

PAPE - Participation of autistic people in EU

142667-LLP-1-2008-1-DE-LEONARDO-LMP

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=4353>

Project Information

- Title: PAPE - Participation of autistic people in EU
- Project Number: 142667-LLP-1-2008-1-DE-LEONARDO-LMP
- Year: 2008
- Project Type: Development of Innovation
- Status: completed
- Country: EU-Centralised Projects
- Marketing Text: PAPE will develop a Autism Europass Access Tool (AutismEPAT) for autistic people (autism in early childhood), to serve a competition of competence and to give them access to the Europass.
- Summary: The tool in itself is not a certificate, rather it is a means to completing a certificate. We develop our 'tool' as a means to enable the filling in of the standard Europass. Instead of inventing a new 'certificate' we 'direct' the process towards the existing Europass. Through its computer-based format, the 'AutismEPAT' enable dynamic entries, which can continuously show the development in the persons life "self-reflexive".
- The purpose of the AutismEPAT is to foster transparency and recognition of the abilities and competencies of people with autism. For this, not only curricula are described, but above all, competencies of day-to-day life are documented, which often already present a big challenge for people with autism. Therefore AutismEPAT helps to documents abilities in detail in different areas.
- In contrast to documents that emphasise deficiencies, the AutismEPAT also explicitly highlights the possibility for personal development for the concerned persons and, thereby, makes it more accessible. This increases the motivation to pursue one's own development, entailing a better social integration.
- Description: AutismEPAT standing for 'Autism Europass Access Tool' captures the 'living-document' aspect of the tool that we are trying to develop. It indicates the potential for positive future development of all sorts of skills and abilities, rather than a static, unchanging view of the person. The AutismEPAT will give possibility to continue competences in every area of life and to compare in different services and also in different countries. Modules of AutismEPAT will give the possibility to autistic people to document their social and professional skills, to extend these skills and so to intensify their participation in public life. The AutismEPAT also will be an instrument of motivation for lifelong learning, because of the necessity of external aims for autistic people. Moreover it will be a help for services to prove more measures for autistic people. The instrument that we are developing can be seen as a way of 'scaffolding' or facilitating the person with autism (with limited expressive language) to be able to complete the Europass (or to complete sections of the Europass). Without such an instrument people with autism with limited expressive language capabilities will not be able to complete the Europass - but with the right kind of instrument access to this potentially important document (the Europass) could be enhanced for people with autism - and of course with our kind of instrument, the person with autism would not be completing the Europass by her/himself - the instrument would structure the conversation/interaction with a carer/parent/facilitator to enable a better level of access to the Europass.
- Themes: *** Lifelong learning
*** Recognition, transparency, certification
*** Access for disadvantaged
** Equal opportunities
- Sectors: * Human Health and Social Work Activities
- Product Types: transparency and certification
CD-ROM
website

Project Information

Product information: The Autism Europass Access Tool(AutismEPAT) will be developed in computerbased form.It has 5 sections to fill in competences in I view. The sections are communication, well-being, social, daily living, occupation and interests with a lot of subsections. For people with autism who can not speak parents or carer who know them best should fill in the competences. People with autism who are able to write with Facilitated Communication (FC) can fill in themselves. The computerbased form offers the opportunity to print a summary of competences and like europass this document will show not only reached official qualifications but also soft and key skills. Instead of inventing a new 'certificate' we 'direct' the process towards the existing Europass.

Projecthomepage: www.project-pape.eu

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Country/Region: Dublin
Country: IE-Ireland
Organization Type: association/non-governmental organisation
Homepage: <http://www.gheel.ie>

Project Files

2008_1923_PR_Pape.doc

http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/4353/prj/2008_1923_PR_Pape.doc

2008_1923_PR_Pape_en.doc

http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/4353/prj/2008_1923_PR_Pape_en.doc

Products

- 1 Autism EPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)
- 2 Progress Report
- 3 Final Report

Product 'Autism EPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)'

Title: Autism EPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)

Product Type: others

Marketing Text: The „Autism EPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)" is a Freesoftware with handbook which offers for non or hardly speaking people with autism the opportunity to show formal qualification, soft and key skills. Download www.project-pape.eu

- Description:
1. The Autism EPAT is designed to be used with and for people on the autistic spectrum, particularly who have limited communication skills.
 2. The overall purpose of compiling the AutismEPAT is to empower and give voice to people who are often not heard, to assist in full inclusion in all aspects of life.
 3. The Autism EPAT is list of conversation topics which lead to a greater knowledge of the person.
 4. It is a dynamic and flexible tool that can be used by a range of ages, particularly focused on those who will be experiencing transitions.
 5. It can be adapted to individuals e.g. add pictures or symbols according to what the person usually uses.
 6. The Autism EPAT is administered in the way that the person is used to communicating.
 7. No one has to complete the entire AutismEPAT document.
 8. The motivation to complete the Autism EPAT depends on the will of both individuals and support workers, with an onus on encouraging both groups of people to see the benefits. The overall benefit is to focus on giving people quality of life rather than services.
 9. The Autism EPAT should be completed in the context of a relationship. It is designed to record and challenge views of people with a focus on greater insight and understanding of individuals.
 10. It is OK not to know something about someone. It is also OK to disagree with the person's view of themselves. Disagreements and disparities can be positively used to further understanding of individuals.
 11. The first answer of the person completing the Autism EPAT will be noted, in order to commence the discussion and negotiation, prior to completion of the final certificate.
 12. The final document will be a positive portrayal that is as much as possible the views of the persons themselves.
 13. The Autism EPAT will need continuous updating – it is a living document, which is not an end in itself. The process involved in the completing of the Autism EPAT is at least as important as the completed document.

Target group: People with early childhood autism, non or hardly speaking

Result: Computer based instrument to fill in and to print a summary of information provided. Outcome is a document which makes competences viewable and tangible for motivation, for transitions between services or for new staff, to define goals for suitable assistance offers and for reflect self-perception.

Area of application: In all sections in which adults with early childhood autism get supported. This could be in the field of living, learning or working for example.

Product 'Autism EPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)'

Area of application: Pre-condition is that the one who wants to use the instrument is able to speak or write or if the instrument should be used for someone with autism who do not speak the person who fill in the CoC in the view of the autistic person has to know him very well.

Homepage: www.project-pape.eu

Product Languages: English
German

Product 'Progress Report'

Title: Progress Report

Product Type: others

Marketing Text: PAPE – Participation of Autistic People in Europe is developing a certificate of competencies for autistic people called a “Certification of Competence” (CoC).

It documents the skills and competencies from the user’s perspective and has several advantages:

1. It focuses on the user’s skills and formulates goals.
2. The description is exclusively positive, strengthening the user’s self-esteem.
3. If the person changes to a new institution or there is staff turnover, the CoC is used as an instrument to facilitate these changes. Through its positive form, it draws attention to the abilities of people with.
4. The families of the persons affected can also contribute their knowledge and, in this way, improve the overall situation of their relatives.
5. Through the concrete description of their skills, the CoC supports a new perception of people with autism in society.
6. Independently of specific methods of working, the CoC can be filled in/used centering on the client.

Description: PAPE – Participation of Autistic People in Europe is developing a certificate of competencies for autistic people called a “Certification of Competence” (abbreviated as CoC in the following).

After the conclusion of the project in November 2010, the certificate will be available for all adults with early childhood autism. It documents the skills and competencies from the user’s perspective and has several advantages:

1. It focuses on the user’s skills and formulates goals.
2. The description is exclusively positive, strengthening the user’s self-esteem.
3. If the person changes to a new institution or there is staff turnover, the CoC is used as an instrument to facilitate these changes. Through its positive form, it draws attention to the abilities of people with autism and strengthens the motivation to offer more activities.
4. The families of the persons affected can also contribute their knowledge and, in this way, improve the overall situation of their relatives.
5. Through the concrete description of their skills, the CoC supports a new perception of people with autism in society.
6. Independently of specific methods of working, the CoC can be filled in/used centering on the client.

The consortium which is working on the development of the CoC is composed of people with many years of experience working on a day-to-day basis with autistic individuals in their institutions. All areas of life, living, privacy, work and education are taken into account. The project gains additional quality through qualified research on FC from the partner organisation United Kingdom.

For the involved partners, the success to date of the project PAPE is already impressive. At the same time, through intensive exchange (of information) across national and linguistic borders, a profound discussion about attitude and philosophy in working with autistic people has taken place, which benefits the affected persons on different levels. The CoC assembles modules that are in the process of being tested on their practicability in all partner institutions. Autistic persons are involved in this first testing phase. During a concluding conference in October 2010 in Germany, the final version of the CoC and the results of the evaluation will be presented to the specialised public.

The consortium presents itself with own presentations on the website www.project-

Product 'Progress Report'

Description: pape.eu. All results from the project PAPE are (will be) available there.

1. Project Objectives

The goal of the project is a certificate of competencies, modelled on the Europass: The „Certification of Competence (CoC)“, (in German "Zertifikat meiner Kompetenzen (ZmK)") is especially tailored to people with early childhood autism. It allows the documentation of the user's own abilities and skills. The following content is included in modules:

- Formal Curricula,
- non-formal Curricula (Mobility, use of public institutions),
- Professional core competencies (use of the computer, behaviour at work, etc.),
- Social competencies (communication, emotional control, etc.),
- Show personal development (reflexion on the condition, planning competence, etc.)

The CoC is designed to reflect the CoC user's (self-) perception. That is why all the given answers (and answer boxes to tick) are formulated in the first person. As much importance as the actual documentation is attached to the process of working on the CoC, either with or for the user (in case he/she does not have the ability to communicate verbally or in written form).

Through its computer-based format, the „Certification of Competence“ enables dynamic entries, which can continuously show the development in the person's life. The instrument is autism-/ ASD-specific and centered on the person. It can be revised over and over because – in accordance with the joint conviction and experience of the involved partners – a person's development is never completed. The instrument always shows the current state regarding the way it is perceived by the user or assumed. Changes are documented in a self-reflexive way. People with autism are rarely asked to give their own assessment, which is why the CoC has particular value for them. It is also important to acknowledge and, if possible, change this in society as a whole.

The purpose of the CoC is to foster transparency and recognition of the abilities and competencies of people with autism. For this, not only curricula are described, but above all, competencies of day-to-day life, which often already present a big challenge for people with autism, are documented. Autistic people have to work hard to acquire competencies that for other people are self-evident. These competences are named in the CoC and documented as abilities, including the progress made.

Previous experience has shown that highlighting competencies can considerably raise the user's self-esteem and make him/her aware of the fact that he/she is part of society. Autistic people often had the painful experience of being excluded, however they repeatedly emphasise in written statements that they feel very happy when thinking about their present situation and future. The CoC documents abilities in detail in different areas (see chart 1). For people with autism, many apparently normal activities are very complex chains of actions and require a high ability to concentrate, training and self-control. Therefore these activities are also described in small steps in the CoC. This subtly differentiated view has the purpose to enable people with autism (as well as staff and family) to consider developing the abilities further.

In contrast to documents that emphasise deficiencies, the CoC also explicitly highlights the possibility for personal development for the concerned persons and, thereby, makes it more accessible. This increases the motivation to pursue one's own development, entailing a better social integration.

For family and staff, the emphasis on competencies can direct the focus of attention away from deficiencies and towards abilities and, through a changed perspective, provides the opportunity to broaden the range of activities offered to people with autism.

Product 'Progress Report'

Description: Another important goal of the CoC is the structured exchange across institutions and borders. Up to now, documentation systems are mostly deficiency-oriented. Positive abilities that the person does not display clearly or only infrequently are often only known to small numbers of staff and carers. If there is staff turnover or the person moves to a different institution, this knowledge is often lost. The development of the concerned person cannot be built on this knowledge.

This is also an important reason why changes are often traumatic for concerned persons and go hand in hand with long periods of adjustment. Here the CoC can offer a ground-breaking way of assistance.

2. Project Approach

The consortium unanimously found that a single method or approach towards working with autistic persons does not exist! Besides training the staff, it is, above all, crucial to focus on individuals with autism and on their abilities and interests in order to support them positively. The different political situations and the varying value attached to socio-pedagogical work with disabled people play an important role, which is reflected in staff ratios and qualifications as well as in adequate facilities.

Through intensive discussions that enabled partners to exchange, explain, discuss and reflect on attitude and approach towards people with autism, it became possible for all five partners to contribute in equal parts to this complex instrument. Here it is an advantage that the members of the consortium not only share, but at the same time have had many different experiences in their work. Some of them are themselves parents of adults with autism and, thus, have extensive and detailed practical knowledge. Furthermore, all members of the consortium are in leadership positions and, thus, have significant influence on content and direction of their institution's work.

The consortium has agreed to a flexible design for the instrument so that every institution, across countries, can work with it using its own methods and can achieve the desired effects like motivating further education and training and increasing the self-esteem of the person with autism spectrum disorders – independently of fixed methods! The underlying philosophy of the „Certification of Competence (CoC)“ is appreciation: That is why all statements on abilities and competencies are formulated positively. The users can decide on their own which part of the CoC they want to fill in and how they want to present themselves, provided they have the ability to do so (for example through verbal communication or facilitated communication (FC)). If a user needs the help of a confidant, the latter must review his/her perception of the competencies of the autistic person conscientiously. The personal perspective of the „Certification of Competence“ is an integral factor that helps to emphasise appreciation and to extend the possibility to participate for the user.

The process-oriented evaluation of the CoC's effect will take place at the Leadpartner Germany – representative of all partners. The following material will be used: Analysis of documents, select texts from three participants, structured interviews with the PAPE management and with project participants, with persons in charge of the shared apartment and residence for autistic persons as well as with parents.

After the first testing phase and again after general testing, further interviews will be conducted. Here, the focus will be on possible changes that will be the result of the self-assessment of the person with autism. Expected side effects and at the same time precondition for further planning steps are: Enhancement of motivation, willingness to self-reflect, and increase of self-esteem.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

In the first year of the project the „Certification of Competence“, including the modules, has been developed to the point that it can now be tested, in a first phase,

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Description: to assess its usefulness and application in all five partner countries. For this, the different areas of life and competencies (see chart 1) that can be put into statements, are listed as declarative sentences in a computer-based format (see chart 2).

With the help of a computer, the users themselves or an assistant can either tick the given statements, amend them or skip them. Afterwards, the personal statements are compiled according to subject areas, printed and, thus, made available in hard copy form.

With its multitude of topics and areas, the CoC is designed to show as many areas of the user's life as possible. As it is, inevitably, impossible to list all areas, the CoC allows the user to add individually important subject areas as needed. The purpose of the testing phases is to show if the offered subject areas sufficiently cover the spectrum of potentials and whether important areas are missing, which will be added afterwards where necessary. In the existing form, at the end of the document, there is the possibility to point out what is missing or difficult in the CoC.

In a second testing phase, partner institutions that were not involved in the development of the instrument will participate in order to check if the instrument displays everywhere the expected benefits and is easy to manage. After the testing phase, the results received to date will be published on the website.

4. Partnerships

The partners of the consortium are from Ireland, United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Germany. The benefit of developing this project cross-nationally is, above all, to see not only one's own possibilities and limits, but at the same time to gather impressions and ideas that lie beyond the work with the "Certification of Competence (CoC)".

The exchange about experiences made and individual possibilities generate a diversified discourse – which is reflected in the broad spectrum of modules.

The mutual visits deepen the understanding about the current political situations as well as the practical work in situ. The working meetings on a European level are exciting because, regardless of the initial language barriers, they enable a highly experienced and innovative exchange.

Some of the involved project partners work mainly in residences while others rather focus on day centres. The involved institutions can either offer services for autistic people or focus on training parents. Also universities and, with this, research and teaching are involved and enhance findings. The extraordinarily experienced and interested as well as open staff of the project PAPE enable a mutually beneficial exchange.

The practical experience of working with autistic people consistently confirms the paradigms and descriptions of the scientific literature.

Through the collaboration of different institutions with their different perspectives but similar attitudes towards the support of people with autism, the attention is turned on the user's perspective. The underlying philosophy of the CoC is the appreciation of the individuals and the assumption that lifelong learning and the development of abilities is possible.

Product 'Progress Report'

Description:

While working with autistic people, particularly with those on the early childhood autism part of the spectrum, it is often noticed that guidelines which are made for people with disabilities are not adequate for this specific group of people. That is why in many areas (for example vocational training, adult education, social training, and integration), new and more adequate methods are in demand. Looking across borders inspires with new ideas and points of view because every country has different political systems, attitudes and, accordingly, approaches.

5. Plans for the Future

Currently, the first draft of the CoC is being tested in the five partner institutions. Every institution works on the instrument with three autistic persons and documents their experiences, e.g., with video recordings. For the next working meeting, every institution will prepare a presentation of their experiences and results. On this basis, a possible revision will be discussed at the next meeting in March 2010. The revised draft will be tested in a second phase by the partners of the consortium as well as by five new institutions (minimum) in the partner countries. The Leadpartner in Germany will exemplarily evaluate the results of the overall process and of the effects envisaged and attained by the use of the CoC.

Before the concluding conference, two publications will be released in the specialized press in all of the five participating countries. These publications in their respective national languages contribute to the involvement of new partners as well as to further dissemination. The concluding conference will take place with one representative for every partner institution in October 2010 in Gießen/Germany.

The presentation of the CoC as well as the presentation of the evaluation's findings will be the main points of the agenda. Furthermore, a workshop will introduce the use of the CoC. The target audience is experts as well as policy-makers.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The possibility to display their abilities and competences helps people with autism get better opportunities to participate in social life, decreases existing discriminations and fosters integration also in relation to (vocational) education and further education.

The CoC supports and focuses exchange to reach this goal and, through cross-national cooperation, supports it in different institutions and across countries.

Through the CoC, which exclusively uses positive descriptions, self-esteem and self-confidence of autistic people that do not speak much or not at all are strengthened. The more so as there is currently no comprehensive documentation of competencies adapted to people with autism, nor a way to acknowledge their qualifications.

The description of their competencies and efforts is, above all, important for the autistic people themselves, but also for their families, for specialists in the institutions and for society as a whole.

This new and different approach using the CoC is particularly important. The 'challenging behaviour' of people with autism often hinders effective support, but the CoC casts a different light on this previously (negatively connotated) behaviour and even creates understanding:

With existing, but unexpected, intelligence and with abilities not accessed by the person, but at the same time without the possibility to express oneself verbally, aggressive and auto-aggressive behaviour of the affected becomes understandable.

The CoC is a Europass tailored towards autistic people; this document recognizes them as part of society. People with autism (and in particular those who do not speak much or not at all) have, up till now, largely been excluded from a recognition of their abilities. The competencies listed on the CoC refer to competencies in areas

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Description: of formal life as well as to competencies that have been acquired during non-formal and informal learning and give an opportunity to name something that usually stays unnoticed but, nevertheless, represents a big achievement for the person affected by autism. Particularly when changing services or institutions or in case of staff turnover, the abilities of people with autism are passed on more clearly. Through documentation with the help of the CoC and resulting encouragement for further educational activities, the level of competencies can be raised in the long term.

With this instrument, people with autism can display their abilities and make a contribution to social life. They get a chance to be heard. This is of particular importance because their abilities may not be recognizable at first sight and, what is more, are often not expected to be there. Because the CoC has a motivating effect, it contributes initially to the personal development of the people affected and ideally, in a next step, it fosters social integration. This can and should lead to more justice and to improving the quality of education and vocational training for people with autism.

Target group:

Result: Progress Report

Area of application:

Homepage: www.project-pape.eu

Product Languages: German
English

product files

Final Report

2008_1923_FR_Pape.doc

http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/4353/prd/2/2/2008_1923_FR_Pape.doc

Product 'Final Report'

Title: Final Report

Product Type: others

Marketing Text: PAPE – Participation of Autistic People in Europe developed the AutismEPAT (Autism Europass Access Tool)

AutismEPAT is a tool which enables autistic people and especially those who speak very little or not at all (Autism in early childhood) to make a statement about their skills and competencies.

Description: The AutismEPAT offers access to “europass cv“ and links further possibilities with its application:

1. It focuses on the user's skills and formulates goals.
2. It serves as a conversation guide and is built in a autism specific way, step by step approach. It can be completed by or with autistic people as well as about autistic people.
3. The presentation of one's own competencies in a solely positive way strengthens the user's self esteem.
4. If there is a move to a new institution or a change in staff, AutismEPAT can be used as a transfer instrument.
5. Families of the people concerned can contribute their knowledge and thus improve the general situation of their affected relatives.
6. Within society, AutismEPAT supports a new perspective on people with autism by a concrete description of their skills.
7. AutismEPAT can be used independently from special work methods and can be completed in a client-centered way.

Partners from different institutions were part of the development, all of which brought along long term experience from working with autistic people. All areas of the autistic people's lives were considered as a collection of positive statements.

Similar to the Europass, AutismEPAT encompasses the following chapters: work experience, leisure time and occupation, schooling and occupational training, languages as well as personal skills and competencies. They are divided into different subchapters and can be extended at any time by individual entries.

During the developmental period AutismEPAT was tested in two phases, it was evaluated and adjusted to day-to-day needs.

The experiences that all institutions had with the implementation so far were perceived as successful; working with AutismEPAT is well adopted by people with autism and it leads to a positive change on how the users are viewed. Furthermore, topics that have been unconsidered so far are taken up and show interesting, new perspectives.

Results of the evaluation and further information about the instrument and the partner institutions of the consortium can be looked up on the homepage. The computer program AutismEPAT including a detailed manual is available for download free of charge on the project's homepage. ([www. project-pape.eu](http://www.project-pape.eu))

1. Project Objectives

Goal of the project was to develop a tool along the lines of „europass cv“ for people with autism and especially for those who speak very little or not at all. It is meant to enable them to present their skills and competences, encourage them to engage in self-reflection and active cooperation as well as to promote inclusion and to initiate personality development.

PAPE-Team set itself the goal to develop a tool that would allow an access to Europass. The Autism Europass Access Tool (short: AutismEPAT) is meant to allow a dynamic entry which can continually show the development in the person's life so that change can be documented in a self-reflective manner and so that continuity

Product 'Final Report'

Description: can be ensured. A manual describes the work philosophy and provides ideas and instructions for working with the tool.

During the developmental work the consortium was carried by their shared goal „collecting strenghts instead of describing difficulties and inabilities“ and the shared work philosophy „Focus on giving people quality of life rather than services“.

Like Europass, AutismEPAT consists of five areas. They are completed by the user from their first-person persepective. The areas are personal data, work experience, leisure and occupation, schooling and occupational training, languages, personal skills and competences. The descriptions are listed autism specific and on a step by step basis.

Overview AutismEPAT

Goals which are related to the development of the tool:

To divert the view away from deficits towards skills for family and staff and thus offer the possibility to extend the spectrum for the autistic person.

A structured exchange is meant to be enabled over and above institutions.

To ask autistic people about their own assessment and to enable them to speak up for their own issues.

To capture positive skills that the person only shows rarely or not in an obvious way and which are familiar to only a small part of the staff. If there is a change in staff or a move to a different institution, this knowledge gets lost and it cannot be build upon any further. That's also why changes are often traumatic for the affected people and connected with long periods of settling in. AutismEPAT is meant to offer a ground breaking assistance here.

The big goal of PAPE Team, which is connected with the cooperation on the development of a new evidence of competence for people with autism, is a change in

Product 'Final Report'

Description: the perception of the affected people in society as a whole as well as in a transnational way. That's why the tool as well as the manual are available as a computer program free of charge for everyone who is interested.

2. Project Approach

PAPE Team agreed accordingly that there is no such thing as the method or this approach when it comes to working with autistic people. Besides training and advanced training of the staff, the view on autistic people with their skills and interests is above all decisive, in order to support them positively. The varying political situation, the status of socio-pedagogical work in the handicapped area – all these factors play an important role which are reflected in the level and qualification of staff as well as in appropriate facilities.

Through intensive discussions in which attitudes and approaches towards autistic people were shared, discussed and thought over, it was made possible that all five partners worked together equally on such a complex tool. It is an advantage that the members of the consortium share different as well as common experiences from this field of work. Some of them are parents of autistic people themselves. Furthermore, all members of the consortium are in leading positions and can therefore determine content and direction of their institution's work; and on the other hand they are working actively with autistic people and therefore possess long term and broad practical knowledge.

The consortium agreed to apply the tool in such a broad way that every institution can work with its own methods, in a transnational manner. Desired effects such as motivation for further training, an increase of self-esteem as well as the support of new offers for people with autism can be reached independently from fixed methods. AutismEPAT was designed as an access tool for the Europass. This can be used as it is by autistic people. In the sense of inclusion, this is a major step.

The underlying philosophy of AutismEPAT is appreciation: That's why all statements about skills and competences included therein are positive and formulated in a first-person perspective. This form of first-person perspective is meant to make assistants or reference people who use this tool with someone check the image they have about the competences of the autistic person.

According to our experience, people with autism make the best progress if their current skills are acknowledged and understood so that future goals can be clearly identified. If he is able to, the user can decide for himself, which section of AutismEPAT he wants to work on and how he presents himself therein (for example through verbal communication or alternative forms of communication). The consortium wants to emphasise that AutismEPAT is not designed as a catalogue, whose statements need to be processed successively.. Rather, the underlying idea of AutismEPAT is to be used as a conversation guide and the particularities of the user are slipped in.

In order to simplify the application and make it accessible for all interested parties, the consortium decided to develop a simply usable software for this tool, which in addition to that, is accessible free of charge.

A process-oriented evaluation accompanies the project with regard to the achievement of goals (promotion of motivation, willingness for self-reflection and boost of self-esteem). The main emphasis of the evaluation with representation of all – was set with the leadpartner Germany. The other partner institutions were also

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Description: included through a questionnaire in the second testing phase.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

During the 2,5 years of the project's progression, the tool AutismEPAT was developed, adapted into an easy to handle, computer based form and it was tested in all partner countries in two pilot stages. It is composed in English, German, Portuguese and Czech. Accompanying to that, a detailed manual was developed which conveys the project's philosophy and explains the application of the computer program. The manual is deposited in English, German, Portuguese and Czech too.

The tool is designed as a dynamic and flexible instrument for people with autism starting from about 16 years of age. At that age, first shifts often need to be managed, for example from school to a workshop/job, from living with the parents to a residence. All chapters and statements are collected in a main catalogue. These can be adapted individually for each client through an analysis, by choosing chapters, eliminating or adding statements. The wording is kept detailed and autism-specific.

It can be used by people with autism individually as well as with the help of parents or caretakers. With AutismEPAT competences are documented and assessed positively in daily life, those of which often times already mean a big challenge for people with autism. Educational contents are illustrated as well as the analysis of the statements which allows the preparation and planning of occupational tasks.

Working with AutismEPAT can serve as an impulse as well, to test further (educational) measures. The tool is a comprehensive instrument, but it is not necessary that it is completed quickly – some users might find the process tiring, while others enjoy it and therefore complete it faster. As the clients grow older and certain goals are achieved, the document needs to be updated on a regular basis. At the same time the user will lose certain skills when he or she grows older, which will be reflected in AutismEPAT. That is why the process of adaption of the tool is never fully completed.

Dialog and contact are always in the foreground. AutismEPAT can structure communication and serve to prepare a dialog contentwise. It is all about getting to know autistic people better and possibly getting to know them in a new way. PAPE Team works according to the philosophy to also give those people a voice who don't speak. The conditions of autistic people are meant to be improved with AutismEPAT and a contribution to their participation is meant to be made.

According to our experience, people with autism can best make progress, if their current skills are recognized and understood so that future goals can be clearly identified.

Best results from the work and the evaluation were the following:

- The observation was made that users enjoy working on it
- Views on the users change
- Behaviours were inquired which were usually simply perceived as disturbing
- Topics which had apparently not been relevant thus far were now considered as important
- A lot of suggestions for the development of new activities with the clients were gained
- During the development of AutismEPAT it was established that the training of the supporting staff is of special meaning. Staff that tries to use AutismEPAT without any training or instruction tends to rather use it as a questionnaire, without the dialog which is necessary to establish a connection to the client. Staff, on the other hand, who has received an instruction into the application of the tool uses it in the intended way; to encourage a conversation with the client, in order to understand their needs and wishes better.
- It is helpful to experiment with AutismEPAT. For different people (family members,

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Description: legal representatives and staff) who know the user well it could be helpful to apply AutismEPAT together with him/her. Based on the type of relationship between the user and these different people, different statements can be made, as the user might prefer to make certain statements in the presence of a certain person. It's an advantage for the user as well as for the other people that this process occurs, as additional information can lead to a better understanding of the person and his/her needs, while other people might reconsider their attitude about the skills and goals of the client.

A download of AutismEPAT including a detailed manual is available free of charge at www.project-pape.eu

4. Partnerships

The partners of Team PAPE came from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Germany. The advantage of developing this project in a transnational way rested with the idea of not only seeing one's own possibilities and boundaries, but to also collect impressions and suggestions which go beyond working with AutismEPAT.

The work fields of the cooperation partners were very versatile, day care facilities and/or residential facilities, institutions that originated from affected parents and the university research. All representatives of the project partners contributed long term experiences from different areas of life of autistic people. Some of them also from their private environment, as they are parents of autistic adults.

The mutual visits deepened the understanding about the current political conditions as well as the practical work on-site. In the encounter at the working level in Europe it was exciting to see that a highly qualified and innovative exchange was possible despite initial language barriers.

The underlying philosophy of the common work and therefore also of AutismEPAT is the appreciation of the people and the assumption that lifelong learning and development of skills is also possible for people with autism. There are different perspectives in the different institutions, however everyone related to a similar basic attitude towards the support of people with autism. Coming as close to the needs of the people in need as possible was always in the centre of the cooperation.

Especially in the work with people with autism (especially people with autism in early childhood) it is often realized that guidelines and methods which are laid out for the work with people with handicaps, are often not adequate. That is why new and more appropriate ways are being looked for in a lot of areas like occupational education, adult education, social training and integration. The view across borders opened up new ideas and approaches as every country has different political systems, attitudes and according to this, different approaches.

The extension of further associative partner institutions in every country during the second testing phase brought another view from the outside. Since those partners had not been included in the development of the instrument, helpful experiences were gained and the tool could undergo another test.

Working in a partnership with people from different European countries with different languages promoted the extension of technical and political insights, as well as the linguistic competences of the non native speakers.

5. Plans for the Future

In the partner institutions of PAPE it was worked with adult autistic people, who do not speak or only speak a little and often times show challenging behaviour. With this group of people progress can only be observed in bigger lapses of time. That is why during the testing phase only tendencies could be determined, which however point to further positive developments.

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Description:

AutismEPAT was convincing in the institutions in which experiences were collected with it and it established its firm place. A further distribution is being pursued through different steps. In October of 2011, the leadpartner introduces AutismEPAT at the Union Convention of Autism Germany.

PAPE Team plans a further joint project in which AutismEPAT and its distribution plays an important role. Countless positive feedback and requests, among other things also due to the tools introduction at Europe Day of the Werkstätten Messe in Nuremberg in March of 2011 give rise to the development of workshops which are more in depth. Also the wish was expressed repeatedly, to make the tool available to people with other handicaps, as well as an adaption for people with Asperger syndrome.

6. Contribution to EU-policies

Through the possibility to present their skills and competences, the participation in social life is extended for people with autism, existing discriminations are diminished and integration in terms of (occupational) education and further education is supported.

AutismEPAT supports person-oriented statements and thus increases quality of life. The tool enables the user to experience self-determination, options and self-intercession through their own statements. This way it supports dignity, possibilities and inclusion. Moreover, the tool emphasises the preservation of rights and the support of people with intellectual interferences, as people regardless of their intellectual interferences or health issues practice their civil and human rights. With AutismEPAT institutions can support people with autism/users to learn these rights. The tool preserves dignity and respect by treating the clients first of all like human beings. Their competences and strengths are emphasised and areas for further development are determined, instead of looking at them as weaknesses. AutismEPAT strives to affirm natural support networks.

Due to their limited communication competence, people with autism have limited opportunities to take part in the basic right for general and occupational education. With AutismEPAT they are given the possibility to present their skills and competences and through that gain a better access to education. Formal as well as non-formal competences are not getting lost during shifts between institutions and workplaces and it can be build upon them. AutismEPAT increases the level of competence of risk-groups. Autistic people can now gain appreciation which had not been available this far. Beyond that, it is a tool for the support of lifelong learning motivation, interpersonal, social and civil learning competences are named and serve as an incentive.

The possibility to present yourself in a positive way through AutismEPAT leads to a bigger acknowledgement of skills, especially for people that speak very little or not at all and establishes a compensation when it comes to equal opportunities and justice. Especially since there is no such thing as an overlapping and adjusted documentation of skills and acknowledgement of their qualifications for people with autism.

Institutions received further suggestions from the tool to offer educational measures. The sense of belonging is meant to be increased by the tool's application, as the users are supported to maintain current bonds and make new friends. Working with AutismEPAT supports and focuses on the exchange of shared interests in working with autistic people in different institutions as well as beyond country borders.

Target group:

Product 'Final Report'

Result: AutismEPAT - a free software
to show skills and competences

Area of application:

Homepage: www.project-pape.eu

Product Languages: Czech
Portuguese
English
German