



E-NEWSLETTER #1

July, 2022

About the project

Since November 2021, in the scopes of the key action 2 - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training of the Erasmus+ program, 7 project partners from Portugal, Denmark, Latvia, Greece, Cyprus, Netherlands and North Macedonia have been implementing the project ASES - Autism: Spectrum of Employment Skills.

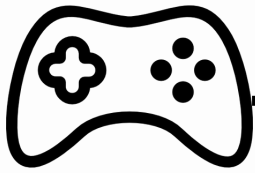
The 2-year project ASES focuses on the development of a training material and tools for SME management to increase workplace inclusion of adults with autism spectrum disorder(ASD).

It will develop VET digital training resources to train employers and HR staff to recruit, mentor and empower staff with ASD throughout their employment cycle.

The objectives of the ASES project are:

1. To furnish management with a recruitment and career development methodology suitable for staff with ASD.
2. To offer a distance learning solution for training SME management staff in exploiting the qualities of staff with ASD
3. To increase the productivity of employees with ASD at the workplace
4. To increase the recruitment and retention rate of staff with ASD
5. To reduce employment gap between people with and without disabilities by increasing employment opportunities for people with ASD
6. To eliminate exclusion of people with ASD in the workplace
7. To enhance the role of VET in the career development of staff with ASD
8. To benefit the European economy through increased productivity and employment levels of people with ASD

Project results



ASES Serious Game: Autism can be a company asset

The serious game is the centerpiece of the ASES project. The best way to train SME management on ASD with the use of the game, is to take them through simulations of interviews and exercises to create an ASD-friendly environment. The objective of the serious game is to support SME management to increase workplace inclusion of adults with ASD. By playing the game, SME management will meet the following learning objectives: - Experience the interview process from both perspectives (SME manager and candidate with ASD) - Implement a retention methodology for employees with ASD



ASES VET Curriculum for SME Management

VET course, conforming with the ECVET standards, to train SME management on how to perform interviews with candidates with ASD, how to prepare a proper working environment for staff with ASD and how to develop them professionally. In this PR, the consortium will develop all those training components that will support:

1. A blended learning environment for course delivery
2. A digital version that will be delivered over distance
3. Physical training seminars.

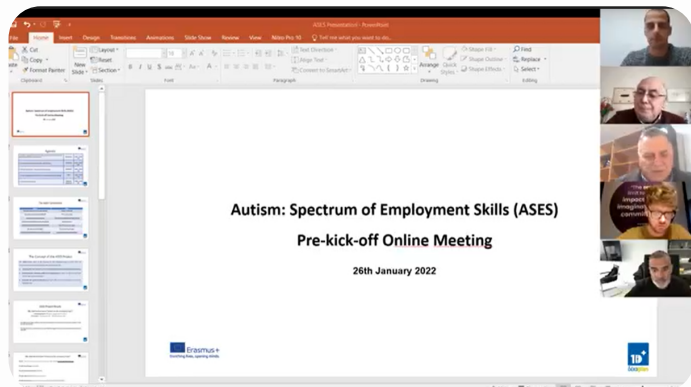
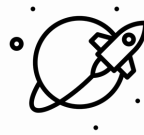


ASES e-guide for Recruiting and Developing Staff with ASD

Addressed to SME owners and managers, the project "Recruitment & Development of Staff with ASD" electronic Guide will contain practical material and references, to assist potential employers and recruiters of staff with ASD. The Guide will include a collection of procedures, tools, tips, best practices, guidelines and overview of interview and professional development methods. It will represent a quick reference document where an employer will consult when in the process of recruiting, managing and developing staff with ASD. The guide will be available in electronic format for faster retrieval of information when being used through desktop or mobile devices.



Starting off the right way



In order to effectively start the project and get to know all project partners better, the first online meeting was officially held, which will also be a practice for the duration of the entire project life on a monthly basis. Prior to the face-to-face meetings, partners will hold an on-line planning session to agree the agenda and partner actions/responsibilities. Between meetings, partners will hold online meetings to plan, share and collaborate on activities: sometimes all partners will participate and other times just specific ones. The PSG will meet periodically to monitor and review project progress: where necessary, FPDA (the leading partner) will agree on corrective actions plans with a partner(s) in the event of underperformance or other problem.

In the first online meeting we discussed:

1. Partner's organization presentations; Partners briefly presented themselves and their organizations
2. Introduction to the concept of the ASES Project
3. PR2 Questionnaires – Showcase and Discussion
4. Project Management and Discussion regarding Kick-off Meeting

The kick-off face-to-face meeting took place in Lisbon in March 2022. The aim of the first TPM was for all partners to get acquainted with each other, the project management plan and project implementation methodology. Dissemination and Quality assurance partners BCM, LAS and OECON gave brief presentations on the dissemination and quality assurance plans. Additionally, PR leaders 8D GAMES, DEKAPLUS and SPECIALISTERNE presented each all PRs; PR1 "ASES Serious Game", PR2 "ASES Curriculum and Training Material" and PR3 "Recruitment & Development of Staff with ASD" e-Guide. The implementation of PR1 and PR2 started at the same period.

PR1 lead partner 8D GAMES presented the PR objectives, steps for development and explain to partners the game development process, how PR2 and PR3 deliverables will be incorporated and make clarifications on any particular content submission requirements (i.e format, size etc) . DEKAPLUS presented a draft version of the PR2/A1 questionnaire and interview templates and invited the partners to discuss them. The consortium decided and finalized the survey layout during the meeting.



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Interviews and skills needs analysis



In order to properly deliver project result 2, the project partners started to work on the Activity 1 of the project result 2: Training strategy and Curriculum. To develop an effective learning experience for the learners, the consortium started forming a clear training strategy. In this document, the following will be described:

1. Skills gap analysis - this analysis will identify which interview skills and professional development knowledge related to autistic behavior SME managers lack. Not all SME managers are familiar with ASD, and therefore understanding of the disorder will be essential.

2. Training needs analysis - upon performing the skills gap analysis, the consortium will produce the training needs of the SME managers in order to acquire the skills to apply a suitable interview and professional development methodology.

3. Training delivery - the training needs will determine the learning objectives of the course; but this is only one part of the learning equation. The other part is to describe the digital and blended delivery methods, enabling knowledge to be comprehended, retained, and implemented by learners. For this purpose, the partnership will conduct interviews with SME managers.

For this purpose, the partnership conducted interviews with SME managers. Each partner (except 8D GAMES) conducted 10 interviews (total of 60). The draft interview template was prepared by DEKAPLUS and presented during the kick-off meeting.

Each partner summarized survey results and reflected them into a predefined template form.

With this basis being set, the project partners will furtherly work on drafting the training strategy.



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ASES Autism:
Spectrum of
Employment
Skills



FPDA - Federação Portuguesa de Autismo



Business & Development Consultants



DEKAplus



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BUSINESS
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8D GAMES.