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Erasmus+

## Erasmus+ project LINK

Erasmus Learning Academy (IT), Agrupamento de Escolas de Anadia (PT), Education Center of Rokiskis Municipality (LT), CEPA TERESA ENRIQUEZ (ES), Maria's World Foundation (BG) are proud to present the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership "Learning Opportunities on Digital and Employability skills for Young Adults with Behavioral and Cognitive Disabilities (LINK)" co-funded by the European Union.

The need analysis undertaken pointed out that the completion of secondary education is a crucial and scary moment for adults with behavioural and cognitive disabilities and their families. In front of them there is the risk of being excluded from society and from the job market. Secondary schools make a great effort to support the transition to the job market but many young adults with behavioural disorders and mild cognitive disabilities, despite having the potential for actively participating in the society and its economy, fail this transition. In this context, post-secondary and adult education can play a crucial role. It emerges however that only few adult education institutions and disability day care centers offer structured high learning possibilities to adults with behavioural and cognitive disabilities (AwBCD).

Following the needs analysis, the main aim of the project is to allow AwBCD aged 19-24 to develop digital and employability skills enabling them to actively participate in the society and find a job.

## Objectives

The partnership will pursue the following project objectives:

- Developing a flexible modular curriculum on digital and employability skills tailored for AwBCD
- Developing gamified and digital learning activities and materials adequate for AwBCD
- Inspire and enable adult educators to organize high quality gamified and blended learning opportunities for AwBCD
- Raising awareness on the needs and potential of AwBCD and the learning opportunities that can unleash it.

## Results

The project activities aim to achieve two main results.

The first one is a modular blended **adult education course on digital and employability skills**, with 90 hours of face-to-face instruction and 120 hours of distance learning. Digital pedagogy and gamification mechanics will be applied to both the classroom and the distance education offering new and more tailored ways of learning.

While the second one will be a **Handbook on digital and gamified learning activities for adults with behavioral and cognitive disabilities**, based on the concrete experiences of the partners including the ones of the local LINK courses. LINK handbook will be structured as a practical tool enabling adult educators to easily integrate in their existing courses digital activities and tools, new technologies, game mechanics and game-based digital apps. It will serve as well as a supporting

reference to implement the LINK course or to reuse and adapt it to be totally or partially embedded in another existing curriculum (both in adult education or in a different sector).

## Activities planned during the project

The project plan includes various activities to prepare, shape and guide the project results development.

An Open **Web Conference** on Gamification, Game-based learning and digital learning will be organized online targeting people among internal staff of partner organizations, associated partners and general public in which the partners will have a chance to present the project and its objectives, besides highlighting the importance of the pedagogies explored in the framework of LINK. All participants will then be free to contribute by sharing their experience and best practices on the use of gamification, for the purpose of providing a fertile ground to develop the Project Results, creating engagement and encouraging active participation among the partner organization.

A solid **Awareness Campaign** will be carried out through online social media campaigns, virtual meetings and events, face-to-face meetings targeting local stakeholders and AwBCD. The aim is to raise awareness on the needs and potential of AwBCD and the learning opportunities that can unleash it, sensitise the audience towards social inclusion and showcase successful stories of members of the target group.

A 8 hour **training for associated partners** will be carried out in each partner country to showcase the use of LINK Adult Education Course and select the adult educators who will be involved in the **Local Adult Education Courses, which will also be** organized in each country to implement the LINK course. A selected target group will be involved, while adult Educators will benefit from a Draft version of the LINK Handbook supporting them in the delivery of the course. Specific measures will be enacted to ensure support for active participation, logistic support and follow-up support. The aim of these two activities is to empower AwBCD to experience an innovative educational and training opportunity, gain a feedback about the LINK Adult Education Course and inspire and enable Adult Educators to organize high quality learning opportunities for AwBCD.

**Dissemination activities** are also crucial in order to ensure that activities and results are properly promoted to the external audience. Besides traditional social media reach, the project partners will engage in meeting with local stakeholder and in the creation of the “LINK Network” for cross-sectoral cooperation serving the purpose of creating new learning opportunities involving diverse stakeholders at the EU level. The main dissemination activity will be 5 **Multiplier Events** (1 in each country), they will involve at least 300 among representatives and staff of specialized centres for people with disabilities, Adult Educators working with people with disabilities, Adult educator trainers, policy makers, AwBCD and their families.

In particular, the events intend to illustrate the project achievements while raising awareness on the benefits of gamification education with learners with behavioural and cognitive disabilities and other groups with fewer opportunities.

## Expected impact

LINK is expected to **impact** on several levels:

At the **LOCAL LEVEL**: We expect benefits for AwBCD reinforcing their awareness of the learning possibilities they have and also inspiring them to engage more in education. We expect also an impact on representative and staff of specialized centres for people with disabilities, adult organizations working with people with disabilities and policy makers so as to reduce the distances between them and the families of AwBCD and unleash their willingness and ability to promote and engage in innovative learning and educational opportunities to foster digital and employability skills of AwBCD.

At the **REGIONAL** and **NATIONAL LEVEL**, we expect to see an impact on institutions in the adult education sector that will be able to use the results of the project to improve their services. The contribution of associated partners and stakeholders will be crucial for a more inclusive digital transformation of the education ecosystem.

At **EUROPEAN LEVEL**, the expected impact is related to adult education organizations, education and support centres for people with disabilities and other interested beneficiaries. Through dissemination activities and a transnational cooperation, the project will give visibility to the opportunities promoted by the European Programs, especially Erasmus+ in the Adult Education sector and this will enhance the aptitude for the design of transnational projects and the development of new adult education practices.

At the **SYSTEM LEVEL**, LINK will reinforce the inclusive education system producing uptakes of adult education learning, a higher focus on education and training of the disability service sector and the affirmation of gamification as an effective pedagogy for social inclusion. Also, it will lead to a different approach in designing education paths, a digital transformation of the inclusive education system and an increased human and social capital of the EU.