



E-NEWSLETTER #2

February, 2023

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.

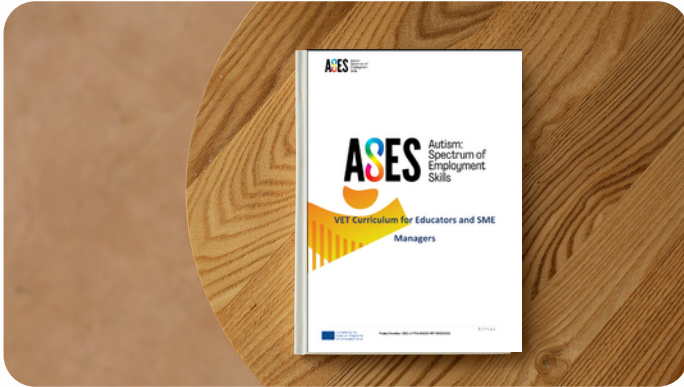
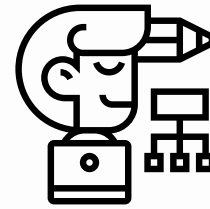


ASES e-guide for Recruiting and Developing Staff with ASD

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 when being used through desktop or mobile devices.



Unlocking Potential: Developing the VET curriculum



In the last few months the consortium has been working on the initial steps towards developing a 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 regards, the consortium has been working to 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

DEKAPLUS is the coordinator of these activities, supported by all partners. DEKAPLUS prepared a work plan, specifying partner's roles and activities.

In the previous period each partner summarized survey results and reflected them into a predefined template form. In this period DEKAPLUS used those reports to draft the training strategy.

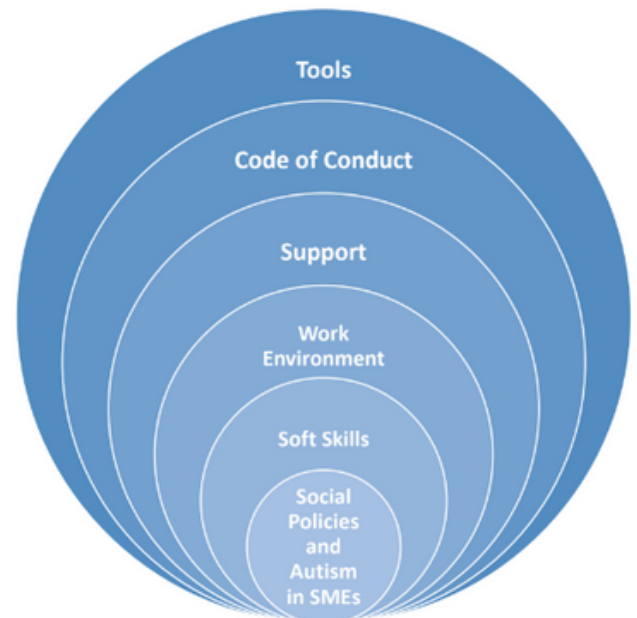
To strengthen the role of VET, the consortium was working to prepare an adapt curriculum and training/learning materials for a physical learning delivery.

The ASES VET Curriculum for SME Management, aims to train VET Educators and SME management on:

- How to perform interviews with candidates with autism
- How to prepare a proper working environment for autistic staff and
- How to support the professional development of autistic staff.

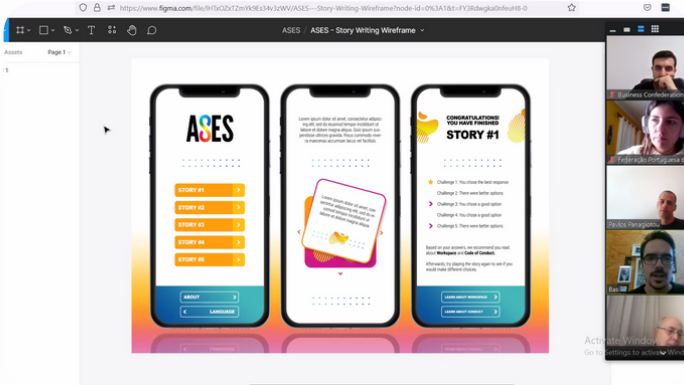
After finishing the training strategy and methodology, the project partners in the following period will be working on the development of their assigned training module.

The modules will be focusing on several knowledge areas as shown in the graphic below:



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Play to Progress: Updates on the Development of the Serious Game 'Autism Can Be a Company Asset'



One of the main activities to develop the game properly was the brainstorming session on the transnational project meeting which was held in Thessaloniki on the 30th of September 2022 in organization of OECON. On this meeting 8D Games held a brainstorming session with the project partners in order to initiate the development of the different scenarios the serious game would contain. On this meeting, the partners also talked about the progress of the project and future steps and activities.

In the context of project result 1, technical partner 8D Games has initiated developing the serious game "Autism can be a company asset". The serious game is the centerpiece of the ASES project.

This game was developed with input from SME management, using interviews. The serious game part of the interview was carried out in parallel with the analysis stage in the initial project activities. This influenced the design of the game in two ways:

- Identification of aspects of the interview process and professional development will be critical for SME managers.
- Identification of important design requirements to making a fun and informative experience for this target group.

8D GAMES, DEKAPLUS and SPECIALISTERNE, prepared the interview template. The game was also influenced by the development of project result 2 - Curriculum and Training Material, as the intention is to use the theory in the course to create the game mechanics.

The research and preparation phase define d requirements and goals for the final product. These requirements and goals were converted into a product concept during the game design phase.

In order to get an overview of the game development progress, 8D Games ensures constant communication with the other project partners on the Project Meetings.



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