



ERASMUS+ small scale partnerships  
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# GREEN-IN

## INCLUSION OF ALL PERSONS FOR A GREENER FUTURE

Summary of outcomes from the focus group meetings

Activity 2: Setting up the training programme for young  
volunteers

**2023.**

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## ***I. Introduction – The purpose of focus groups***

The main goal of Activity 2: Setting up the training programme for young volunteers was to develop the training programme and guidebook for volunteers for the selected volunteers in the project. In the preparation of the project, it was foreseen that focus groups would be organized as a means to gain inputs and feedback on the drafted contents for the training. To ensure that the training and guidebook could be aligned to the needs of youth and the community, focus groups (w/6-12 persons/country) were foreseen for specific groups. The groups were foreseen as follows: 1) The selected participants; 2) Parents of persons w/disabilities; 3) professionals working directly with persons w/disabilities (e.g. teachers, assistants, social care workers, medical professionals, etc.). For each group, an online format was foreseen where 1 joint online meeting would be organized as to bring Croatian & Italian participants together (3 groups\*1 joint meeting/group=3 meetings). At meetings, it was planned to present the programme and discuss its possible impact. Focus group participants were to provide feedback on the proposed contents and complete a questionnaire describing what other changes should take place.

## ***II. How the activity was implemented (and adjusted)***

After the project was approved the socio-economic situation in Croatia and Italy changed drastically. The COVID-19 pandemic was declared over and this allowed the project team to examine the possibility of organizing more in-person activities. ŽIR and Cavriago examined the original format proposed for the focus groups, and both partners agreed that the format may be problematic. During the pandemic, both partners had mixed results while using online tools (Skype, ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, etc.). It was also noted that the IT skills of certain groups could be limited (e.g. parents and guardians of persons with disabilities), which could impact the effectiveness of the meetings. Also, language was noted as potential barrier, as the need for constant translation support for some participants could hamper the presentation of the training concept and approach to focus group participants.

In order to address these barriers/challenges, it was agreed that the partnership needed to change the approach to the implementation of the focus groups. The change that both sides considered the most effective would be in-person meetings for each group of stakeholders. This meant that there that the plan would be to gather local stakeholders for focus group meetings (joint meetings as an approach were abandoned), present the project training approach and gather feedback via discussions. Concerning the use of questionnaires with the focus group participants, it was also examined as an approach. It was considered too impersonal as it limits participants to a tool, not a person who can make the appropriate changes to the training approach. In order to ensure that the participants felt that their inputs were appreciated and taken into consideration, discussion questions were prepared for focus group meetings. By discussing certain questions, stimulating exchanges of opinions and experience among participants and proposing certain contents and changes at the meetings, it was considered that more meaningful inputs could be gained.

The following describes how the focus groups were organized in Croatia (by ŽIR) and in Italy (Cavriago) and the findings from the focus group meetings.



## **Focus groups in Croatia**

3 focus groups (focus group meetings) were organized in Cestica, Croatia.

The first focus group meeting was held on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Cestica, and it lasted 1 hour. In total, 7 professionals that work with persons with disabilities attended. The project (its goals and activities) and the methodology for the training of young volunteers were presented. After that, a questionnaire (paper format) was given to the participants in order to stimulate discussion on key themes covered in the training. Through the discussions, the experts mentioned that they (themselves) actually need such education since they often lack the tools and approaches to address the needs of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, they mentioned that they were unsatisfied with previous approaches taken to address the needs of persons of disabilities because they lack an inclusive approach.

The second focus group meeting (held on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2023) in Cestica focused on the needs of parents with children with disabilities. It lasted 1 hour. In total, there were 9 parents in attendance. As the format of the meeting with professionals yielded results, the format was repeated. During the meeting, the parents expressed their support for the training approach as they need as much support as possible to ensure that their children have the opportunity to live in dignity and gain social inclusion in the community. Overall, the parents believed that some areas the project activities (training and others) needed to consider are creating an atmosphere of tolerance and building awareness in the community of how they can support such persons.

The third focus group (held on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2023) focused on the volunteers that were selected for the programme (5 volunteers selected + one potential addition = 6 participants). The meeting was held over an hour. As the format from the other meetings yielded results, it was repeated. During the discussion, they mentioned that they appreciated the interactive approach proposed in the training. They mentioned that in past training, learning was mainly pure lectures (which was considered limiting).

As a result of the focus group meetings, ŽIR was able to conclude that the training programme/methodology proposed in the project was taking the right approach. The considerations noted by the participants were used to adjust the proposed format for the volunteer guidebook proposed in the activity.

The following provides a view of how the questionnaire was structured (used as a tool for discussions). Multiple choice formats allowed for participants to consider various options/opinions regarding the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.



## GREEN-IN

Upoznajmo osobe s invaliditetom - program za osposobljavanje volontera

\* Označava obavezno pitanje

1. Odaberi skupni naziv za djecu s oštećenjima vida, sluha, motoričkim oštećenjima itd. \*

Označite samo jedan oval.

- retardirana djeca  
 djeca s teškoćama u razvoju  
 bolesna djeca  
 djeca s posebnim potrebama

2. Odaberi pravilan naziv za osobe s oštećenjima vida, sluha, motoričkim oštećenjima itd. \*

Označite samo jedan oval.

- hendikepirane osobe  
 osobe s invaliditetom  
 osobe s teškoćama u razvoju  
 invalidne osobe  
 osobe s posebnim potrebama

3. Prema modelu ljudskih prava, što osobe s invaliditetom imaju osim prava? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Odaberi točne odgovore \*

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- osobe u invalidskim kolicima trebaju stalnu pomoć i njegu  
 cerebralna paraliza je oštećenje mozga  
 osobama u invalidskim kolicima treba pružiti ruku kod upoznavanja  
 bolje je odmah pomoći nego pitati da li je pomoć potrebna  
 kod epileptičnog napada je osobu potrebno probuditi  
 osobe s motoričkim oštećenjima nisu bolesne

Zašto djeca s intelektualnim teškoćama ne mogu rješavati školske zadatke namijenjene mlađoj djeci?

13. Odaberi točne odgovore

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- osobe s autizmom su visoko inteligentne  
 za autizam nema lijeka  
 autizam utječe na komunikaciju  
 djeca s poremećajem iz autističnog spektra nemaju osjećaja  
 Odabir 5

14. Navedi tri područja u kojima osobe s poremećajima iz autističnog spektra imaju poteškoća \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Navedi najmanje tri stvari koje pomažu funkcioniranju djece s PAS \*

4. Navedi najmanje tri pomagala kojima se služe slijepe osobe i tri kojima se služe slabovidne osobe. \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Opiši slijepoj osobi prostoriju u kojoj se sad nalaziš. \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Zašto slijepe osobe imaju problema u komunikaciji? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Odaberi pravilne tehnike u ophođenju sa slijepim osobama \*

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- slijepe osoba hoda ispred  
 slijepu osobu treba držati za nadlakticu  
 slijepa osoba hoda korak iza  
 slijepa osoba ne treba koristiti bijeli štap ako hoda po poznatoj ulici  
 smijemo koristiti riječi "pogledaj" i "doviđenja"  
 slijepa osoba može osjetiti tko je u prostoriji

16. Navedi dva osnovna simptoma djece s ADHD-om \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. Odaberi točne odgovore \*

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- ADHD se može izlječiti stroгим odgojem  
 ADHD je poremećaj u mozgu  
 ADHD imaju samo djeca  
 ADHD može imati genetsku podlogu

18. Navedi dvije stvari kojima možemo pomoći djetetu s ADHD \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Na koje funkcije obitelji dolazak djeteta s teškoćama ima najviše utjecaja? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Prema fazama žalovanja, kada može početi kvalitetna rehabilitacija djeteta s teškoćama? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. Napiši u nekoliko rečenica kojim riječima roditelje obavještavaš da dijete moguće ima teškoće. \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Odaberi točne odgovore za osobe s oštećenjem sluha \*

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- gluhe osobe nas mogu razumijeti ako glasno govorimo  
 sve gluhe osobe mogu čitati s usana  
 gluhe osobe mogu naučiti govoriti  
 znakovni jezik nema gramatiku, sintaksu ni morfologiju  
 gluhe osobe uvijek mogu koristiti pisani tekst umjesto govora

9. Navedi najmanje tri druga kanala komunikacije osim govora. \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Navedi najmanje tri područja u kojima dijete s intelektualnim teškoćama ima ograničenja.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Odaberi točne odgovore \*

Odaberite sve točne odgovore.

- Osobe s lakim intelektualnim teškoćama mogu brinuti o sebi i samostalno živjeti  
 Postoje neki slučajevi intelektualnih teškoća  
 Intelektualne teškoće se mogu izlječiti  
 Djeca s intelektualnim teškoćama u šetvotom razredu mogu bez problema pratiti nastavu ako dobije zadatke za prvi razred

22. Ako roditelj odgovori da to nije istina, u kojoj je fazi žalovanja? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. Smatraš li da sva djeca s teškoćama trebaju imati pomoćnike u nastavi? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. Ako znamo da većina osoba s invaliditetom ne radi, možemo li reći da osobe s invaliditetom ne mogu raditi? Obrazložiti odgovor \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. Ako kažemo da osobi treba podrška, je li to diskriminacija? \*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Fig. 1. Questionnaire used to create discussion at meetings (for Croatian groups only)**



**Fig. 2. Photos from the focus groups**



## **Focus groups in Italy**

After the format change was agreed on, Cavriago made some additional changes to the format of the focus groups in order to ensure enhanced participation (and enhanced inputs from the targeted stakeholders).

The first meeting was held on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Cavriago and the meeting lasted 1.5 hours. The focus of the meeting was to gain inputs from young people in the community and from experts that work with persons with disabilities. In order to promote the project and ensure that the project gains a footprint in the community, the meeting was held at the same time as the festival “Giovani in Europa/Youth in Europe” held in Cavriago on that day. At this meeting there were 10 participants (3 young persons and 7 experts). The project was presented as well as the main training approach. After that, the discussion took place to address the needs of youth. Concerning the 30 hours of training foreseen in the project, young persons expressed that there is a need for flexibility as many young persons have to balance multiple obligations (work, university, family, etc.). However, they expressed that the concept would benefit their career prospects. The professionals/experts expressed that there is a lack of support in exercising the rights of persons with disabilities to acquire adequate education and employment; and a need for more actions and practical work with persons with disabilities in local communities. In that way, social inclusion can be effectively enhanced in Cavriago.

The second focus group meeting was held in Cavriago on August 28<sup>th</sup> 2023 with parents of persons with disabilities and experts working with persons with disabilities. The meeting lasted 1.5 hours. In total 12 persons attended the meeting. The meeting began with the presentation of the project and its aims. After this, the approach to training was mentioned. The discussion based on set questions showed that there was interested in providing support to persons with Down's Syndrome in particular. It was agreed by all participants that there is a lack of action focused on the needs of persons with disabilities and they are often left in the background. The project was regarded as a positive action and they expressed their support for the training targeting young volunteers.



**Fig.3 From left to right: Photo from the meeting in Cavriago in May 2023; and a photo from the 2nd meeting in Cavriago in August 2023**





### III. Conclusions

As a result of taking a pragmatic approach to the project implementation, the project team was able to effectively implement the focus groups (focus group meetings). The in-situ approach held with local stakeholders (parents, volunteers, and professionals working with persons with disabilities) along with changing the questionnaire into discussion questions allowed the project team to gain meaningful inputs and feedback that was used to further adjust the training concept and methodology originally proposed. The overall outcome of the meetings is highlighted below:

- 36 persons providing inputs and feedback for the training programme
  - This was possible via the 3 formed focus groups based on specific target groups of the project (volunteers, parents with children/loved ones with disabilities and professionals that work with persons with disabilities) in Croatia and in Italy  
*\*Some persons attended multiple meetings and they were not counted twice. That accounts for the discrepancy below with the participant numbers.*
- 5 focus group meetings held in-situ
  - 3 focus group meetings in Croatia (22 participants in total) providing inputs and feedback for the training programme
  - 2 focus group meetings in Italy (22 participants in total) providing inputs and feedback for the training programme

By using this approach to gaining feedback and inputs from the wider community for similar training, the partnership is certain that other similarly-minded organizations would have the same positive results.