

# NEWSLETTER #4

May 2023

## The IPAT Project

Individuals with Autism Spectrum disorders present difficulties with respect to verbal and non-verbal social communication and interaction, as well as, restrictive or repetitive interests, behaviors or movements.

Parental training is one of the factors enabling the optimal adaptation of parents to their child's autism diagnosis and challenges, their ability to support the treatment and collaborate constructively with the professionals involved in the child's rehabilitation and special education programs. IPAT aims to increase awareness about the role and the importance of parental training in the global management of the needs of autistic people, to increase accessibility to effective training, to motivate parents to use a valid self-training approach at different stages of life, in order to promote the quality of life and wellbeing of themselves and that of their children' while supporting their parental role and self-confidence.

IPAT aims to:

- train parents with an autistic child, to decrease parental stress and improve their quality of life
- create an Integrative Parents' Autism Training-IPAT module and a digital self-training Tool-IPATT, to be used by professionals and parents.

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## PROJECT RESULTS

Within the framework of IO3, the IPAT-T self-training digital tool was designed and developed in Moodle, work led by Autismo Burgos, with the collaboration of all partners, based on the IPAT Training Module, as implemented in IO2.

The purpose of the tool is to facilitate free access to a comprehensive digital self-training program for parents, combining the knowledge acquired in the IO2 phase and the advantages offered by digital technology .

In the preparation phase, the IO2 training Module material was adapted to an accessible and flexible digital format, complemented by visual presentations and self-assessment activities. Videos were recorded in English and subtitled in the four languages of the consortium. Overall, the tool is available in five languages, ie English, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Turkish and available from computers or mobile devices after registering.



## PROJECT RESULTS

### Testing of the IPAT digital self-learning tool- Satisfaction of users - IO4

The IPAT digital self-training tool was tested by 80 parents in four partner countries who agreed to use the tool and participate in the satisfaction survey anonymously, in order to provide feedback on its accessibility and usefulness. The testing phase ran in April 2023, the period during which more than 3000 users accessed the tool and more than 500 used it.

The majority of participants- 76%- had already been exposed to current or previous psychoeducation or counseling programs. Their overall satisfaction with the tool scored 7,5/10, while they agreed that the use of the tool may contribute to consolidating existing knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, and improving family life and relationship with their child, scoring on average 3,5/5.

Comments and feedback received in the testing phase are being addressed in the current technical review of the tool and will be included in the recommendations for future improvement.



## PROJECT RESULTS

### Impact of the IPAT Training activity using the IPAT Module, on parents' Quality of life and stress- IO4

Last year, overall 62 parents participated in the 24-hour' duration Training activity with the use of the IPAT Training Module, organized and coordinated by 2 experienced professionals in each of the 4 partner countries. The short-term impact of the training on the self-perceived quality of life and stress of participating parents was assessed by administering the WHO Quality of Life-BREF (physical, psychological, social relationships and environment domains) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) before and after training; their satisfaction was assessed with a satisfaction survey questionnaire developed for the study. The self-perceived quality of life of participating parents improved significantly with respect to the environment domain( healthy physical environment, opportunity for leisure activities, access to health services), to “satisfaction with their sleep” and “level at which they enjoy life”; the training was more beneficial for participants with the lower initial quality of life score, as they had a higher probability to improve their QoL in the physical health domain; the parents' stress was not modified after training and their overall satisfaction scored 8,5/10. Comments and feedback were used to modify and adapt the training material and formulate recommendations for its use and improvement.

***Integrated digital self-training tool in Autism for parents IPAT-T***

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# THE MULTIPLIER EVENTS

## Spain

In Burgos, Spain, the Multiplier event took place the 11th april 2023, in the “Science and Technology Station”, from 17:00 to 20:00. The event was inaugurated by M<sup>a</sup> Antonia Paniego Morán, Burgos Social Services Manager, and Simona Palacios Antón, President of Autismo Burgos.

The event had a high participation: 178 people registered, 60 of them attending the event in person, the rest of them online. The countries of origin of the participants were very diverse: 52 applications coming from 11 iberoamerican countries plus one european: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Ecuador and Italy.



Also the background of participants was quite diverse: 50% of people coming from Burgos were relatives of people with autism, 25% were professionals from schools and nursery schools, and the rest of assistants were professionals from social services and other services. Participants from others regions came from Autism Associations from Madrid, Galicia and León, and the Ministry of Education of the regions of La Rioja and Castilla y León.

The event served to disseminate the work carried out within the framework of the European IPAT Project, with special emphasis on the presentation of the IPAT-T digital tool, whose development and testing process has been led by Autismo Burgos. At the same time, presentations were given on the Autism Burgos Family Support Program, interventions mediated by parents that take place in the Association's Early Care Service, and an intervention workshop for families through games and daily experiences.



The presentations were given by professionals from Autismo Burgos: Tatiana Martínez, María Rico, Marta González, Maria Merino y Conchi Remírez de Ganuza. The break held in the middle of the event allowed families and professionals to exchange concerns and experiences in a friendly environment, contributing to enriching the family support network.





# THE MULTIPLIER EVENTS

## Greece

In Athens, the multiplier event took place on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, with the participation of parents, mental health and education professionals and representatives of service providers and parents' organizations, both online and live.

The Deputy Minister of Mental Health in the Greek Ministry of Health, Mrs. Zoe Rapti, as well as representatives of the North Aegean Region, the Municipalities of Athens, Peristeri and Chios and the Hellenic Scientific ASD network gave a greeting.



An overview of the IPAT was presented by the project Scientific Coordinator, while good practices in supporting parents of children with autism were presented by partners in Spain, Belgium and Greece. Participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with the IPAT Training Module, to be used by professionals in order to train parents of autistic children and the self-training digital tool for parents.

**The short-term impact of the training on parental self-perceived quality of life and stress, as well as the satisfaction of parents with their participation in the training activities organized in partner countries, were also presented in terms of the results of the survey conducted before and after training.**

**It was a quite meaningful event, with all participants showing great interest in getting to know and using the tools provided by IPAT and asking the speakers for more details about them. Many highlighted the importance of parental training and support in autism, the impact such projects may have and the limited resources allocated in the field of education and training for parents and carers of people with autism.**





# THE MULTIPLIER EVENTS

## Turkey

In Turkey, the multiplier event was held on Tuesday, May 16. A presentation was delivered at the Şahinbey guidance and research center with 35 participants. In the event, highly positive feedback was received from the parents of the children diagnosed with autism. It was confirmed that this type of projects are really beneficial and that such activities should be continuous. The lack of knowledge on what the social and legal rights of the children with autism are in their participation in life, the diagnosis process, the development of social skills of the students, confirmed the need for initiative such as the IPAT project. Participants shared ideas on the topic.



Information on how to use the IPAT mobile self-learning tool, how to become a member, and how to use the modules after becoming a member was shared with participants. The flexibility and usability of the tool was underlined mentioning the self-paced approach, the usefulness of subtitles and presentations and the monitoring of the progresses. In addition, the participants considered the tool very useful not only for parents of the children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, but also for teachers who can educate themselves about the project topic.

**The audience consisted of parents and educators who are working with people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Approximately 35 people attended. In addition, the 3 participating Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers, the Parents affiliated to the center and the Şahinbey guidance and research center, where the meeting was held, being relevant institutions in the field were an added value to the event.**





# THE MULTIPLIER EVENTS

## Italy

On the 14 of April 2023, the multiplier event organised by the Cooperativa Sociale Controvento was held at the Agorà delle Abilità. The event was attended by families of people with ASDs and professionals from the fields of education, disability and autism.

The speeches, mediated by Martina Nucifora and Enrica Chiara Cappadonna, focused on the results of the IPAT project. In particular on Parent Training and the IPAT platform that many of the parents had the opportunity to test. Autism was discussed and, following the topics addressed by the IPAT project, great attention was given to the diagnosis, the legal issues related to the presence of a family member with ASD, the lived experience of families, and the delicate topic of social inclusion.





**With the aim of multiplying the effects and effectively reaching the target groups, Cooperative took the opportunity of the conference held in Centuripe, during which the results of the IPAT project were presented. There was a discussion in the possible educational interventions for people with ASD, strategies for managing problematic behaviour at school, highlighting - thanks to the results of the Focus Groups organised at the beginning of the project and the feedback from parents who participated in the pilot action within the project - the relevance of the Parent Training. In that occasion, the Italian PT moderators Doc Federica Failla and Federica Campanella recounted the experience and the path undertaken last year with parents. Finally the IPAT platform was presented, which aroused great curiosity among the attendees due to its great potential for use, both professionally and on a daily basis.**



## FOLLOW-UP

We have developed the IPAT Training Module and the IPAT digital self training tool- IPATT for parents of autistic children. We have also trained parents at the partner countries level and produced material and tools to be used for increasing the accessibility to autism parental training.

Both the Module and the tool have been tested with parents of autistic children of different ages and with diverse levels of needs and time from diagnosis.

We have documented the short term impact of the training activity using the IPAT Module on certain domains of the parents' self perceived quality of life, while we have not identified any modification of their stress level. Parents seemed quite or rather satisfied with the Module and tool , respectively; their feedback was taken into consideration to modify and adapt content and technical background; the self training tool, in its current format, probably seems more appropriate and useful for parents who have not previously been involved in psychoeducation and/or counseling activities and within limited time after the reception of the autism diagnosis for their child. The use of the Module in a psychoeducation activity allows for experience sharing and exchange among parents which are highly valued. Parents insist on their need to receive and identify practical and tailored guidance which seems more compatible with face to face group training.

Both the IPAT Module and the digital self learning tool are available at [www.ipatproject.eu](http://www.ipatproject.eu) as Open Educational Resources, under Creative Commons Attribution- Share licenses.



**The IPAT project ends in May 2023  
but its results and resources are  
always available on the project  
website. Keep in touch with the  
project partners!**

**Follow the IPAT project on our online channels!**



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