

The Relevance of Digital Inclusion and Support of Young People with Disability

As flagged up in the 2020 report by the European Parliament¹, the employment rate for people with disabilities is significantly lower than that of non-disabled individuals, with only 50.6% of people with disabilities employed compared to 74.8% of non-disabled individuals. These statistics highlight the importance of projects such as the JOBS4ALL project, which aims to address the obstacles faced by YPwDs in finding employment by equipping them with the necessary digital skills and confidence. Furthermore, given the COVID-19 pandemic aftermath, the need for modernisation and digital transformation is proving more than ever, to be essential to ensuring a swift recovery and adaptability while simultaneously promoting equal opportunities for all young people, especially the ones with disabilities.

To that end, JOBS4ALL project's rationale supports the digital transformation and modernisation of the youth sector, thereby increasing its effectiveness and efficiency. The project's main objectives revolve around the purposeful use of digital technologies in youth, the development of digital pedagogy, as well as the empowerment of digital confidence needed by YWs/professionals & expertise in using digital tools. Furthermore, JOBS4ALL pioneers the integration of emerging technologies such as serious games with the use of Virtual Reality (VR) equipment based on real-job scenarios in order to facilitate the YPwDs' introduction into the labour market.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and gaps in digital-oriented programs for YPwDs, there are conducted focus groups not only with professionals who work with YPwDs but also with other stakeholders such as businesses and policy-makers.

In addition, the JOBS4ALL project endeavours to enhance the skills and expertise of Youth Workers (YW), trainers, and educators who work with YPwDs. This will involve developing training techniques that enhance the current state of the art in training programs that are accessible to this vulnerable group of the population. By doing so, the JOBS4ALL project will create an enabling environment for improved methodologies and foster a more comprehensive community that promotes equal access and participation in the labor market, thereby encouraging personal growth and confidence.

The JOBS4ALL project is funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ program and is implemented by a consortium of partners from five European countries, comprised of universities, non-profit organizations, and research centres that have extensive experience in the field of youth work, namely: NCSR Demokritos (Greece), Emphasys Centre (Cyprus), Appda Coimbra (Portugal), LCYouth (Cyprus),

¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)651932_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI(2020)651932_EN.pdf)

MetropolisNet (Germany), 2ο Επαλ Αγίας Παρασκευής (Greece) and Zespół Szkół Specjalnych im. Janiny Porazińskiej w Ignacowie (Poland).

In conclusion, JOBS4ALL proves to be a timely project whose results will be conducive to improving existing methodologies and establishing a broader community that fosters equal opportunities in the labour market. Considering the challenges discussed above, it is crucial to implement such proactive initiatives to enhance workplace inclusivity and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.² Additionally, promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion in the workplace can have a positive impact on morale and productivity for all employees, while also supporting individuals with disabilities in achieving their full professional potential.³

CONSORTIUM:

Coordinator: National Center for Scientific Research “Demokritos” (GR)

Partners: Portuguese Association for Developmental Disorders and Autism of Coimbra (APPDA) (PT), Learning Center for Youth (CY), European Metropolis Employment Network EWIV (DE), Emphasys Centre (CY), 2nd VET School Agia Paraskevi (GR) and Janina Porazinska Special Education School Complex in Ignaców (PL)

²[https://www.akademischesgesellschaft.com/fileadmin/webcontent/Publikationen/Communication Insights/AGUK CommunicationInsights 11 Diversity Inclusion July2021.pdf](https://www.akademischesgesellschaft.com/fileadmin/webcontent/Publikationen/Communication%20Insights/AGUK%20CommunicationInsights%2011%20Diversity%20Inclusion%20July2021.pdf)

³https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_150658.pdf