



Bridges for ideas and practices

22 - 31 August, 2014

St. St. Constantine and Helena
Bulgaria



Context: 21% of the European youngsters suffer from some communicative problem. It could range from a usual stuttering, through some speech-language and hearing impairments and articulation disorders, to an inability to read and understand texts. The communication disorders have a strong negative psychological impact on young people - low self-esteem, fear, anxiety; or the opposite - hatred, aggression, tendency to negativity. The affected self-assessment, possibilities for socialization and daily living activity result in failure to integrate into the local communities' life.

And here youth workers have a very important mission - they have to support the young people in overcoming communication disorders and also to help their more active and successful inclusion into the educational system, labor market and social life.

Unfortunately, in the rural areas of Eastern Europe, the youth workers often continue to use outdated methodologies in their work with young people with communication problems. The main reasons for this are limited access to quality information on the latest working methods and lack of interaction and exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices at international level between organizations involved in this mission.

"Bridges for ideas and practices" was an international training course for youth workers who support the personal socio-educational development of youngsters with communication problems in rural areas of Eastern Europe.

The training course took place from 22nd to 31st of August, 2014 in St. St. Constantine and Helena Resort, Bulgaria.

It brought together 50 youth workers and experts from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania and Bulgaria. **The participants** were logopedes, youth advisors, social workers, project managers, youth leaders and volunteers, involved in non-formal education of rural young people with speech and language disorders.

Main project aim was: Professional training of the youth workers for increasing their capacity and quality of work and development of their cooperation for innovation and exchange of experience, skills and best practices.

Objectives of the training course were:

- 1) To raise participants' awareness on the essence and applicability of the latest methods for non-formal education and systems for work with young people with different communication disorders;
- 2) To provide a space where the youth workers to exchange ideas and experiences and to acquire practical skills for encouraging inclusion of rural youth with disorders into the educational system and labor market;
- 3) Generating ideas for further interaction and cooperation among the partner organizations, aiming professional development of the youth workers and better quality of the services offered by them in benefit of young people with fewer opportunities.



Activities

Each day of the training course had a different working topic:

- ⇒ Opening and Group building activities;
- ⇒ Methods for work with young people with hearing impairments;
- ⇒ Working with youngsters who stutter;
- ⇒ Prevention and art therapy of communication disorders;
- ⇒ Visits for observing of good practices;
- ⇒ Working with youngsters with comprehension impairments of oral and written language;
- ⇒ Working with dyslexic young people;
- ⇒ Follow-up planning and evaluation.

The training was conducted by an international team of trainers and contained:

- ◆ Input to the working themes;
- ◆ Get to know each other;
- ◆ Training sessions on essence and applicability of the latest methods for work with youngsters with different communication problems - hearing impairments, stuttering, specific comprehension impairments of oral and written language, dyslexia and others;
- ◆ Exchange of experience among the participants;
- ◆ Field visits and observing of good practices for work with youngsters with speech and language disorders;
- ◆ Presenting and promotion of "Erasmus+" Programme and planning of follow-up activities;
- ◆ Intercultural learning and exchange;
- ◆ Project evaluation.



Outcomes

The participants:

- ◆ Acquired various useful competences for practical work with rural young people with communication problems;
- ◆ Learnt about new and innovative methods for work with youngsters who suffer from hearing impairment, stuttering, comprehension impairments of oral and written language, dyslexia and others;
- ◆ Got informed about practices and systems for work with young people with speech and language disorders, applied in different countries;
- ◆ Increased their capacity to support inclusion and retention of youngsters with communication problems in mainstream schools;
- ◆ Improved the quality of their work for inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities into society and labor market;
- ◆ Improved their foreign language competences in an interesting and dynamic international environment.

The partner organizations:

- ◆ Improved their way of work as were acquainted with innovative working methods used by their colleagues in different countries;
- ◆ Increased the qualification and professionalism of their members who work with youngsters with disabilities in rural areas of their countries;
- ◆ Integrated good foreign practices and working methods in their activities with young people with communication disorders;
- ◆ Intensified their interaction with institutions active in various social, educational and labor fields;
- ◆ Committed to lobby for recognition and validation of competences acquired through non-formal education;
- ◆ Intensified the interaction and cooperation among themselves for innovation and exchange of experience, skills and good practices;
- ◆ Acquired motivation and skills for management of European projects in benefit of young people with disorders;
- ◆ Confirmed the long-term strategic cooperation in this partner network and applied with a new joint project to the "Erasmus +" Programme.



Partner organizations:

Asociația Specialiștilor în Terapia Tulburărilor de Limbaj din România - www.asttlr.ro

Logopedinės Pagalbos Centras - www.logopedaslp.lt

Latvijas logopedu asociācija - www.logopedi.lv

Eesti Logopeedide Ühing - www.elu.ee



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