

PSI WELL NEWSLETTER

Erasmus+



A pleading for Building Bridges

The project Building Bridges: Promoting Social Inclusion and Wellbeing for Families (PSI WELL) proposes an innovative adult learning approach through developing, implementing and validating a psycho educational and social intervention program for parents of children with special needs. PSI WELL will contribute to the adult education field offering high quality learning experience based on scientific research. The intellectual outputs of the project will serve as useful and high quality tools for adult learning in order to improve the level of transversal skills (such as parental skills social emotional skills).

PSI WELL is aimed to facilitate the social inclusion for parents of children with special needs through adult education and to raise the awareness regarding the specific needs of these families. The innovative and integrative adult learning approach will contribute to the enhancing the access to information related to parenting practices for a disabled child and to the enhancing the participation of the disadvantaged parents to the social life of community as active citizens.

The project provides education and training for social inclusion of disadvantaged parents of children with special needs through facilitating the acquiring and updating the knowledge, skills and competences needed for inclusion and personal fulfilment, by enabling parents to benefit from quality learning experiences. PSI WELL makes lifelong learning a reality for the families parenting a disabled child through developing a quality intervention program and efficient tools to promote equity, social inclusion and active citizenship.

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Description of the Project

The current project focuses on supporting and empowering parents of children with disabilities. The importance of parental stress in family life has been demonstrated in different studies. In general research shows that that parenthood is associated with significant changes in parents' life and parenting in itself can be stressful.

In the family context, stress negatively influences parents' wellbeing, the quality of their relationship and the quality of parent-child interaction. In general, major and chronic stressors (such as having a child with special needs - SN) determine more instability and dysfunction in family than the other types of stressors (Watson et al, 2001).

Stress associated with being a parent of a child SN affects parents' well-being and the quality of their parenting. This category of parents represent a vulnerable group of individuals in each society. Studies have shown that families parenting a child SN experience higher levels of stress compared to families with children with a typical development (Delambo, et al, 2011; Lee, 2013).

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Having a child SN requires more effort and involvement from parents (i.e. long term psychological therapies, medical treatments). The stress faced by families raising children SN may continue during adolescence and adult life, influencing the quality of family relationships on a long term.

Parents of children with SN experience higher levels of emotional distress (Lecavalier, et al, 2006), depression (Benson, 2006), anxiety (Pakenham, et al, 2004) and social isolation. This category of parents may feel overwhelmed by the problems associated with their child disability. Therefore, interventions to help parents raising children with disabilities to reduce stress and enhance well-being are needed.



Aims

PSI WELL proposes an innovative approach aimed to facilitate social inclusion and wellbeing for families confronting with disabled children through adult education for parents. The project is addressing to the specific needs of families parenting children with special needs (SN) and it is designed to help parents to improve their coping strategies and to enhance their parenting skills in order to foster their social inclusion and wellbeing.

The first aim of our project is to assess the wellbeing, stress related factors and couple relationship of parents of children with special needs.

The second aim is to enhance personal resources (such as individual coping, emotion regulation), family resources (such as dyadic coping) and social support for parents of a child with special needs through development, implementing and validating a psycho-educational and social intervention program.

The general aim of the project is promoting social inclusion, equity and wellbeing for risk families in Europe through an intervention program for parents of children with special needs.

Expected Impact

The expected impact on the participants:

1. The project team will develop and exercise their intercultural competence through working in an international team, improvement of their professional expertise through researching and writing on the topic of parents' education in the field of the psycho pedagogy of special needs;
2. They will enhance their linguistic competence and their communication competence through exchanging ideas and experiences with colleagues from other countries;
3. They will improve their skills related to adult education, as trainers and as facilitators for parents of children with SN;
4. They will gain a greater understanding and responsiveness to social and cultural diversity;
5. They will gain a better understanding of practices in adult education.

The expected impact on target groups is twofold. On the one hand is expected a personal development process and on the other hand is expected acquiring specific parenting skills:

1. 360 parents of children with SN (from six European countries) will develop their coping skills, their resilience and they will enhance their wellbeing;
2. They will become more assumed parents and they will gain a fortified feeling of control;
3. They will be enabled to practice different parenting strategies in order to respond exactly to their children growing and development needs;
4. They will be involved in a support network and group so they will overcome the social exclusion becoming active involved in the process of raising and supporting their own children with SN;
5. More active participation in society;
6. More positive attitudes toward European projects and EU values.



Objectives

1. Diagnose the level of social inclusion, stress and wellbeing of 1500 families parenting children with special needs through a cross sectional and cross-national research by the end of the first year of the project;
2. Developing a psycho-educational & social intervention program for fostering wellbeing for families of children with SN by the end of the second year of the project;
3. Validating the psycho-educational & social intervention program for risk families through the implementation with 360 parents from European countries of partnership by the end of the project;
4. Raising the awareness of the communities regarding the specific needs for social inclusion of risk families and disadvantaged parents of children with special needs through conducting an information campaign by the end of the first year;
5. Developing a psycho-educational kit comprising two working tools for trainers specialized in working with disadvantaged parents by the end of the project;
6. Improving parenting skills and parent-child relationships through developing an integrative handbook for parents by the end of the project.

PSI WELL Erasmus+

Str. Universitatii 13,
720229 Suceava,
Romania

Phone:
+40 230 216 147 / 187

Fax:
+40 0230 520 080

psi-well@usm.ro

*Building Bridges: Promoting
Social Inclusion and Wellbeing
for Families*

Find us on the Web:

www.psiwell.eu

