**Project for the Interreg Europe’s first call (MAY 31)**

**« Provide social and professional integration for caregivers and their disabled children»**

**Description:**

The overall objective of this project is to implement solutions that allow for the social integration of children with disabilities while meeting their needs (especially in terms of health), but also to allow for the social and professional integration of the parents of the child(ren) with disabilities, as they are, in most cases, separated from the professional and social environment due to the care of the health needs of their child(ren) throughout the day.

**Background:**

There are nearly 240 million children with disabilities worldwide, according to UNICEF's most comprehensive statistical analysis to date. A lot of families find themselves without solutions to have full-time work and take care of their disabled child(ren). They can call a home health care worker but this has a cost that many of these families cannot afford. For example, in the French department of Charente, these families can only (in most cases) rely on associations but for many situations, these associations are not able to respond to all families' requests. This situation can be oppressive for parents and for children and can create a social distance with, for the children for example, discriminations.

Being a parent of disabled child(ren) is: not being able to work both of them or only part-time, having to face financial difficulties for the purchase of adapted materials, not being able to move easily due to lack of space in institutions, having difficulties in getting child care because caring for your child is so complicated, having a child that society hardly recognises, improvising as a caregiver, etc. All these difficulties created a social and professional exclusion for these parents and this must change with the implementation of new approaches and policies.

**Partners:**

 For this project, we are looking for local authorities, associations specialised in helping people with disabilities, partners linked to the domain of employment, professional and social integration (institutions, etc.).

Partners will exchange good practices concerning the project’s domain of action such as the care of disabled people, the care of children with disabilities and their health needs. Partners will find and exchange ideas for the social integration of these children but also exchange with the aim of finding help for parents of disabled child(ren) concerning their professional and social reintegration. Finally, to decide which are ideas to implement, observe and improve their development over the next few years.

In France, we already have partners who will help us to implement our project which we will explain in the next section. Among them, we have the *Departmental association of parents and friends of mentally disabled people* (ADAPEI), the *Regional Health Agency* (ARS), public agencies (like “Pôle Emploi”) specialised in the professional reinsertion, and the *National Family Allowance Fund* (CNAF).

**The project of Ruelle sur Touvre:**

 The town of Ruelle sur Touvre (about 7,300 inhabitants) has a project to build a new, higher quality, less energy-consuming establishment, rethinking its offer to adapt it to the needs of all families. The Town Hall has been working for almost two years now with numerous partners to build this new establishment, in a global logic of inclusion. The architect's office has been recruited and the final project validated, which means that we are planning to lay the foundation stone in the second quarter of 2022.

The new structure will be able to receive up to 50 children, 30% of whom will be children with any kind of disability. It will also include on-site care rooms, which will be managed in partnership with the CAMPS/ADAPEI to enable children to be cared for on a continuous basis and families to no longer have to worry about the issue of child care.

1. ***Environment and environmental health***

From an environmental point of view, the selected project will be a building based on numerous bio-source materials, with a very low carbon footprint and low energy consumption. It will be a positive energy building (E4-C2 certified). In addition to this, an environmental health approach has been taken to the building's construction as well as to its functioning and management: all materials and equipment have been studied to preserve optimal indoor air quality for the occupants.

1. ***Inclusion of children with disabilities***

In addition to the quality of the planned building, the child care centre intends to offer care open to all, particularly to children with disabilities. To do this, the organisation of the teams will be reviewed in order to operate by "small families", grouping together young, medium and older children in one group. At present, the structure functions with sections by age. This new system will make it possible to welcome children from birth to 3 years old, and up to 6 years old when they are disabled. The establishment will also offer care rooms to accommodate the care of children who need it, to allow complete care on one site. On-site care allows parents/carers to be totally discharged on a continuous basis, opening up prospects for social and professional reintegration. These rooms also facilitate the reception of children with very different pathologies, including multi-handicapped children. The structure will thus be technically able to receive children with all types of disabilities. In France, schooling begins at 3 years old and institutes from 6 years old, so this new service, unprecedented in the French department of Charente and in France, will provide solutions for families who currently have none. The families of disabled children who met during the numerous preparatory meetings were unanimous in their praise for this project, which meets their expectations.

1. ***Space sharing***

The care rooms will be available to nursing staff of CAMPS (*centre for early medical and social action*) or liberals but also open to inhabitants of the district. This pioneering establishment will thus offer a mutualised and coordinated range of services. This mutualisation is also based on an intergenerational logic: next to the “crèche”, we will have an intergenerational residence, with shared car parks and gardens to create links between the public.

1. ***From social inclusion to professional integration***

Furthermore, this structure fits in with a process of professional integration with help for single-parent families, with the reservation of a place in the childcare centre for children whose parents are unemployed, with the support of parents to employment or to professional training. This social objective is in line with the integration objective of disabled children because parents of children who need care are caregivers who have broken their ties with the professional environment because of the care of their children for their health and development. This also includes single-parent families.

1. ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, we are convinced that this new approach can profoundly change people's lives and can easily be duplicated, supported financially and technically by bringing together actors of the sector. The project will be carried out over two fiscal years: one planned for this year which will include the structural work of the establishment; a second planned for 2023 which will be dedicated to the interior work. The "first stone" will be laid in September 2022.

**Budget**

* investment of € 3 227 664 (all taxes and VAT includes)
* operating costs (2021): € 466 000 in expenses; € 359 700 in revenue
* + Estimated additional staff costs: € 172 600