



ProDeafToolKit

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

In 2008/2009, members of the HIPEN Network – the European Network for professionals working in the fields of deaf and hearing impaired education and training – carried out a survey to investigate the situation of deaf and hearing impaired people in society and in employment. The results indicated:

- Little or no training, or at best inadequate training, of people to meet the needs of deaf and hearing impaired people in public services, employment, and in most of society.
- Little or no understanding by the public of the needs of people who are deaf or hearing impaired, and that services and businesses are unaware of how to deal with their hearing impaired or deaf clients and employees.
- That deaf and hearing impaired people face barriers to communication and no understanding by services and employers.

As a result, member organisations of HIPEN developed the **ProDeafToolkit Project** which seeks to address these issues and which at the same time responds to EU legislation of equality and anti-discrimination and to policy developments in members' states.

The project has developed and provides free and open access for everyone to a set of Tools which will enable anyone involved in providing services for or working with deaf people to do so with understanding, ability and access to appropriate communication methodologies so that deaf and hearing impaired people may develop their own active citizenship and inclusion – in contrast to the survey results outlined above. The Tool Kit has been tailored to meet the needs and circumstances of each participating country so that maximum impact is obtained from the project.

Indeed, this project aims to bridge the worlds of deaf and hearing through innovation in all domains.

The consortium consists of highly experienced and respected experts in the fields of education and training of people who are deaf or have hearing impairments, and, by being a transnational consortium, not only does it have added strength through calling upon the variety of skills across the EU but it also ensures benefits for people who have a minority disability – deaf and severe hearing impairment, often excluded from wider society for the reasons identified.

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1. Project Objectives

ProDeafToolKit aims to be one of the bridges between the worlds of deaf and hearing people, worlds which are often separated, unknowingly and unwittingly, by the lack of means of communication between their inhabitants. **ProDeafToolKit** provides a kit of tools which hearing service providers – public and private – employers and members of the public can use, simply and directly, in normal day-by-day situations so that communication, awareness and personal competencies can be formed between hearing and deaf people.

Similarly, **ProDeafToolKit** will be a tool to be used by deaf people, as individuals and associations, to enable their communication and interaction with hearing people.

And the objectives of **ProDeafToolKit** are broader than providing access to a means of communication; information about and links to Deaf Awareness training, useful contacts, the role and examples of technology, what is Interpreting for deaf (and deaf blind) people – and how to access it, the range of potential Support Services, deaf people in work – these are amongst the subjects included in the model and developed for each Partner's own country's situation.

So the aim is also that it is an organic tool, developing in response to the situation in each locality, enabling and promoting the inclusive active citizenship of deaf and severely hearing impaired people through the mutual local actions, on a day-by-day basis, of all EU citizens.

2. Project Approach

The Project Approach has been one of exploration, analysis and joint development by professionals, including deaf people themselves. Initially, the transnational partners surveyed the materials and methodologies available in their own countries, using their networks and professional associations, and, by bringing these to the transnational meetings, they were presented, analysed, adapted and developed for inclusion in a European model.

The results of this approach are innovative – not only is this the first time that such a process for the objectives of the **ProDeafToolKit Project** has been carried out, but also the transnational approach, the open sharing of knowledge, will produce not only a European model but also a model which can be adapted for each country, meeting the needs of service providers, employers and the public in differing situations.

As part of the Project, the draft Tool Kits were tested by the members of the consortium in their own countries before final evaluation and shaping of the Tool Kits.

The process and results of each stage of the work were evaluated by the Project's External Evaluator who, being an experienced and qualified professional in the field of deaf education and training and of deaf awareness training, brought an objective qualitative perspective to the work.

Through ongoing dissemination by the consortium members of the work of the Project, awareness raising at local and national levels took place on an ongoing basis, preparing the ground for the launch of the Tool Kit and for its accessibility for everyone. This work will continue after the end of the Project as part of the Exploitation and Sustainability Plans of each Partner.

At the end of the project, the Tool Kit will be openly and freely available to all users, principally on the Project Website – www.prodeaftoolkit.eu - with no copyright or intellectual property restrictions. The aim of the Tool Kit is to support the development of an open, active citizenship for all deaf and hearing impaired people – this the Project believes can only be supported by enabling free and open access to the Tool Kit.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The Project Outcomes and Results have been fully achieved and are fully accessible on the website – www.prodeaftoolkit.eu .

The External Evaluator in the final report has commended the professional partnership and committed cooperative working of the members of the Project Partnership, an element which has enabled the Project to exceed its initial objectives and to develop outcomes of benefit for people who are deaf or with severe hearing impairments throughout Europe (and, for example, as experienced in Quebec) beyond.

After testing, the products have been evaluated and refined as appropriate, reviewed by the Project Management Group and then made available on the Project's website as well as in other media as appropriate. This will continue to be supported by ongoing dissemination, exploitation and feedback through service providers as well as through deaf-users' associations.

4. Partnerships

Deafness and severe hearing impairment is, as indicated, a minority disability and practice centres, educational and training organisations can often be working in isolation, an isolation which is only exceeded by the deaf or severely hearing impaired person him/herself. Therefore, professionals working transnationally in a European Partnership bring major added value to any development such as the Tool Kit whilst at the same time ensuring that the benefits are applicable to the deaf person him/herself.

This approach is reflected in the work of the **HIPEN** Network and is evidenced by the **ProDeafToolKit Project**. It is also reflected in the fact that deaf people themselves, as professional educators and trainers, are members of the work groups, thus ensuring that the final beneficiaries are equal partners in all stages of the Project.

Further added value comes from the geographical and development stage of the members of the consortium – ranging from the well-established and respected services of Norway to the developing services of Romania, In **HIPEN** itself, there are a number of members from the new EU countries in the east of Europe, equal partners with the more developed countries in the development of professional skills and active citizenship.

5. Plans for the Future

The Project Period has now ended, but not the development and exploitation of the **ProDeafToolKit**.

The Exploitation Plans of the Partners include feedback from Partners' States via Evaluation Surveys. The results will drive the next stage of development, eg:

- Further additions to the Toolkit
- Embedding the Toolkit in the training provision of all service organisations eg local authorities, education services, social services, and business enterprises.

The Tool Kit is now freely and openly accessible for all potential users.

6. Contribution to EU Policies

The aim of the Project is to contribute to EU and National anti-discrimination legislation and to create a EU model improving hearing impaired people's education, social and employment lives.

ProDeafToolKit does this by developing methodologies and material for continuing professional education in order to harmonise better quality in public services which will

- Meet the needs of accessibility for deaf and hearing impaired people across Europe.
- Develop awareness, professional knowledge and skills across public and business sectors and provide equal opportunities for deaf and hearing impaired people.

This project addresses the policies and respond to EU legislation of equality and anti-discrimination, and it will develop the implementation of policies in members' states.

7. Extra Heading/Section

Not required.