

PROJECT TITLE: ADULT EDUCATION IN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PERSONS

Project number: 2018-1-CZ01-KA204-048059

Project duration: 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2020

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to help people who work in the education of hearing-impaired persons and to help hearing-impaired persons themselves achieve better understanding of the latest compensatory/assistive aids and assistive technologies for persons with hearing impairments.

JUSTIFICATION OF PROJECT NEED

The dynamic progress of communication technologies is intensively reflected in assistive technologies for persons with hearing impairments. Around the world, new and more sophisticated equipment is being developed to eliminate the communication barrier between people with hearing impairments and hearing society. However, when it comes to hearing aids, there is such a varied offer that it is very difficult for the non-hearing to establish orientation and choose a hearing aid that best suits their physiological needs and expectations for the level and type of hearing impairment. Modern digital hearing aids offer the possibility of individual settings across a range of parameters that eliminate interference from surroundings, respecting the frequency limit of the auditory system of each individual and other specifics. To use these options, however, it is necessary to be able to “read” the technical parameters and be able to adjust the hearing aid properly.

The same is the case with other aids such as headphones with the transmission of information via infrared or by radio transmission.

Induction/hearing loops, the installation and use of which are the most prominent example of the technology installed in buildings and other places where there is a greater concentration of people, allow hearing-impaired persons to receive an audio signal in their hearing aid through the electromagnetic field of a distributed induction/hearing loop directly and without

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any interference from the surroundings. In this area, there is an extensive range of equipment of different performance and quality, where the orientation is difficult for designers, investors and other interested professionals and stakeholders.

Dynamically developing areas with the tremendous potential for use by persons with hearing impairments include “smart phones”. They already offer persons with hearing impairments a number of specific, very useful applications, and whose number is increasing day by day.

All new technologies and aids are completely useful, but only when they are optimally selected and optimally adjusted individually. For this, it is necessary to have adequate information. Ear doctors, the staff of counselling centres of organisations working with hearing-impaired persons, social service providers, and others do not have this information as needed. Altogether, they are focused only on a particular segment of the offer in response to what the manufacturer of the aid is offering. In most cases, an overview of the offers of other manufacturers is missing. Surveys conducted both among persons with hearing impairments and the aforementioned entities providing sales and consulting services in the segment show that the creation of a clear and systematically annotated catalogue of assistive devices and assistive technologies, including a description of their optimal use, adjustments and maintenance, would be a great benefit.

The applicant and its partners have been involved in this project for many years, have direct contacts with leading companies engaged in the development, manufacture, distribution and follow-up service in Europe, the US, as well as in China and Korea. They are therefore able to combine their efforts in creating a catalogue of this sort. Their many years of experience in the education of hearing-impaired persons and the workers providing services to these persons qualify them to supplement the aforementioned catalogue with a methodology for educating target groups.

| PROJECT OUTPUTS

In addition to developing a methodology and interactive, annotated catalogue that provides not just basic technical parameters, information and contacts, but also a wealth of video material – tutorials, examples of correct and incorrect applications, examples of good practice, assessments and user feedback on individual devices and technologies. The aim of the project is to use this methodology to train 90 professionals working in the field of assistive technologies and assistive devices, and 150 persons with hearing impairment in the home country of the applicant and in the countries of its partners.

TARGET GROUPS

The aim of this project is to create and run a system of training activities (courses and seminar cycles) for specific target groups, namely:

1. Specialists working in a field of adaptive and assistive technologies such as: otorhinolaryngologists, specialists working at people with hearing impairment's advisory centres, salesmen and other subjects conducting service in field of adaptive and assistive technologies.
2. Social services providers for HIP.
3. Teachers, educational consultants and technicians working at kindergartens, preliminary, elementary and high school institutions for HIP.
4. Specialists working at centres dedicated to university students with special needs
5. planners, architects, investors, building authority staff members, etc. who deals with planning, construction, adjustments and regular check-ups of applications of hearing loops and other assistive technologies at public institutions, theatres, cinemas, public transportation etc.
6. 6. people with hearing impairment who are supposed to get a major benefit from project activities - trough target groups stated above - elimination of communication barrier between people with hearing impairment and intact society.

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Project partners:
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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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