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“Eliminating Social Exclusion” (EliSE)
Nr. 2019-1-LV01-KA204-060427

Preliminary Training Course report

Rezekne Academy of Technologies

Rezekne, 2021



Introduction

RTA was responsible for the implementation of preliminary courses, the content of which was developed within the ELiSE project. The aim of the course content is to expand the competencies of social educators by supporting fair travel for the families of children with behavioral disorders.

Within the framework of the course, 4 face-to-face classes and 12 distance learning hours were conducted for parents of children with special needs. Due to the situation of Covid-19 in the country, face-to-face classes were also conducted online.

16 face-to-face hours and 20 hours of distance learning activities with social, special and primary education teachers were also conducted. Due to the situation of Covid-19 in the country, face-to-face classes were also conducted online.

Parent training courses

Tuesday 18-05-21 (18:00-20:00) through ZOOM platform

The small parent focus group was chosen as methodology for getting feedback and inclusion criteria were:

- 1) parents have some experience in travelling with children with special needs;
- 2) knowledge of English on basic level;
- 3) willingness to participate in training and provide course evaluation.

Information about courses was sent to nongovernmental institutions “Eņģeļi ar mums” (*Angels with us*) <https://www.facebook.com/Biedr%C4%ABba-E%C5%86%C4%A3e%C4%BCi-ar-mums-109427143752724/>

and “Autisma atbalsta punkts Rēzeknē” (*Autism Support Centre in Rēzekne*) <https://www.autismsrezekne.lv/en/>.

Eight parents agreed to participate in focus group for pilot implementation.

The implementation of training courses was provided by Aivars Kaupuzs leading researcher and Head of the Laboratory of Social Pedagogy and Rehabilitation Technologies.

The pilot presentation was started by providing the information about the aims and partners of the ELiSE project.

<https://tdl.rta.lv/mod/page/view.php?id=114>

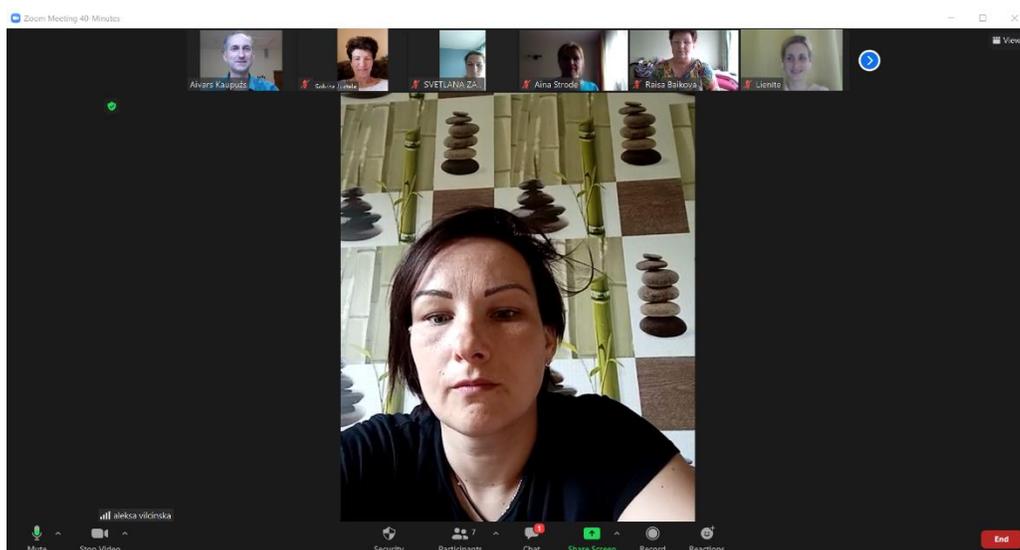
Some quotes after short presentation of the ELiSE project:

“Traveling with children with special needs is a big challenge.”

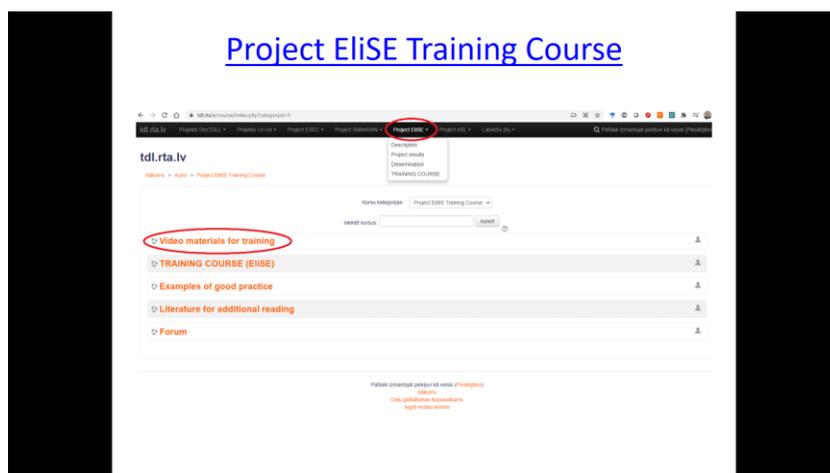
“Although it is not possible to visit other countries at the moment due to Covid, it is very good that there are studies that help parents”

“There is often a lack of public understanding of a child's destructive behavior”

The parents were very excited that martial arts are applied for self-concentration and self-confidence improvement. Two parents shared their kids experience in Rezekne Dziu Dzica club. Like in judo this kind of martial arts helped children to improve physical condition and self-confidence as well.



After the short presentation of partners and content of Training Course, the parents were encouraged to go through all materials and prepare some comments or recommendations by filling online questionnaire
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1877HnrBAvZNmlGzLdzei7qZTHFewQJ3drqiyZjrz1YI/edit#responses>.



As second part of first meeting was the presentation of RTA material “Basic principles of Sensory integration therapy”. The theoretical material was prepared based on Sensory Integration Therapy by Ainsworth (1972) and practical experience of work in Multisensory room placed in RTA laboratories. Sensory Integration is a dynamic process that allows a child to adapt to events in a constantly changing environment that during the travelling can influence behavior. Incoming information is processed with different intensity and significance. Tasks are shaped in the same way as everyday life, which requires a series of increasingly complex, tailored responses based on sensory perception.

The parents get knowledge about types of Sensory Integration disorders and how to recognize it.



The discussion was held after presentation of the materials. The parents shared their experiences to dealing with Hypersensitivity or Hyposensitivity of the kids. They were asked to prepare some examples of Sensory Integration Disorders that have been seen in every life routine. Moreover, asked to prepare examples of methods how to deal with these problems.

In conclusion, the most of participants were satisfied with provided information and confirmed readiness to participate in second pilot implementation meeting.

Second pilot implementation in parent focus group

Tuesday 25-05-21 (18:00-20:00) through ZOOM platform



The discussion between parents was held before the continuing the training course. The participants gave the feedback of theoretical materials. Five of eight parents agree that there are some practical information that could be useful for parents travelling with children with special needs. Although added that there are quite a lot scientific information that could not be clear for parents especially without English knowledge.

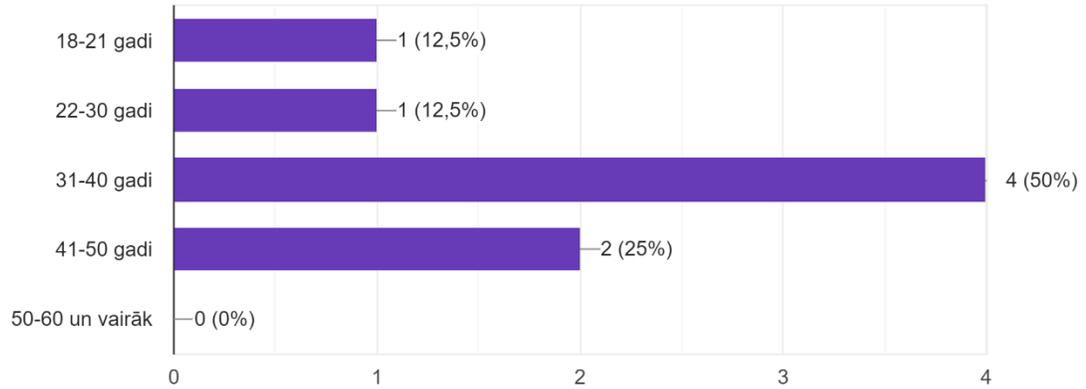
The parents pointed out that most useful are video materials and links to specific video files. Although they added that there are some video with too much text and highly appreciated practical tips for preparing and managing trips. The translation is highly recommended for video (at least where are practical recommendations) and some text document summary should be available for native speakers.

After discussion, the video material about work in Multisensory room was presented. The methods how to deal with Sensory Integration Disorders was discussed during the presentation. Parent shared their experiences that could be adopted and integrated in to the course materials. The parents to emphasized the importance of developing small motor skills working with natural products (seeds, wood, stones etc.). Two parents were unsure of that artificial environment in Multisensory room could be acceptable for their kids. During next discussion its doubts were eliminated by explanation of different methods and inventory that could be integrated in Multisensory room.

THE RESULTS OF ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOCUS GROUP

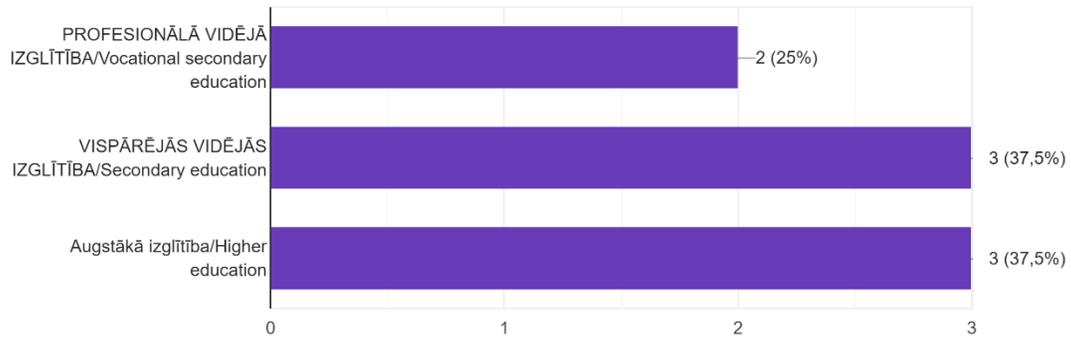
Jūsu vecums/ Age

8 atbildes



Jūsu izglītība / Education

8 atbildes



Eight participants who attended both training courses filled the online questionnaire. Most of them were older than 30 years with higher or secondary education level.

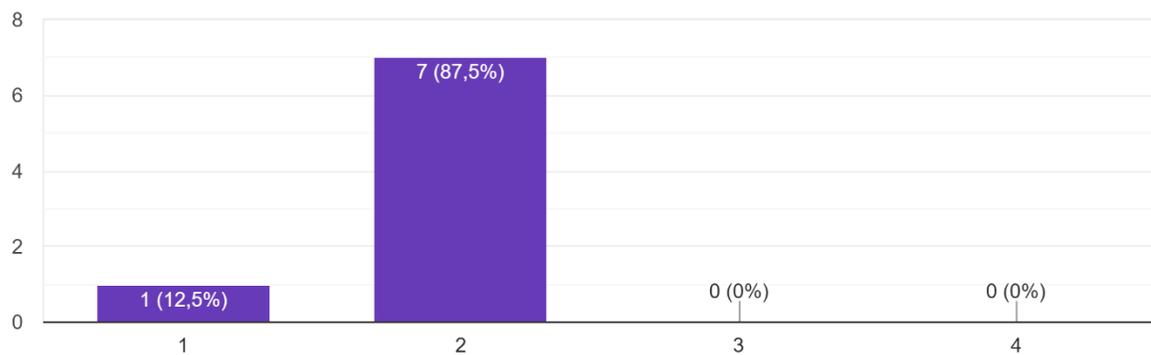
Next questions were about the quality and content of delivered training courses.

The statements were in Likert scale

- 1 Fully agree;
- 2 Agree more than disagree
- 3 Disagree more than agree
- 4 Disagree

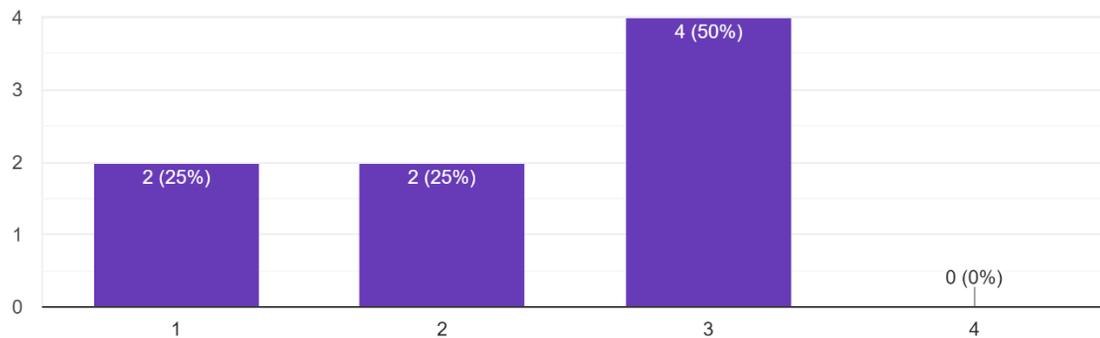
Mācību kursu resursi atbilst manām cerībām/Training course resources meet my expectations

8 atbildes



E-apmācības tēmas atbilst manām faktiskajām vajadzībām un interesēm / E-learning topics correspond to my real needs and interests

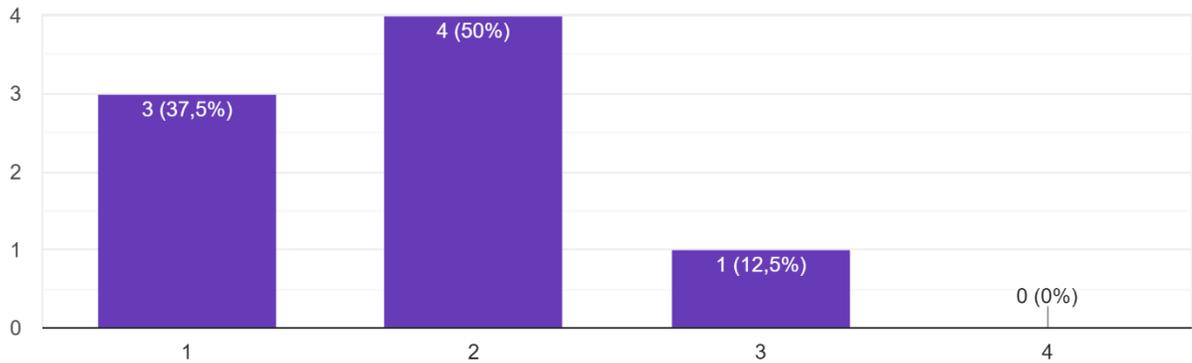
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As it is seen in diagrams, most of participants were satisfied with training program content and expectations.

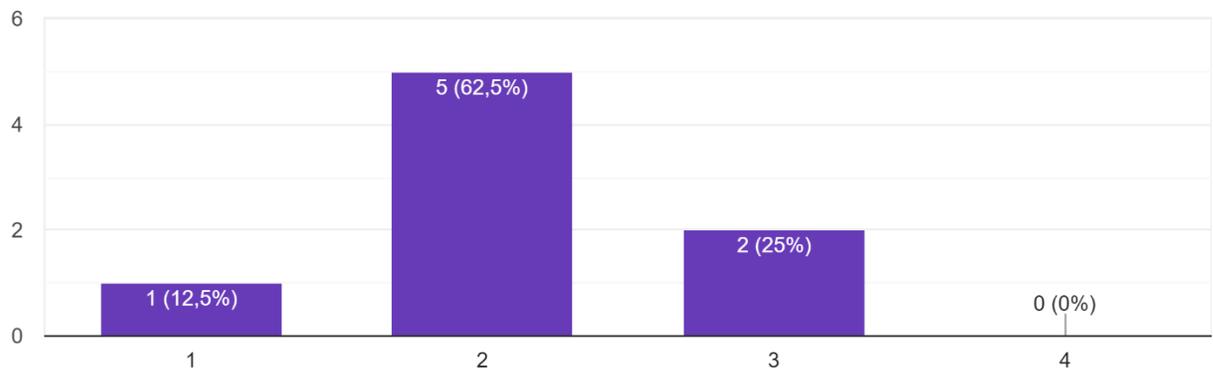
Tiešsaistes mācībās lietotie termini, valoda un piemēri atbilst manām spējām, vajadzībām un interesēm / The terms, language and examples used...g correspond to my abilities, needs and interests

8 atbildes



Tiešsaistes materiāli mani motivēja padziļināt dažas kursa tēmas / The online materials motivated me to deepen some of the course topics

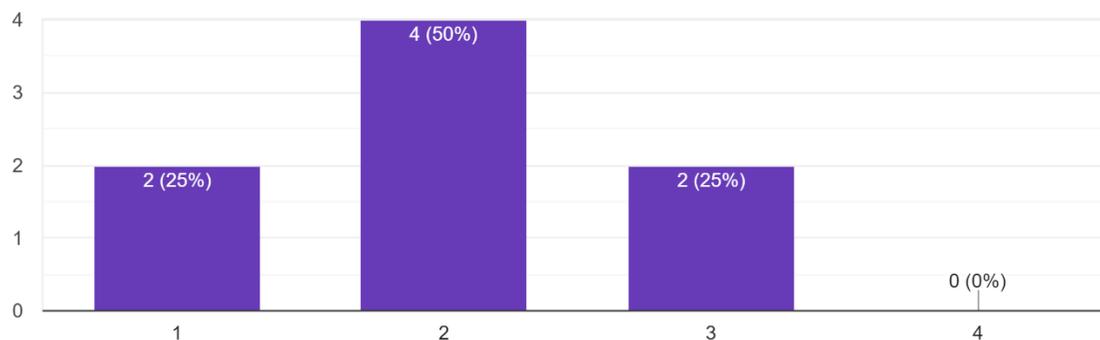
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The terminology and examples was clear and some topics motivated for deepen studies. But it should be taken in to account that participants were with basic English knowledge.

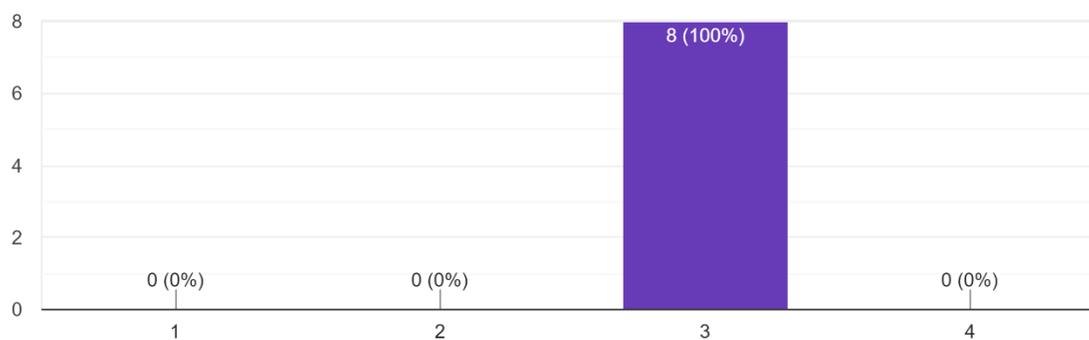
Teorētiskajiem priekšstatiem pievienoti praktiski piemēri / Practical examples are attached to the theoretical ideas

8 atbildes



Mācības ietvēra praktisko uzdevumu risināšanu, kur man bija iespēja izmantot savu pieredzi / The training included solving practical tasks where I had the opportunity to use my experience

8 atbildes



As it is seen in the diagrams the main challenges of online courses is to balance theoretical materials with practical activities. The participants noted that there are practical examples but it should be combined with possibility to try it in real life.

The last question was: **“Please write the main keywords or insights about the course”**

The main quotes from participant answers (translated from Latvian).

“More video material is desirable. Complement the sensory integration course with examples of what can be done at home.”

“Interesting materials, but not everyone will understand in English.”

“It is desirable to use more practical examples that can be used in real life. A good example was the organization of hikes and the use of additional equipment for it”

“Interesting examples of using Judo in work with children with special needs. Good luck!”

“More practical examples of working with children are needed and preferably in video form”

“Interesting courses. It is desirable to adapt them in Latvian so that they are available to all who are interested”

“Theoretical materials contain a lot of text, which study requires time and motivation”

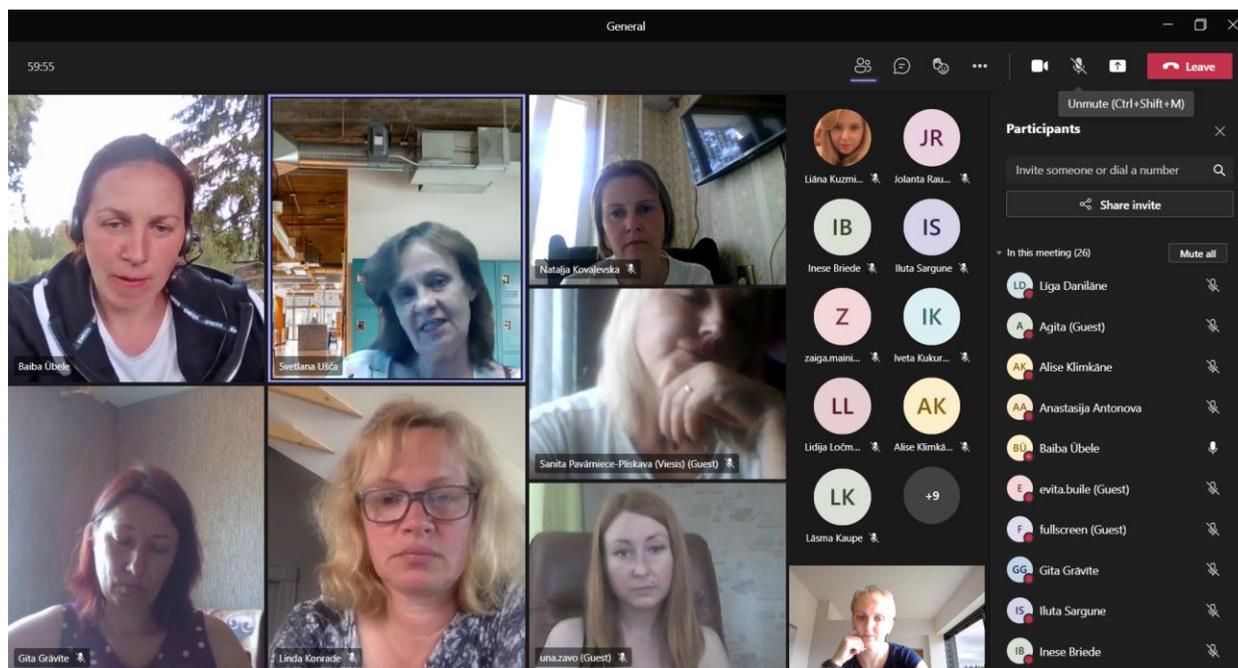
“Interesting and necessary material for further study. Thank you for the chance!”

Summary of main recommendations after focus group discussion and questionnaire:

- **parents recommended to focus on video materials and video links;**
- **some practical tips in video should be translated;**
- **some text document summary should be available for native speakers;**
- **online learning is useful but main focus should be on sharing of experience.**

Courses for social educators

The courses were implemented over a period of three months (March-May 2021), organizing 4h face-to-face classes every other week (in total 16 hours) and 20 hours distance learning activities. They are attended by social, special, primary and pre-school teachers.



At the end of the course, they were asked to express their opinion on the content of the course, its course and impact.

The course participants noted that the developed course content is voluminous and well developed. It covers topics for which no information is available from other sources. Educators acknowledge that parents of children with special needs in Latvia lack knowledge and skills about travel opportunities with such children, as well as they do not know how to teach their children self-care.

Reccomendations:

The participants of the course acknowledge that the parents of children with behavioral disorders need one website, where all (or at least most) information about the preparation for the trip, its course and possible difficulties can be found.

Emphasize in the course content the importance of identifying the needs of parents, regardless of the needs of children. As well as emphasize the need to teach self-service skills to children with behavioral disorders.

