



**Institut Public
la Persagotière**

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Les Carnets de la Persagotière

HIPEN Network

***A mobility experience :
education and support
for deaf children
with associated disabilities***

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HIPEN is the European Network for Professionnels working with People with Hearing Impairments

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Le texte de ce carnet a fait l'objet d'une présentation, au nom du réseau HIPEN, à une Conférence Professionnelle qui a eu lieu à KREMNICA (Slovaquie) les 9 et 10 octobre 2013 : « Aktuálne trendy vo výchove a vzdelávaní viacnásobne postihnutých vo V4 » (Current Trends in Education and Training of Individuals with Multiple Disabilities in V4)

These children, who are deaf and have associated disabilities, are present in every institution and school that aims to support and educate deaf teenagers and children. They constitute a special group or category, and they need, most of the time, very specific supports. With the development of inclusive policies concerning education and mainstream school, these children became, in some institutions, an important group of the supported population. Various discussions and exchanges within the HIPEN network have led to questions and issues concerning the different ways of taking care of these children and teenagers.

The first step of this project consisted in a meeting where professionals from different institutions and schools of the network shared their experience, in Bivolarie, Romania, November 2011. During these discussions among working groups, each institution had presented its experience in the field of education and teaching to deaf children with associated disabilities.

These exchanges helped us to put in light :

- A common concern of the institutions about this issue :
 - More or less important presence, in all institutions or schools, of a deaf population with associated disabilities.
 - Accounting for this issue in institute or school projects
 - Specialized teams working with this group of children
- Significant differences in the implementation and way of taking care :
 - In clinical categorization: the concept of associated disability differs from country to country, and even in institutions of a same country (associated disabilities, additional disabilities, multiple disabilities, pluri-disabilities, learning difficulties or learning disabilities or learning troubles ...)
 - In the organization and the way of support and accompaniment: specific or separate schooling, partial inclusive education, partnerships with other specialized institutions...
 - In the implementation : we found various objectives and aims of education, schooling and training, educational methods, educational and therapeutical approaches, categories of professionals involved, tools and medias used...,

This first observation of common issues and differences of practices has led us to develop a project of European exchanges between professionals involved in the education and schooling of deaf children with associated disabilities :

In each institution or school, professionals involved feel relatively isolated concerning the analysis and thought about their practices

- They need to develop their professional skills to continuously improve their practices

- Knowledge of other practices, and participative observation, is source of knowledge and practice transfer for each professional
- Professionals participating in an Exchange can spread their new knowledge in their own teams and institutions.
- These knowledge transfers are a great help in beginning the harmonization of practices at the level of the European Community.

After some hesitation, we have chosen the form of a European project «LEONARDO DA VINCI MOBILITY ». This project allows one or more countries to send professionals in one or more other European countries. It is partially financed, subject to acceptance, by the national agencies of the European education and training programs. Reports and assessments must be done by the participants and organizational efforts made to make the most of these exchanges.

The initial project was to involve 5 European countries with reciprocal visits. For technical and administrative reasons, the project finally concerned only one country (France) that has sent professionals, and two countries that have received professionals (Hungary : Budapest;) Romania: Cluj-Napoca). The first step of the project took place in February in Budapest, the second step will take place in October in Cluj-Napoca.

3 French institutions have been involved in the project: the Centre Charlotte Blouin in ANGERS, that assured the leadership, the public Institute la Persagotière in NANTES and the National Institute of Young Deaf in METZ. Fourteen professionals have gone or will go to Budapest and Cluj-Napoca (7 professionals in each institution) for visits, exchanges, and training activities. The professionals concerned are from different professional groups :

- Specialized teachers
- Social workers
- Speech therapists
- Psychologists
- It is noted that one of the professionals involved in the mobility was herself deaf, and so she was accompanied by a sign language interpreter during her mobility.

Exchanges and training fields provided for in the project for all the professionals were :

- The knowledge of issues, diagnosis and support for the population of deaf children with associated disabilities: terminologies, categorizations, nature and diagnosis modalities, medical and theoretical references ...
- The organization of services : links and partnerships with the educational system, mainstream school and other support institutions, nature of services within the institution, links between services, professionals involved, organizational arrangements for the teams...

- The professional practices: modes and modalities of communication, communication, teaching methods and educational tools, multidisciplinary practices, therapeutic approaches...
- The modes of the support in the individual record of education and training
- The conditions of preparation of vocational training and working and social life.

On the basis of the professional background and specific skills of each of the candidates and their jobs in the institutions and services, the contents of training referred were :

- For specialized teachers: academic skills assessments, learning methods, communication arrangements, multidisciplinary practices...
- For speech therapists: assessments of the communication and language skills, knowledge on diagnosis methods, methods and learning tools, multidisciplinary practices...
- For social workers : assessments of the social and relational skills, communication modalities, supports in orientation, multidisciplinary practices ...
- For psychologists : assessments, diagnosis and therapeutic monitoring, work with families

As result, what can we say about this project ? The project having started only a few months ago, and being in its first stages, definitive conclusions cannot yet be drawn. We can nevertheless identify some general ideas :

- The immersion in the host institution, with visits and exchanges, is a true discovery of another way to develop the supports and accompaniments. The differences in implementation were the key point the professionals discussed upon their return.
- The observation of these differences has helped professionals :
 - To consolidate some of their own professional practices
 - To deviate from other non-compatible practices with their approaches
 - To reflect upon other practices
 - To “ import ” practices in their own institution, and to try them out in a new context
- The professionals of the host institution also expressed great curiosity to meet foreign professionals in their establishments, with a wish to seek new information and see how things are done elsewhere.
- The mobile French professionals are committed to preparing presentations of their educational approaches for deaf children with associated disabilities, all participants got a lot out of their mutual presentations and exchanges that took place during this mobility.

HIPEN Network – *A mobility experience : education and support for deaf children with associated disabilities.*

It is a pity that the mobility took place only one way. We hope that many institutions will be able to engage in mobilities to several countries and we are looking forward to welcoming their professionals.