Newsletter

ELPIDA platform in action

The impact of training parents for intellectual disability awareness

With the ELPIDA e-learning platform becoming available for users around Europe, the project consortium created opportunities for dissemination and validation. The most important of these occasions was a flagship event organised in the European Parliament, hosted by MEP Martina Werner (S&D, DE). She mentioned that "the inclusion of persons with physical disabilities can be achieved by adapting our infrastructure, but when it comes to the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities, it's important to have good supportive parenting from an early age onwards. Becoming the parent to a child with intellectual disabilities is not something you can prepare. The joy and love is often counter-balanced by moments of insecurity, often even helplessness and frustration. … This is why I was very impressed by the ELPIDA project. … This ensures that children with intellectual disabilities can grow up in a supportive family environment."

The most important professional feedback we got was from the European Disability Forum stating „EDF is always looking for initiatives that can help improve the living conditions of people with disabilities and their families, while respecting their rights, as advocated by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The project we are talking about seems to me to fit perfectly into this prospect and I warmly congratulate the promoters.

I am pleased to be with you today for at least two reasons : first because this project is about families and parents, which is not common – parents have a hard time making themselves heard by organisations today, the tendency being for self-representation and independent living, then because this project is about people with intellectual and cognitive disability, which is not frequent either -- people with intellectual disabilities have difficulty to be heard because they often cannot speak of and for themselves." (Albert Prevos, Council Member of EDF, parent of a child with intellectual disability)

You can start using the platform and read more about the project here: http://www.elpida-project.eu/index.php/en/

About ELPIDA

ELPIDA is a two-year project ending by the Autumn of 2019 aiming to improve the quality of life of persons with intellectual disability (PWID) by empowering family members and especially parents of PWID and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills on how better to support the needs of children and young adults with intellectual disability.

The most important output of the project is an e-learning platform offering 6 interactive educational modules of training, awareness raising and/or attitude change in
- human rights,
- communication,
- stress management,
- transition to adulthood,
- sexual health and
- ageing

in English, Greek, German, Dutch, Norwegian and Portuguese (with a French version under construction)

Six organizations from five European countries have come together in this project that started at the end of 2017 for a fuller implementation of rights of people with disabilities by supporting the people primarily responsible for protecting these rights, the parents and guardians.

Feedback from users and partners from different countries

- **Greece**

The ELPIDA e-learning platform was evaluated by some of the users in focus group discussions. Parents stated that the choice of topics/modules was satisfactory whilst some modules were more interesting/useful for them. Professionals commented that the six modules included in the platform are among the ten topics of their choice. About half of the participants would prefer to take part in an educational programme in person in to have the opportunity to exchange views and communicate with other participants, whereas the other half prefer distance learning as it is easier to fit it into their busy schedule, do it at their own pace, not having to travel etc. The modules the participants found more useful were Communication, Human Rights and Sexual Health. The majority (75%) thought that the text and the translation were good. Most of the participants stated that they most likely going to go back to the module(s) they completed to look over some of the material they found useful.

- **Denmark**

The evaluation by users concluded that the ELPIDA e-learning platform is easy to access and it is easy to navigate through the programme. It consists of relevant information which is useful to the consultant team. The information in the platform can be used in everyday work and as a frame of reference. Although it is designed to meet the needs of parents it also can be used in staff training. From the perspective of consultants and based on their experience in working with parents to children with intellectual disabilities, the ELPIDA programme will be useful for parents as well. The modules differ in form and length and from a consultant's point of view the longest of the modules could be difficult to parents to access. In that respect the division of the modules in short sections is appropriate.

- **Norway**

Feedback on the course came primarily via an organisation working with parents of children with intellectual disabilities. They emphasised that the ELPIDA e-learning course is a very useful tool for carers and professionals alike. The way the course is built up is engaging, and it encourages the participant to examine and reflect upon their own views and attitudes towards PWID, their rights and needs. Parts of the course are very practical and gives you examples on how to interact and communicate in a way that is beneficial for the family as a whole. In addition, the activities in the course encourages the family to interact and discuss important issues. However, parts of the course comes across as a bit to «academic» when it comes to the language used. This might prevent some participants from completing the course (if not given professional support). But overall the course is user friendly, contains engaging and informative content and it is easy to navigate within the course structure."

- **Portugal**

The final valuation of the work done in the project happened at a meeting of 30 organisations active in the field of child rights, some of them working exclusively for disabled children. In general, all participants acknowledged the good quality of the modules in the e-learning platform and the important information contained in. The course is very well structured and is an innovation in the field. Some detailed ideas for further improvement came up in the discussions. The modules were found to be a huge help especially the more unique ones, such as Transition to Adulthood, Sexual Health and Ageing because they are realities difficult to approach by some parents. Participants found the course a great help because it provides parents with basic knowledge that will give them more confidence to address these issues and to remove their doubts when working together with professionals.

- **Germany**

Feedback from staff of the partner and parents show that individual modules are well designed and clearly arranged, the platform is very nicely designed and illustrated, the-platform is very interesting and informative. The information on the platform can be well used in the day-to-day work of staff who work with people with disabilities as well as parents while individual modules that they currently use depend on the age of their child with disability Older parents often have no computer or cannot operate it well, so they are technically unable to use the platform without assistance. Some commented that the use of the ELPIDA platform is very time-consuming. Watching movies, doing exercises and reading long texts is far beyond the time frame they can invest in a course like this. Under the link https://www.internationaler-bund.de/angebot/10497/ on the website of IB, interested parties will find a first overview of the ELPIDA project.