

Research summary

in easy-to-read



Erasmus+

ACCESS to Leisure

Adult education Courses on Capacity-building for the Engagement and Support of Self-advocates in the field of Leisure

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<https://kezenfogva.hu>

<https://www.atempo.at/>

www.facebook.com/CenterVAL

www.hubbie.brussels/nl

<https://tukena.fi/>



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What is this research about?

This research is about leisure time.

You can read about how people with learning disabilities spend their leisure time.

What do they do when they finish work?

What do they do at home after work?

What do they do on weekends?

What do they do in their free time?

Why is it good for you to read this?

Because we write about what leisure is.

You can get to know what your peers' free time is like.

You can also read about how people in other countries spend their leisure time.

What problems can occur during the leisure time?

And if this is not interesting enough for you,
there will be many beautiful and interesting photos
about leisure time.

The photos are taken by your peers in their leisure time.

Let's have a look now!

Who prepared this research?

The research was a team work.

In this research five countries worked together.

These countries are the following:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Finland
- Hungary
- Slovenia

In all the countries among the organisations' staff were persons with disabilities.



1. photo Participants of the project pose for a group photo. They are from different countries. They met in Graz, Austria for a training in 2023.



2. photo Participants had a training in Graz, Austria. In this picture they are sitting in groups and listening to the trainer.

We worked together on the research,
following the principle of „**Nothing about us without us**”.

Do you know this?

If you want to read more about it,
you can find more information here:



Or click on this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1pRvqst_8U

Are you curious about the organisations

that participated in this research?

We will introduce these for you in the following section.

Austria

The organisation in Austria is called atempo.

Like this, all lower case.

It has been working for more than 20 years.



The office of atempo can be found in Graz.

There are 75 people working in this organisation.

They assist people with disabilities to find work.

They also support them to live more independent lives.

What does it mean?

They help in the following areas:

- they provide learning opportunities for people with disabilities
- they have various support tools as well,
such as Capito, an easy-to-understand text translator.

You can use this program on your phone.

It's a bit similar to Google Translate.

Belgium

KRACHTIG ANDERS IN BRUSSEL
HUBBIE

The organisation in Belgium is called Hubbie.

The Hubbie office can be found in Brussels.

There are 130 people working for the organisation.

They support people with disabilities in their daily lives.

They have three residential homes.

They also provide home support.

They provide help in the following:

- to take a bath,
- to get dressed,
- to cook,
- to go shopping,
- to go out for fun.

They offer a wide range of activities:

- entertainment opportunities,
- helping you relax,
- sports,
- cultural activities,
- they organise excursions and hikes.

They believe in a world:

- where everyone feels at home
- where everyone is accepted for who they are
- where everyone has the opportunity to build relationships
- where everyone has the opportunity to be an active member of society
- where everyone can decide for themselves how they choose to do things
- where everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills.



3. photo This is the inclusive team of Hubbie on their meeting.



Finland



The organisation in Finland is called Tukena-Säätiö.

It means Support Foundation.

Tukena offers housing and care services for people with disabilities.

They have over 40 housing units all over Finland.

They are also part of different projects
to secure good life for people with disabilities.

The Finnish organisation has also been around
for a very long time, for 31 years.

There are 72 people working for this organisation.

They work to help people with intellectual disabilities
and their families to live a better life.

They also provide housing assistance.

They have group housing as well
where several people live together.

Their staff help people with intellectual disabilities
in their daily lives.



Hungary

The Hungarian organisation is called the Hand in Hand Foundation.
The foundation was established 30 years ago.
It has an office in Budapest.

It supports people with disabilities and
and their families:

- they help ensure that there are flats,
where people with disabilities can have their own room.
- they also help people to have jobs,
to work in a place they are happy with.
- they also make it easier for them to have help at home.

If necessary, they can also be given help with showering,
getting dressed or shopping, for example.
They can help with anything they can't do on their own.

The Foundation also helps families
by providing counselling.
It helps families where one family member
has a disability.

They also have a service where they help
parents with children with disabilities
to raise their children.

If they have decided to adopt their child,
they help find adoptive parents.

So they help people with disabilities,
to live a happier, easier life.

Slovenia The logo for 'Center VAL' features the word 'Center' in a grey serif font above the word 'VAL' in a blue serif font. The 'V' and 'A' in 'VAL' are connected.

In Slovenia, we work together with Center Val.

It is a recently founded, young NGO.

The organisation has its office in Ljubljana.

Ljubljana is the capital of Slovenia.

They work to improve the health
of people with disabilities.

They work with 50 volunteers
and other organisations.

The partners worked together on the research,

They did the same thing in all 5 countries.

The results of the research are presented
in the following sections.

Exciting part is coming, keep reading.

Why leisure time is so important?

Everyone has the right to leisure time.
We have the right to spend our time after work,
as we want.

You know the saying:

**if we spend our leisure time well,
we become healthier.**

And there's research to prove it.

Unfortunately, people who have learning disabilities
often have fewer leisure opportunities.

They have fewer leisure activities to choose from.

If they prefer to play tennis, for example,
they might not find a partner or a place to play.

Or if they want to learn to play the guitar,
it's harder to find a guitar teacher.

Often they can't find a programme,
that they can go to.

There are several reasons for this.

For example, because it is often expensive,
they can't afford to pay for the admission or the tickets.

Or they don't dare to go alone.

They don't know anyone who will go with them.

So often they're home alone
or spend their leisure time with their families.

But leisure is very important.

**Leisure activities help to make friends,
and to be in a good mood: to be happy.**

That is why it is very important,
to raise attention to the importance of leisure time.
Maybe they will have more options to choose from.

and now think of your leisure time...

What do you do in your leisure time?

How do you spend your days after work?

What do you like to do on the weekends?

Do you have friends you do this with?

These are some of the questions
we have been looking at with your peers, too.

What did we do during the research?

1 - Collecting leisure opportunities

We have collected opportunities
where people with learning disabilities
can spend their leisure time without any obstacles.
For example tennis, hiking, painting.

2 - We had a talk as well!

We spoke with experts in the participating countries (e.g. special education teachers, social workers):

- How professionals can help people with learning disabilities to spend their leisure time?
- We also talked to people with learning disabilities about how they spend their leisure time?

3- We also took photos!

During the photoweeek in all 5 countries, 5 people with learning disabilities took photos, 15 people collected photos of their leisure time. The duration of the photo shoot was one week.

In the meantime we chatted for example on Messenger, sharing the photos with others.

When the week was over, we came together to show what we had photographed during the week.

We all chose 5 pictures.

And for those 5 pictures, they had to share 5 stories about what kind of leisure time can be seen in the picture.

Results of the research

During the research,
4 interesting themes were selected,
which were confirmed by the literature as well. (Datillo, 2008)

These are the following:

1. Self-awareness and leisure awareness

What does it mean?

**Leisure is often about
demonstrating our talents:**

some people are good at drawing,
but they can't draw at work,
so when they go home after work, they make comics.
It's their hobby.

Others, for example, like to play music,
so they choose to play music in their leisure time.

2. Self-determination and decision-making

What does it mean?

For this topic, it was considered important,
that people with learning disabilities
have more leisure time to choose from.
And they should be helped to choose,
to help them make a choice.

Self-determination therefore means,
with or without help,
we can decide what to do with our leisure time.

3. Social interaction

This topic is about,
who you like to meet in your leisure time,
who you organise activities with.

Who you can or would like to invite
to a cinema, for example.
social interaction therefore means,
who you share your leisure time with.

4. Resource awareness

Self-awareness and conscious leisure:
"being conscious in leisure activities"
and "valuing leisure".

This means **that I know what my options are.**
where I can go in my leisure time.
I know the possibilities where I live.
I know who I can call if I want to go somewhere,
and I also have the money.

On the question of what is leisure time,
we received a variety of answers.

Often leisure was associated with friends.

For example:

“I can meet my friends in my free time,
and meet new people”,

See how your peers feel about leisure time:

”

“Leisure is important to get to know people,
to relax,
to keep busy
and not be bored, not be on Facebook all day,
to have fun.” (H2)”

“Leisure is meeting other people,
discovering new places,
when you're free,
you don't have to do anything,
it's your choice,
finding a little peace, relaxation,
going on trips, meeting people regularly.” (H3)

“I need some free time,
so I don't have to stay between four walls all the time,
and get outdoors.
It's important not to be bored.” (H3)

”I need to find a hobby for myself,
to do in my spare time,
like photography,”
but right now I don't have the right tools,
I can't do it on my phone,
I like electronic devices like that,
but my phone is not good for photography. ” (HH1)

Let's look at these four areas in a little more detail.

What do your peers think about them?

Self-determination and decision-making:

During leisure time it is very important,

to have the possibility to make choices

everyone can say how they want to spend their leisure time

Where to go, with whom and when.

But you need to know

what leisure activities are available.

You would have to know people,

people to go with.

And that would be good too,

if you had the money,

if you want to buy a ticket, for example.

But many people can't make up their minds,

because they are either not aware of their options

where they live,

or they don't know who to go out with, for example,

or they don't have the money to go,

or their parents have not allowed it.

”
As seen by support professionals...

”The respondent organizes his leisure time independently. He makes appointments with his helper, orders a taxi, and informs the staff of the housing unit about his plans and ideas. In most cases, he finds out how to spend his free time. Sometimes he uses the Internet to find out about interesting events in the area, such as theatre performances, museum exhibitions, etc., and cultural events he occasionally attends.”

„The respondent organises her own leisure time. Most activities are done from home and when she wants. These activities do not depend on time or on others. When she wants to buy new clothes for cosplay, she makes sure that she has enough money left for the basic living expenses. If there is enough money left for a new outfit, she buys it, if not, she buys it another time. If there is an event near her hometown, she has breakfast, checks the bus schedule and goes to the event. She usually saves the money for the ticket in advance.”

„The respondent organises his own leisure time. He also uses travel agencies, for example, as he says he likes organised trips. He also goes to a travel exhibition every year to get new ideas for his travels. If he needs help, he asks friends, relatives or someone who works with him.”

Interpersonal relations:

"meeting peers during leisure time"

Unfortunately, many people spend their leisure time alone, or have few friends.

And if they find a programme, they don't know who to go out with.

But friends and acquaintances can help a lot with a better use of their free time.

As seen by people with disabilities...

"I have no friends, so I have nothing to do with anyone. I would like to meet nice people my age, make more friends and meet them this weekend." (H1)

" My friends are busy. I would be free, but unfortunately my friends don't have time to meet me. My friends are busy. If I managed, we could meet in person, when I call my friends from high school - but they have kids and I don't have a family. I would love a partner too." (HH1)

„I used to go for walks with my friends - but it's hard to find company. I don't like to go anywhere alone, but if someone calls, I'm in. I have dreams, e.g. if I had a girlfriend, I'd go with her to watch the sunrise. I watch movies, unfortunately alone, mostly on the computer or phone, but I also go to the cinema. I usually watch series on Netflix. The roommates are busy doing their own thing. I also have a communication barrier. I don't meet new people easily, I'm insecure and shy, which has always been a big problem in my life. It would be nice if I could get some help with that too." (HH3)

Animals can also help a lot in making friends.
For example, some people, while walking their dogs,
can talk to new people more easily.

”

”The only leisure activity he really does on a daily basis is walking his dog. ”One of my neighbours has a dog and I spend every day [afternoon] with him and that's how I pass the time, he's out in the garden playing, playing with the other dogs and I'm looking after him and sunbathing in the garden.” (HH1)

”My cat's name is Kitty. The picture shows me in my parents' room. I pet her as often as I can. She is so soft! Kitty has lived with us since last year. I had a cat before Kitty, but unfortunately she died.” (Photovoice-A1)



4. photo: Stroking the cat (from the photovoice activity)

"I did it for fun. I was waiting for someone to mention that they have kittens so I could say I have two, but I don't have to feed them. They bring good luck according to Chinese tradition. They work continuously, non-stop, waving and making me millions. I am very attracted to the Japanese culture, but I feel the same way about the Chinese. I must have lived there in my past life, I can really relate to it, when I watch a video, it's like I'm there.

We got them at the Asia Center earlier when I was there with my mom. Now they are in the window next to the flowers. I photographed them from the hallway outside. I used to talk to them jokingly. For example, I just got a plastic parrot, named it Pacito after the Bud Spencer movies, and my mom laughed at me for naming it 'budspencerlike' ." (Photovoice-HH3)



5. photo Beckoning cats in a window (from the photovoice activity)

Some people can do it,
to have a personal assistant.

A personal assistant is a person,
who helps you in your everyday life,
including organising your leisure time.

Or you can even spend your free time with him or her.

”

”I made an appointment with my leisure assistant via WhatsApp. Then we go to the skate park in his or my car. Sometimes I take something to drink with me. The assistant is very good and shows me some things while skating. Then we come back to my place and play a little Super Smash Brothers game on the console.” (A1)

”I can go indoor rock climbing with a friend or my "recreational assistant". I like to climb rocks in the indoor climbing gym. I have to take these with me: Drink, sports clothes, money. I can rent climbing shoes, take the train or public transport or my car.” (A2)



6. photo Picnic in the park (from the photovoice activity)

” We talked and laughed in M. Park. At the picnic we drank orange juice and ate a cake, which A. brought as a surprise. We even had watermelon before. We talked about A.'s son, what school was like, and how A.'s mother and father are. A.'s mom is sick, we talked about that too. We celebrated G.'s birthday. We had a good time. A. helps M. with money management. She helps with paperwork, medical stuff. A. helped her choose glasses. A. gives me money to buy a present for G.'s birthday. We went home from the park because A. made us chestnut puree to put in the fridge.” (Photovoice-HH2)

Awareness of resources:

"opportunities for leisure activities"

What options were discussed?

- be informed,
what opportunities are available in their area of residence
- get help from professionals or local volunteers.

This is often an obstacle,

and so they do not explore their leisure options.

"Professionals do not play a significant role in the respondent's leisure activities, but her sister does. She spends every second week at her sister's and the rest at her own home. She and her sister share common interests such as anime, manga, video games, going to events related to these, so she provides the necessary encouragement and support. For example, the interviewee tells us that she became interested in making her own YouTube videos at the urging of her sister. She now makes them regularly and really enjoys it." (K2)

Obstacles

What obstacles may arise?

Transport barriers

" If it's too far, I won't go." (H1)

"I have been going to ballet classes for a long time,
my ballet instructor teaches me.

If I want to be good, I have to train regularly
and I also practice at home.

Since the ballet school has moved to another location,
I have problems getting there,
as I can fall on the way.

I really missed ballet during the quarantine.

I also like to go to performances,
but the problem is that I need someone to come with me
or take me there, who is usually my mum." (CV1)

Not knowing the options

„It's hard to find new things on your own.

I don't know the area where I live
and what opportunities I have here.” (H1)

Lack of financial support

„The interviewee says that the main obstacle she still faces is financial; she says she does not always have enough money to do what she wants.

The interviewee says that her computer is quite old and sometimes "gives up". This is also related to financial difficulties, as she cannot afford to buy a new one at the moment. The same applies to her phone, although to a lesser extent.” (K3)

„He has no money to go to concerts or more expensive events, for example. So he prefers to watch them at home.” (HH3)

Lack of skills, abilities

”I don't use my computer to explore and find opportunities, different things, because it's difficult for me and I don't know the right sites.

It's the same with my smartphone. I only use it for games, pictures and social networking. It would help if someone could join me in searching for new activities on the Internet.” (H1)

"When he was younger,
when he didn't speak English so well,
it was sometimes difficult to play video games,
he didn't understand everything.

Now, after years of playing,
he understands most of the language,
but sometimes he has to look up a word
or two in the dictionary.

Sometimes, when he gets stuck in a game and
doesn't know what to do,
he goes on YouTube to look for answers and help." (K2)

Lack of assistance

"His free time is very much linked to
how much time the personal assistant provided
by the municipality can spend with him.

The involvement of the helper is very important
for self-determination and participation." (K1)

"To try leisure activities that you haven't tried before,
you need a trusted partner –
someone who will help you avoid getting into silly situations. →

'I've never partied, that could be a factor,
it's that kind of introversion that makes it difficult.

I don't dare to do it alone,
I need a reliable partner." (HiH01)

Safety

"If it's too late, I won't go
because I won't get home safely". (H2)

"Feel safe at home –
prefer to do things at home". (HH1)

In this summary you could read about
our research about leisure time.

We hope you found it interesting.

**Leisure time is very important
for the people with learning disabilities interviewed.**

**Both in terms of self-esteem,
joy of life, happiness
but they also experience many obstacles
during leisure.**

**In our project we have therefore set out
to make it easier for you
to organise your leisure time.**

If you are interested in more,
contact us at the details below:

<https://kezenfogva.hu/node/2069>

