assurance. The restaurant also provides other endeavours which enable users and their families to engage in occupational and social activities.

The service users also get paid for the work they do as the providers feel they have a legal obligation to offer financial benefits for the work undertaken.

### **Programmes of Sožitje Association on a local and national level**

As described in IO1, Sožitje association (Zveza Sožitje) is a Slovenian organisation for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It consists of 52 local societies (branches Sožitje) which are distributed around the country. Zveza Sožitje is a member of Inclusion International and Inclusion Europe. All the programs intend to provide training, education, empowerment and health benefits to the learning disabled as well as their families.

#### Programmes on a local level:

- self-help groups
- Lifelong learning for people with learning disabilities
- family training programmes
- rehabilitation programs
- Organization and implementation of special social activities

Some local societies Sožitje include cooking and meal preparation classes as a part of their Lifelong learning programmes for those with learning disabilities.

#### Programmes on a national level:

- Lifelong learning programmes: training those with learning disabilities to lead an independent and active life. This programme available for those with learning disabilities over the age of 18. The goals of the programmes are: independence, active participation, social skills and self-advocacy. The subject matter available within LL is very different. Around 20 topics are available every year, of which one of them is cooking. The program provides a culinary journey around Slovenia. Participants learn about typical dishes from different parts of Slovenia. They get to know the dishes with the help of entertainment, sports, interactive games and creative workshops. In addition to cooking, they also learn how to conduct oneself at the table, how to prepare the table, how the food is served, etc. The learners gain knowledge of how to prepare simple dishes, traditional Slovenian dishes and their origins, different cooking techniques (baking, cooking, frying, frying...) and the basics of healthy food preparation. Even if the subject of the programme is not cooking, in most LL programmes the participants learn about cooking. They will make pancakes, learn how to prepare coffee, set the table, and learn how to behave during meals.



They will also make home-made ice cream, prepare herbal tea bags (after harvesting the herbs) as well as prepare a fruit salad and bake a cake.

- Training programmes for families and individuals with learning disabilities:  
The aims of these programmes are to provide support for and prevent the social exclusion of families of those with learning disabilities.
  - Four-year cycle
  - Maintaining psychophysical health of families
  - Weekend seminars
  - Programmes for children and teenagers

As stated earlier, the Second violin restaurant is an example of good practice existing in Slovenia. Not only do the employees learn about food and meal preparation, but also gain other important skills for life (money exchange, working face to face with customers, working habits, etc.).

In most OAC the programmes the set up enables the service users to be involved in daily activities (they help to set the table, clean after the meal...)

The LL programmes of Sožitje association have high numbers of attendance every year. Participants are happy with the programme as it encourages independence and enables participants to build confidence in their work. Participants like the activities that include cooking or meal preparation.

### 3.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

The questionnaire was completed by 27 respondents (families with AFMID). The respondents in the family consisted of 12 mothers (44%), 4 fathers (15%) and 4 aunts (15%), 3 sons (11%), one brother (5%), one sister (5%) and one guardian (5%). The age of the respondents was between 23 and 70 years, their average age was 53 years.

According to the results, most respondents believe that it is important for families with AFMID to be engaged in further education within their home environment. They also believe that it is important for AFMID to have some capabilities to enable them to prepare meals independently. Most respondents were in support of cooking courses for AFMID within their homes. Many respondents observed there were no cooking courses in their immediate area, but a smaller proportion of respondents found that there were some – mostly run by local organisations.

Most respondents are of the opinion that the biggest benefit of cooking in the home is the development of further independence for the AFMID. There were however obstacles that might prevent AFMID and their families attending these courses, such as fear of injury when preparing food (cuts, burns etc.). Most of the families said their AFMID would need a degree of help or support to prepare meals independently. In most cases this meant the physical support of somebody else alongside them. Otherwise, psychological, emotional and professional support was deemed to be of more use.

The majority of respondents believe that educating AFMID in cooking is important because it leads to positive outcomes including: independence, social inclusion, day to day life skills and progression of familial relationships.

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## 4 SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR ITALY

In the Italian national report, CSC Danilo Dolci conducted research in to how cookery courses for AFMID are undertaken. The study explores the teaching techniques that enable adults with learning disabilities to fully engage in cookery classes, followed by a look into existing establishments modelling good practices within Italy. At the end, CSC Danilo Dolci presents the results of the questionnaire carried out in Italy.

### 4.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID

Within literature the term “competence” is broad, with multiple meanings. This is due to it having many separate cultural significances, and because of the many requirements that we hope to satisfy with the term. In many projects the word “competence” can be used within several contexts (work, labour market, school, professional training, etc.) and with varied aspirations attached (to describe the position of a person with respect to work, the training path, to read the knowledge of an individual, in the integration between education and training processes, for reasons of transparency, etc.). When we talk about skills, we usually classify them as competences: basic, transversal, specific or professional techniques.

Eating is one of the primary and indispensable requirements of humans. From this necessity a “culture of the kitchen” has evolved, handed down from antiquity to the present, differentiating itself from country to country. But cooking can mean so much more: it can turn into a real wellness therapy, able to stimulate the psychophysical state of people from a diverse range of backgrounds. Offering a cookery workshop, besides it being a pleasant activity, offers the opportunity to:

- improve physical dexterity of hands and fingers by manipulating different materials (water, sugar, flour, etc.);
- improve hand to eye coordination (crushing, touching, mixing, creating forms, rolling up etc.), experience creative tasks and psycho-affective development;
- develop learned skills to benefit participants autonomy and self-esteem, starting from “knowing” to “knowing how to do”, up to “knowing how to be”.

With these goals in mind, service users are given space in which to explore the various materials available, to communicate, invent, create as well as benefit from working from both a sensory and psychomotive point of view. These planned experiences should also satisfy the service users involved in the project.

The educator, the physiotherapist specialized in disability, and the chefs all working within the structure of the project are essential for the kitchen workshop.

The objectives of a training programme for AFMID in cooking and food preparation can be:

- To stimulate psycho-affective development through an educational programme;
- To promote the improvement of cognitive and motor abilities service users through guided practice;
- To increase the sense of autonomy and creativity from the skills and abilities acquired;
- Building a common and shared educational path;
- To improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, and satisfaction amongst service users;
- To achieve goals outlined in initial actions.

## **4.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN ITALY**

In Italy a new professional role exists for people with learning disabilities. The “kitchen collaborator” is a professional figure who intervenes at a supervisory level, in catering to support managers in their work. Their use of basic cooking methods, tool experience and food knowledge allow them to work in a kitchen environment preparing of meals. Basic skills in selection, preparation, and storage of food mean they can support on and finalise dishes. The disabled can participate in the course, whether they have physical, mental or learning disabilities with a degree of disability recognized as no less than 46%, employed or unemployed, aged between 16 to 60 years of age. They must have as a minimum of a Diploma from Secondary School and be a resident or domiciled within Sicily. Exclusions can occur if they are certified as unable to work. In the case of non-EU citizens, a valid residence permit is required. This role allows people with learning disabilities to have multiple job opportunities in different areas of catering. They can work in various food service establishments such as restaurants, company canteens, event catering, banqueting, hotels and self-service outlets.

## **4.3 GOOD PRACTICES IN ITALY**

*A training course for 26 mentally disabled service users promoted in Rome by the Community of St. Egidio to help with employability.*

A project in Italy has been devised that allows individuals to find employment, despite their mental disability. Tasks relating to the jobs available include becoming a chef, serving at the table, explaining a dish or recommending the right wine. The project's name is «Inclusive cuisine», promoted by the **Community of Sant'Egidio** and financed by the Telecom Italia Foundation with the call «Work and social inclusion». "26 people aged between 20 and 30 participate but there are also some adults; many have downs syndrome, and all share a great desire to learn - says the director of the course, Paola Scarcella -. The restaurant sector is in continuous development especially in the centre of Rome; after the success of the **Gli Amici restaurant** in the heart of Trastevere, the Community of Sant'Egidio decided to reproduce the format of organizing a cooking and dining course». The programme is intense, with a cycle of lessons divided into 3 modules, each lasting about a month and a half. During the first module, learners gain the basics: from hygiene to labour law, from English to the history of catering. The other subjects taught in the next 2 modules are: theoretical and practical notions of ergonomics, types of catering, the fundamentals of cooking (the elements to be known for cooking and explaining a dish), wine, the cheese cart, Lazio products. «At the end of the lessons the students will do an internship at restaurants in Rome that are aware of the project's goals, in the hope they will then be hired.

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES - The Community of Sant'Egidio, then gave birth to **the Amici restaurant**. "It is featured in the most important restaurant guides in Rome" - notes the course director -. "Customers appreciate the competence and humanity of the staff, who share the work: there are those who are sommeliers, those who cook, those who work in the restaurant." The volunteers of Sant'Egidio also gave support. "Here there are only people who work with professionalism and passion, without 'diversity' except in the tasks they perform."

**ASSIeme cooking** is the cooking course for the disabled organized by ASSI onlus, the Invalids Social Sports Association founded by Oscar De Pellegrin. The course, held by chef Aldo Andriolo receives nine disabled children and is divided into six meetings. Each lasts three hours, during which the children have the opportunity to try their hand at cooking many varied dishes. But what does the ASSIeme cooking program achieve? Students spend time familiarizing and learning about tools that can help prepare the dishes according to their specific disability, develop the ability to cook independently and produce an ASSI recipe book at the end of the course that is the culmination of their work on the project.



Cooking that enables individuals to achieve further self-sufficiency in their day to day life as well as to improve their confidence in finding work, were the goals of the cooking course organized by the “**Stella Selene**” association for the inclusion of disability and discomfort. The initiative is one of the first in Italy in which disadvantaged groups can learn the food preparation skills to enable them to become chef helpers, boarders and bartender helpers working in restaurants. The project takes place in Rome, in the districts of Ostia and Eur. Lectures are held by teachers who work in established vocational training schools supported by educational psychologists from the “Stella Selene” association on Friday afternoons. The learners work is then authenticated during evening events open to customers.

#### 4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

The questionnaire was completed by 20 respondents (families with AFMID). The respondents were made up of 5 mothers (25%) 5 fathers (25%), 6 brothers (30%), 3 sisters (15%) and one brother in law (5%). The age of the respondents was between 25 and 64 years old, the average age was 45 years old.

According to the results the majority of respondents believe that it is important for families with AFMID to be engaged in further education in their home environment. Also, they believe that it is important for AFMID to have abilities that enable them to prepare food and meals more independently. The majority of respondent’s support cooking courses for AFMID in their home environment. The majority of respondents say that there are no cooking courses in their living area, but smaller percentage noted that there are some – mostly set up by local organisations.

Most respondents think that the biggest benefit of cookery courses at home is the improved independence of the individuals involved. It was seen to also help to forging bonds between family members, and have a positive effect on other abilities besides cooking skills which help those involved work towards reaching their full potential.

There were also some obstacles that may prevent AFMID and their families participating in courses, such as fear of injury when preparing food (cuts, burns etc.), and not having a suitable space within the home.

Most of the families say their AFMID would need a suitable space to work and professional educational support to prepare food more independently, as well as emotional and psychological support. 45% said they need individual care plans.

Most respondents believe that educating AFMID in cooking is important because it has many positive outcomes, such as increased: independence, social inclusion, day to day life skills and improved familial relationships.

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## 5. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR UNITED KINGDOM

In national report for UK education of adults with learning disabilities in cooking and meal preparation in UK is presented as well as availability of cookery courses for individuals with learning disabilities. Last, the results of the questionnaire for UK are presented.

Government Policy and guidance within the United Kingdom outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which also filters down to local authorities and major referral agents has changed the focus as to what direction and goals they would like to see mapped out for those with learning disabilities.

The first of these goals is establishing better routes to employment and increased occupation. This would enable those with learning disabilities to not just be more visible within communities but also to attain work and gain a sense of accomplishment in their work while also being able to give back to society. Finding occupation for those with learning disabilities would again make those individuals more productive within their community and allow for more interaction and acceptance between them and the outside world.

The second of the goals established in the Disabilities Discrimination Act 2005 was to increase levels of independence for those with learning disabilities. Because many individuals with learning disabilities live at home this means that their futures once their family are not around are made uncertain and basic skills to look after themselves and attend basic needs such as how to use public transport, use of accessories and appliances, self-care are more vital for them to maintain a level of independence in their day to day lives. Cooking and gaining knowledge about healthy eating would be a beneficial manner to spend time occupationally but would also help those with learning disabilities be more independent in their futures.

### 5.1 TEACHING COOKING SKILLS FOR AFMID

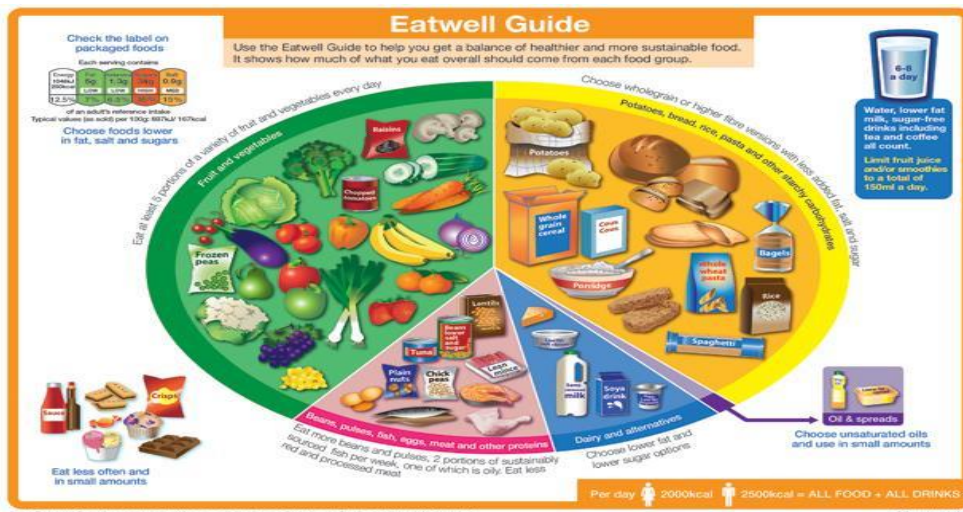
In the UK it would seem that the focus of education for people with learning disabilities is less on the food preparation itself but rather how they can eat well and not fall foul of bad eating habits leading to ill health in later life. One of the more simple and independent methods of acquiring food would be to go to a takeaway shop and purchase a burger and fries, but there is a push to stop this

happening. If this method of consumption is carried on with it could lead to obesity in later life as well as other health problems that would need to be dealt with. It is also not economically as viable as producing food at home is cheaper and as many people with learning disabilities are on tight budgets due to shrinking benefits this is another issue to consider.

'The Caroline Walker Trust', a charitable organisation, based in the UK is involved with making sure that healthy eating is made attainable for those with learning disabilities and focuses on matters such as:

- Lack of understanding of a balanced diet
- How poverty and isolation result in poor food choices
- Effect of prescribed drugs on food choice and general health
- Eating disorders and how those with learning disabilities are more effected than those without
- Principles of good nutrition

The principles of good nutrition have been mapped out on eat well plate promoted by the National Health Service (NHS) and encourages individuals to think about food types they are having and maintaining a balanced diet. With inpatient care of hospitals struggling with the number of people taking up time and beds it makes sense to lower the numbers of people being admitted by looking after their health before they run into issues in the future. This pre-emptive approach of making sure that preventative measures against obesity and heart defects are in place before the condition arises would allow for less burden on the NHS in the future.





'Community Food and Health' in Scotland also led 'food and health training projects' with individuals with learning disabilities and their support workers. This was to make sure a more constant message about the importance of a healthy diet could be achieved within the learning disability community through those who support them. Other subjects they wished to teach other than those above were requirements of diet for various life stages, cultures and religions and understanding of food labelling. One of the hidden advantages of the project was that it prompted support workers without learning disabilities to look at what they eat and methods of preparing food as well. Showing that again it is not just those with learning disabilities who can benefit from further learning in life or are prone to unhealthy lifestyles.

The 'Community Food and Health' project did also run cooking classes and investigated what were the more effective ways of enabling those with learning disabilities to learn cookery skills. This involved the learning-disabled service users involvement in coming up with menus and discussing with staff adaptations of non-vegetarian dishes, how to make dishes more healthy and what particular foods would be in season. They could then move on to the practical side of the exercise.

"Members receive support when making a dish for the first time. They make the same dish as many times as they need to until they feel confident and ready to move onto learning something new. Each dish is broken down into a series of small steps, making it easier to learn, but staff aim to make sure that members have the opportunity to learn every step of creating a dish, rather than just learning one part."

Once confidence in preparing a dish has been established it may be that individuals can then have a go at completing the task independently or have some recipe cards to consult. These recipe cards would be devised with the help of speech and language experts and be made up of a mixture of symbols and words. The main top tips passed down from staff on the project when working on the project were:

- Repetition and breaking down the preparation of a dish into a series of tasks helps to build skills.
- Individuals usually want to taste the food that they have made so making sure they are involved in making the meal from start to finish is essential.
- Discussions about food and health work well when we try to talk about food in a way that is relevant to individuals, such as talking about food programmes that they watch on TV.



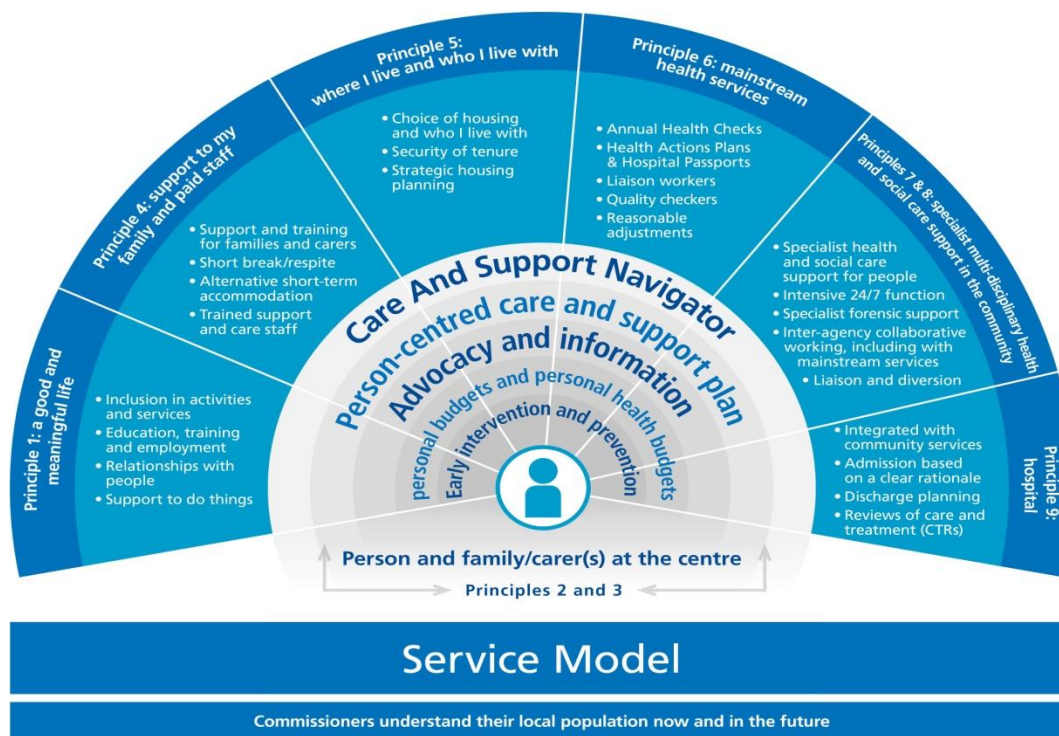
These findings and methodologies are similar also to those of the 'Square Food Foundation' in Bristol, a not for profit organisation that offers cookery community cookery classes, cookery within schools and cookery classes for those with learning disabilities. They also highlighted effectiveness of repetition of tasks when working with people with learning disabilities and 'grading' tasks to allow them to learn the dish gradually in smaller steps. They also talked of the benefit of placing trust in the individuals they worked with. This meant allowing them access to sharp knives and not shielding them from hot stoves. The idea being that in a supported environment the students would begin to gain confidence and whereas they may be told what they were not capable of doing they were in this instance 'enabled' to use equipment and prove to themselves and others they could undertake tasks that previously may have seemed beyond them. All of this is undertaken with a strict understanding of health and safety of course and one to one working where needed.

## **5.2 EDUCATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

The below graph demonstrates a whole system response developed by the NHS when working with individuals with learning disabilities. It shows the nine principles for what an individual should be able to achieve and neatly illustrates the person-based nature of the program by placing the figure in the middle of it. It talks also of creating a 'capable environment' for the individual concerned and describes this as such:

'Capable environments are characterized by: positive social interactions, support for meaningful activity, opportunities for choice, encouragement of greater independence, support to establish and maintain relationships and mindful and skilled family/carers and paid support and care staff.'

The first goal on this graph is 'A good and meaningful life'. Further from this they should have choice and control over the activities in which they participate, facilitated through person-centered care and support plans, in both further education and activity centres. Individuals should also have access to education, training and employment. Developing and maintaining good relationships is also part of this goal but being mindful of the fact there is some support from either care workers or family to make sure the relationships being formed aren't potentially negative or lead to the individual being taken advantage of.



### 5. 3 AVAILABILITY OF COOKERY COURSES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

As seen earlier examples of establishments that offer cookery classes for adults with learning disabilities include charitable organizations such as the 'Square Food Foundation', already mentioned. Beyond this other organizations include 'Stepping Stones' which is a London based charity that also provides cookery classes but also runs classes in drama, music, dance, art and keeping fit. Mencap, being the largest organization within the UK providing support for those with learning disabilities, also runs cookery classes at their national foundations as well as being able to sign post individuals to other courses in the area that would suit their needs. Such as 'Steady Chefs' a catering agency that funds cookery schools for young adults with learning disabilities funded from the catering division of the organization. Examples of government or local authority based schemes include the 'Community Food and Health' project in Scotland. Other regional programs are available to provide adults with further learning skills to assist them in their futures or provide funding and support for adults wishing to take part in programs of this nature.

### 5.6 QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

The questionnaire was completed by 21 respondents (families with AFMID). The majority of respondents were the mothers of the AFMID. Two questionnaires were completed by the AFMID, and one questionnaire was completed by the cousin of the AFMID.

The results of the survey suggested that families with AFMID thought that lifelong learning at home and cooking and meal preparation were very important activities for adults with LD. Several families were already cooking together at home.

There were very few courses available that supported or provided resources for cooking for families together with their AFMID and these were delivered by community organisations or day centres rather than via formal education.

Respondent thought that the main positive benefits would be in promoting independence and decision making while less than half thought it would create better connections between family members. (note, this may be an effect of the current policy in the UK of promoting independent living for adults with LD).

Major barriers were seen to be the lack of motivation (this is probably motivation for the adult with LD, although several respondents mention issues of finding time to spend cooking with their AFMID

100% of the people who responded thought that more support was needed. Main support needs were thought to be personalised plans/support and other kinds of support (emotional, physical, and professional).

Education through cookery was seen to be particularly important in promoting independence and social inclusion and in providing the AFMID with everyday life skills

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## 6 CONCLUSION

Results of the questionnaire show similar situation in all participating countries; majority of respondents believe that it is important for families with AFMID to be engaged in lifelong learning activities in their home environment. Also they believe that it is important for AFMID to have some skills to prepare food and meals more independently. Majority of respondents support cooking courses for AFMID in their home environment. Majority of respondents say that there is no cooking

courses in their living area, but some say that there are some – mostly organised by local societies.

Majority of respondents think that the most positive effect of cooking courses in home environment is bigger independence of AFMID. Also it helps with better connections between family members and it improves individual's competencies. Self-realization is also a positive effect. On the other hand there are some obstacles that prevent AFMID and their family to participate in these courses, such as fear of injury when preparing food (cuts, burns etc.), not having a suitable space, lack of motivation.

Most of the families say their AFMID would need a suitable space and the professional support of educators to prepare food more independently, so as emotional and psychological support, individual support plans and the physical assistance of another person.

Most families with adult members with intellectual disabilities consider cooking education important because it affects the quality of life in the following areas: social inclusion, independence, family relationships, social and emotional relationships with others, as well as psychophysical health.

The following stages of the project will develop the methodology and andragogical material for implementing family education "MeTURA - Back to the Roots" for families with adult members with intellectual disabilities.