Co-funded by
the European Union



GREEN ASC VET PROJECT

KA220-VET - COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

WP2

Final Report:

Analysis of the situation in VET for autistic people

Leader Partner: FPDA – Federação Portuguesa de Autismo

APRIL, 2024

Project 2023-1-HR01-KA220-VET-000157245

Introduction

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder involving persistent challenges with social communication, restricted interests, and repetitive behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This condition is present since childhood and is permanent, as a result of alterations in the development and maturation of the central nervous system. It is a spectrum condition, meaning that while all people with autism will have similar characteristics, overall, their condition will impact them in different ways. Some people may be able to lead independent lives while others will require a lifetime of specialist support. The frequency of autism spectrum disorder is currently estimated at 1-2% (Baio et al., 2018; Zablotsky et al., 2015), and according to diagnoses, this is strongly trending upwards. The increase in occurrence is not limited to any geographic location; instead, reports come from numerous countries worldwide (Kim et al., 2011; Sun et al., 2019). Several explanations have been proposed for this growth, including the expansion of diagnostic criteria for better case identification, diagnostic substitution, and increasing knowledge of the heterogeneity of autism spectrum disorder.

Teachers and other educational staff in schools are faced with the challenge of planning and implementing effective educational programs for all pupils, which includes autistic students. Educators require support due to the extensive diversity among students on the spectrum and their varying needs. To attain optimal outcomes, it is evident that cooperation among all stakeholders in the process is essential, spanning from parents to public authorities responsible for educational legislation.

Autistic people also face many obstacles and difficulties when searching for employment or already in the workplace, including difficulties in social interactions, communication skills, and resistance to routine changes. Estimates suggest that 50-60% of individuals with autism experience poor outcomes in adulthood. Unemployment rates for autistic individuals are high globally, emphasising the need for targeted interventions. High unemployment rates and difficulties with pursuing higher education leaves autistic individuals with having to rely on social benefits and decreasing their chances to experience social acceptance. Also, when they are given the opportunity to enter the labour market, autistic individuals are frequently looked down upon, suggesting that

autism is viewed as a deviation from what is considered “normal”. As a result of not being assimilated by their workplace and society, many people with autism are experiencing anxiety and depression (Kállai, 2018).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs play a crucial role in enhancing the skills, independence, and employability of individuals with autism. Successful completion of VET programs can lead to recognized qualifications and increased employment opportunities. Despite the goals of VET programs, challenges persist in achieving successful employment outcomes for individuals with autism. Current vocational programs often neglect behavioural strategies, leading to social and behavioural challenges at work. Another crucial aspect to consider is the diversity of the autism spectrum, which means that different individuals may have varying responses and needs (Bozgeyikli et al., 2017). Therefore, training programmes should be designed in a flexible and adaptable way to cater to each individual's unique requirements.

Bearing all this in mind, this report was developed as part of Work package 2 of the Green ASC VET - Metautism project, co-funded by the EU, and its main objective was to review the state of the art, legislation, good practices, etc. in the field of vocational education and training for autistic people in each of the consortium partner countries (Croatia, Portugal, Belgium, Hungary, Denmark, and Germany) and at European level. For this purpose, each partner carried out its own research at national and European level. This report aims to bring together and briefly summarise the main findings and give an general overview.

Theoretical Framework

The present review draws upon a range of theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive understanding of autism, VET programs, and employment outcomes. These frameworks serve as foundational pillars guiding the analysis and interpretation of findings. The following are worth emphasising and have guided this review:

- **Neurodiversity:** Judy Singer (Singer, 1999) has coined the term "neurodiversity" and has written extensively on the subject. This framework considers neurological differences as natural variations of the human brain

and advocates for acceptance and adaptation rather than pathologization. The focus on individual support and recognising the strengths of people with autism is in line with this paradigm. As such, this framework fights harmful stereotypes emphasizing acceptance and adaptation of individuals with diverse neurocognitive profiles.

- **Biopsychosocial Model of Disability:** this framework views disability as a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors. Unlike traditional models that solely focus on the physical or medical aspects of disability, the biopsychosocial model considers the dynamic interaction between an individual's biological, psychological, and social components, as well as the environmental context in which they live. This model is often used to understand and address health and disability in a holistic and multidimensional manner. This holistic perspective encourages a broader and more inclusive approach to healthcare and disability services, promoting interventions that address the multidimensional aspects of an individual's experience.
- **Inclusive Education Framework:** aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities, emphasizing collaboration, and adaptation of curricula to meet diverse needs. The mention of inclusive practices, collaboration with families, and adapting curricula aligns with the theoretical framework of inclusive education.
- **Seven-step model:** This model serves as a structured framework for inclusive community worksite programs tailored to develop both technical and soft skills of autistic participants. It emphasizes steps such as identifying strengths, needs, and interests, establishing communication, and evaluation. This Seven-Step Model aims to create inclusive and supportive work environments where autistic individuals can thrive and contribute their unique talents and perspectives. By following this framework, organizations can promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace while also maximizing the potential of all employees.

- **Behavioral and Social Learning Theories:** focus on behavioral strategies, social skills training, and tailored approaches to address learning and behavioral challenges in individuals with autism.
- **Design Theory (including Co-Design):** a systematic approach to problem-solving, which involves the target group early and often in the design process, enabling their voices to be heard and giving agency over the subsequent product. This agency also provides a feeling of ownership and pride over the outcome.
- **Person-Environment Fit Theory:** this theory suggests that individuals perform optimally when there is alignment between their personal characteristics and the characteristics of their work environment. It underscores the importance of finding a good match between individuals and their workplace settings.

By incorporating these diverse theoretical frameworks, the collective contributions of all partners offer a comprehensive understanding of autism, vocational education, and employment outcomes, guiding the development of inclusive and effective interventions and programs.

Key Concepts and Definitions

The literature review integrates various key concepts and definitions relevant to supporting individuals with autism in vocational education and employment. Below we will discuss and contextualise each one of them.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent deficits in communication and social interaction and restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (APA, 2013). Early detection, diagnosis, and inclusion in intervention programs are crucial for promoting the development, education, and socialisation of children with autism. Additionally, early interventions in preschool and family settings prepare children (and their families) for formal education and better school integration. Inclusive education is highlighted as a fundamental right for all students, including those with autism. Efforts to promote inclusive practices within the

education system aim to create supportive learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of students and facilitate their participation in mainstream education settings. Educators and professionals working with individuals with autism require special preparation and education to effectively support their learning and development. This includes adopting individualised teaching methods, active learning approaches, and promoting positive attitudes and acceptance among peers.

Individuals with autism often have difficulty transitioning to work after school (Curtiss et al., 2021; Nicholas et al., 2017). This is due to difficulties with social interactions, communication skills, and difficulties altering routines (Eastman et al., 2021). Many autistic young adults face challenges in achieving positive outcomes in adulthood, such as limited vocational activities, social connectedness, and difficulty living independently (Taylor et al., 2014; Bishop-Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). Estimates suggest that 50-60% of individuals with autism experience one or more poor outcomes in adulthood (e.g., Howlin & Magiati, 2017).

Notably, individuals with autism experience higher unemployment rates compared to people with other disabilities; 80% of autistic people are estimated to be unemployed worldwide (Ki-moon, 2015), and for example, unemployment rates in the United Kingdom are higher for autistic people than other disability groups (Office for National Statistics, 2021). These rates emphasize the need for targeted interventions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; Nicholas et al., 2017), as employment is considered crucial for positive outcomes, providing social engagement, enhancing skills for independent living, and fostering feelings of competency and autonomy (Gal et al., 2015).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) refers to a more formalized and structured system of education and training designed to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed for specific trades, crafts, or professions. The primary purpose of VET is to prepare individuals for employment or to enhance their skills within a particular field. VET programs are typically more formal and structured and are often offered by educational institutions, training centers, or vocational schools. VET programs often involve a curriculum, instructional materials, assessments, and recognized qualifications upon completion. Successful completion of a VET program may lead to the awarding of

certificates or diplomas, indicating a certain level of proficiency in a specific field. Depending on the program and the country, individuals completing VET courses may receive certificates, diplomas, or other credentials that are widely acknowledged by employers in the relevant industry. That said, VET programs play a crucial role in enhancing the skills, independence, and employability of individuals with autism. These programs are designed to provide tailored support, focusing on practical skills, job training, and social skills development to facilitate successful integration into the workforce.

Technology, particularly virtual reality (VR) simulations, shows promise in addressing some of the challenges faced by individuals with autism in vocational training and employment. VR can provide immersive training experiences, targeting non-verbal skills and overcoming barriers such as affordability and accessibility.

Effective vocational education and employment initiatives must be tailored to the specific needs and abilities of individuals with autism. Tailored approaches are individualised strategies and programmes tailored to the specific needs and abilities of people with autism. Behavioural strategies are methods and techniques aimed at understanding, supporting, and improving the behaviour of people with autism, particularly in the workplace. Workplace inclusion refers to efforts to integrate people with autism into the workplace and create an environment that promotes their participation and success.

These concepts collectively address the challenges faced by individuals with autism in transitioning to work, emphasising the importance of tailored approaches, behavioural strategies, and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education for promoting integration, inclusion, and better outcomes.

Synthesis of Findings

Early detection, diagnosis and, accordingly, inclusion in the early intervention program, with appropriate forms of support in the form of individualised educational and

rehabilitation programs, can significantly influence the perspective of the child's development, education, and training for life in the social community. Accordingly, the inclusion of children on the spectrum in regular classes and programs for early and preschool education could be a key part of their socialisation and development.

Legal frameworks and policies play a significant role in promoting inclusion and supporting individuals with disabilities, including autism, in education and employment. However, there may be gaps in coverage and implementation, highlighting the need for ongoing advocacy and improvement efforts. Studies related to intervention programs have analysed many research papers over the last twenty years. The main findings point to the fact that today there is an increasing number of people on the spectrum to be involved in intervention programs. For success, a scientific approach is crucial in choosing intervention programs as opposed to scientifically unfounded commercial programs with attractive outcomes.

In formal education, the best results are achieved through the application of individualised and adapted educational programs. In the teaching process, it is important that the teacher, when teaching students with disabilities, relies on an individualised educational program and thus encourages the special abilities and interests of that student. Also, it is extremely important that the teacher, with a positive attitude, encourages other students to accept the students with difficulties, always help them and guide them in their work. Such an approach would create a pleasant and warm classroom environment for all students.

The origin of inclusive education is within the basic human right to education and equality as socio-cultural values and fundamental assumptions of social inclusion. These values are guidelines for the change in educational systems towards the inclusion of all children into the formal and regular education system, in other words, towards educational inclusion. There are practical implications of the establishment of inclusive education, especially to the changes in complete school culture at the level of formal education, the need for greater sensitivity towards every person characterised by interpersonal diversity, and the changing attitudes of the larger cultural environment.

Family involvement and support are critical factors in the success of individuals with autism in vocational education and employment. Collaborative partnerships between families, educators, and service providers can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and support services and ensure a holistic approach to meeting the needs of individuals with autism. Government agencies, advocacy groups, and non-profit organisations play a crucial role in supporting individuals with autism in education and employment. These organisations often provide resources, advocacy, and coordination of services to promote inclusion and access to opportunities for individuals with autism.

The results of Tamara Barbir research (2021) show that parents believe that teachers in schools are not educated enough to work with children with disabilities, including their autistic children, and that many of them do not even want to be educated and develop professionally. On the other hand, they pointed out that there are some teachers who voluntarily and instinctively want to help and facilitate their children in school, so they try to adapt the process of learning, teaching, and evaluation to them. All parents are heavily involved in solving their child's school obligations, and some are helped by assistants. As a major shortcoming, parents point out the inadequacy of schools and classrooms but consider the biggest problem is the inadequacy of teaching, writing assignments, evaluations, and generally all activities carried out in school in class, which then results in poor performance and low self-esteem, which could be one reason for many autistic students do not progress to secondary or higher levels of education.

Overall, most studies confirmed that autistic individuals are less likely to find employment and higher education after 9th grade. Despite improvements in regulations and support services, unemployment rates remain high, particularly among young adults with autism. Several studies attribute this to lack of social skills, but also to improper workplace preparation for people diagnosed with autism. Additionally, misconceptions and stereotypes about autism may contribute to discrimination and exclusion in the workplace. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive interventions that target both individual skills development and systemic changes in workplace culture and practices. Thus, it is urgent to develop targeted interventions and support programs to improve employment outcomes for this population. It was found that through the support

of the government, individual companies, and organisations, such skills, and requirements can be met.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes are essential in enhancing the skills, independence, and employability of individuals with autism. There are several VET programs and initiatives designed to support individuals with autism. These programs aim to provide skills and training that can help individuals with autism gain employment and navigate the workplace successfully. The specific programmes may differ depending on the country and region. Additionally, government agencies, advocacy groups, and non-profit organisations often play a role in supporting individuals with autism in their education and employment endeavours.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) proposed and the EU adopted the report "*Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World: Building up Competences for Inclusive, Green and Digitalized Vocational Education and Training (VET)*" in 2022. This synthesis emphasises the key role of teachers and trainers in VET through several elements:

- Investing in professional development of VET teachers and trainers.
- The complexity of the roles of VET teachers and trainers in the continuous development of vocational competences and continuous upgrading of these competences related to their multiple roles, for example, work with persons on the autistic spectrum.
- Inclusive and green vocational education and training: the report emphasises the importance of inclusive practices and integration of green principles in vocational education and training.
- Digitalization: VET teachers must adapt to new technologies and include digital skills in their teaching methods.

Based on the findings, some assumptions can be made about where and how VET programs may support individuals with autism:

- Tailored Programs: Some VET programs are specifically designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with autism. These programs may

incorporate adjustments in teaching methods, communication styles, and sensory considerations to create a more inclusive learning environment.

- Job Skills Training: VET programs often focus on practical skills and job training. This can include a range of skills depending on the program, such as computer skills, technical skills, and soft skills like communication and teamwork.
- Workplace Integration: Some programs work closely with employers to facilitate the integration of individuals with autism into the workforce. This may involve providing education and resources to employers to create a more inclusive workplace.
- Job Placement Services: It is often during job interviews where people with autism struggle, are misunderstood, where their needs are not considered, and where employers therefore make the judgement that "the person doesn't fit in". With proper knowledge and training, such issues could be minimised. As mutual understanding is the crucial factor here, this skills training can go either way – so that it is designed either for people with autism or for the people interviewing them. VET programs may offer assistance in job placement, helping individuals with autism find suitable employment opportunities based on their skills and interests.
- Improved and tailored education: From the 9th grade onwards, education for people with autism should be changed to e.g. practical educational programs, to ensure they have experience and skills for future employment. Additionally, programs focused on personal interests and hobbies could be arranged, which would help soft skills development.
- Social Skills Development: Many individuals with autism may benefit from targeted social skills development. VET programs may include components that focus on enhancing communication and interpersonal skills to improve interactions in a professional setting. By identifying and targeting specific contexts, people with autism can experience and work in specific social settings they may be unfamiliar with.

Here are some examples of programmes, initiatives, and projects that aimed at giving support to autistic people:

Project SEARCH is an internationally recognized program designed to support individuals with disabilities, including autism, in gaining competitive employment. The program typically involves a partnership between schools, vocational rehabilitation services, and employers. It provides immersive, real-life work experiences within a business setting.

Ambitious about Autism is a UK-based organisation that runs the Autism Exchange program. This program focuses on building employability skills for young people with autism, providing work placements, and supporting the transition to employment.

Specialisterne, originally founded in Denmark, is a global organisation with a focus on employment for individuals with autism, particularly in the technology sector. It offers training and job placement services.

VIRTUS project is a European project addressing the preparation and readiness of autistic individuals on occupational ability, adaptation to professional environments, and professional training with Virtual Reality (VR) technology. The project activities include the assessment of methodologies, development of VR scenarios for 3 different occupations (Barista, Kitchen Assistant, Office Clerk), training of trainers, training of people with autism, and evaluation and certification according to EU standards.

The Innovative Vocational Education for Autism (IVEA) project aimed to foster social inclusion of people with autism through employment by developing a European holistic guide and online tools that feature transversal competencies that should be introduced to complement the academic curricula, including social and daily life skills to foster independence.

While progress has been made in understanding and supporting individuals with autism, there is still a need for ongoing research and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. This collaboration is essential for developing and implementing evidence-based interventions, promoting best practices, and advocating

for policy changes to improve outcomes for individuals with autism in vocational education and employment.

In general, no specific legislation was found for students with autism in vocational education and training, nor official VET or Educational programmes for autistic people in each country. Instead, there are programmes, projects, and initiatives within the framework of European projects (co-financed by the EU), in private social solidarity institutions (NGOs), or other organisations linked to autism.

For example, there are no specific legislative documents in Croatia or Portugal dedicated to the education of autistic students. They are categorised as students with special educational needs or students with disabilities/difficulties. Both countries have legislation framing Inclusive Education. Inclusive education in the Republic of Croatia and in Portugal is based on respect for human and children's rights and freedom. In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international document recognizing the rights of children throughout the world. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to education in accordance with their capabilities. The right to inclusive upbringing and education is emphasized based on the right to equal opportunities, while encouraging optimal personal development, i.e. that every child has the right to be educated in a way that leads to their best possible inclusion in society. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legal act that has legal force and binds the parties to comply to its provisions and includes the right to monitor its application in countries that have accepted and ratified it. Also, the fundamental international document of the United Nations is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) as one of the most important documents on the rights of persons with disabilities and the first major document on human rights in the 21st century.

Regarding the Portuguese Education System, according to the Decree-Law 54/2018 all schools are inclusive. This decree-law creates the conditions for schools to be places of inclusion, capable of recognizing the diversity of all students and responding to their capabilities and individual needs. Therefore, all children can be included in regular schools, regarding having autism or other conditions. The system is designed to ensure

that all students, regardless of their abilities, have access to quality education. Portugal emphasises inclusive education, aiming to integrate students with special educational needs into mainstream schools whenever possible. The goal is to provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Students with special needs may receive support services within mainstream schools. This support can include special education teachers, educational psychologists, and other professionals who work collaboratively to meet individual needs. In some cases, students may receive support in resource rooms within mainstream schools or attend special classes designed to meet their specific needs. These settings provide a more tailored approach to learning. The Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP) addresses employment and vocational training in Portugal but doesn't have specific programs for autistic individuals. National autism associations (Non-Governmental Organisations) and support centers in Portugal may offer resources and programs for individuals with autism, including vocational training opportunities.

Conversely, Danish definition of disability is narrower than that under the UK Equality Act and may not even satisfy Denmark's obligations under the Equal Treatment Directive. Denmark's legal, moral, and social obligations to the disabled in the workplace lag far behind those of the UK and possibly the rest of the European Union. In Danish law, people with autism are covered by "Act on Compensation for Disabled Persons in Employment", which allows them to be covered by general employment measures. If the needs of the person are outside of these measures, then required measures will be provided via "Act on Compensation for Disabled Persons in Employment" (Measures for placing disabled persons in employment, 2023). These include monetary help, and preferential access. Furthermore, the "Act on Prohibition of Differential Treatment" (Measures for placing disabled persons in employment, 2023) forbids direct and indirect differential treatment and discrimination towards people with disabilities. It "stipulates that an employer may not discriminate against wage earners or applicants with respect to vacant positions". While some debate the effectiveness of these acts, interestingly, these however do not cover VET training of autistic people. After finishing school, where children with autism can get the required help, many people with autism are left at a

disadvantage when compared to people without autism, who may have an easier time obtaining soft skills, changes in routine, etc.

In Denmark, autistic individuals can apply for job placement services, through multiple work institutions. However, many times these institutions don't take into consideration their characteristics and profile. Autistic Youth in Denmark and the job market – Statistics from 2022 (Mange autistiske unge står uden job og uddannelse, 2022) provide a picture of the situation for youth with autism in the labour market. Among individuals aged 15-24 years old, 21% are neither employed nor in an educational program. In addition to that, 48% are dependent on state educational grants, and 50% are dependent on social welfare. Only 1,5% of young people with autism were considered fit for the labour market.

The following are some examples of initiatives or organizations supporting young with autism in Denmark in the labour market: Klar til start (Klart til start, u.d.); Specialisterne (Specialisterne, u.d.); Special minds (Special Minds, u.d.) and Special minds IT (Special Minds IT, u.d.); Sovi (Sovi, u.d.); Klap job (KLAP Job, u.d.); Nextjob (Gentofte municipality) (Nextjob, u.d.); Novo Nordisk "Including the excluded" - an example of a corporate initiative to support co-workers with autism (Nordisk, n.d.).

Specifically, the following are previous, or ongoing Danish projects that have used VR in some capacity in supporting youth with autism in skills training that are related to job-related issues: Autismeplatform (Social training, 2019) (Virtual reality til social træning, u.d.); Special minds (Training aiming to improve abilities to travel without assistance, 2021) (Unge med autisme ser verden i øjnene gennem VR-briller, 2021); Velfærdsteknologi Aarhus (Training to improve independence, 2024) (Læringsfilm til VR på autismeområdet, 2024); Adolescent Under Construction: An exploration of how virtual reality can be used to teach social and daily living skills to children and adolescents diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Adjorlu, 2020).

In Germany, here are some examples of programmes and initiatives that aim to support people with autism in employment:

a) The "Autismus im Beruf" project is supported by various German organisations and companies and provides individual support for people with autism throughout the

application and recruitment process. It aims to promote inclusion in the workplace and provide employers with the tools and resources to create an inclusive working environment.

b) The "Auticon" initiative is a German-based company that specialises in employing people with autism in the IT sector. They offer individual training and workplace support to ensure that autistic employees can fully utilise their abilities while meeting the needs of employers.

c) The "Inclusion Companies" programme is promoted by various German municipalities and organisations and offers individual employment opportunities for people with autism and other disabilities. These companies are designed to create a supportive environment in which employees can develop their skills while contributing to society.

d) The "Autism Therapy Centres" in Germany offer therapeutic services as well as vocational training programmes aimed at preparing individuals with autism for successful integration into the labour market. These programmes often include internships, job coaching, and job search support.

e) The "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Unterstützte Beschäftigung" (bag ub) is a German organisation that works to promote the vocational integration of people with disabilities, including autism. They offer various programmes and resources to help individuals with autism find and maintain jobs that match their skills and interests.

Research Gaps & Implications for Practice

The literature highlights several gaps and limitations that warrant attention and further research. These gaps offer valuable opportunities to align future actions with the project's objectives:

1. Sample Size and Descriptive Results: Many studies lack sufficient sample sizes, leading to limited descriptive results. Larger and more diverse samples should be incorporated to obtain more comprehensive insights.

2. Long-Term Impact Assessment: There is a need for longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of VET programs on people with autism. Long-term follow-ups can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions in real-world settings.

3. Control Group in Program Evaluation: The absence of control groups in vocational skills programs evaluation limits the robustness of findings. Control groups should be incorporated to facilitate a more rigorous assessment of program effects.

4. Generalizability and Diverse Populations: Most studies focus on specific subgroups within the autism spectrum, raising concerns about generalisation. Studies across diverse populations should be replicated and set up to enhance external validity.

5. Assessment Tools for Social Behaviours: The reliance on self-report measures poses limitations in capturing the complexities of social and empathic behaviours. Diverse and sensitive assessment tools should be introduced for a comprehensive understanding of changes.

6. Parental Perspectives and Structured Input: While family feedback is collected in most studies, there's a lack of systematic evaluations of changes in children's behaviour. A structured family input should be introduced to provide a holistic view of program effects.

7. Comprehensive Outcome Measures: Some studies focus narrowly on specific outcomes, highlighting the need for a broader range of outcome measures. Measures

such as quality of life, independence, and well-being should be included for a more holistic assessment.

8. Tailoring Interventions for Heterogeneity: There's a call to explore vocational program effectiveness across the autism spectrum to address the unique needs of different subgroups. All interventions should be adapted to accommodate diverse strengths and challenges of people with autism.

9. Exploration of Negative Aspects: Many studies emphasise positive outcomes, neglecting potential challenges or negative aspects of vocational programs. Balanced evaluations should be conducted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the positive and negative outcomes.

10. Cultural Considerations: The literature lacks exploration of cultural factors impacting the effectiveness and acceptance of interventions. Future research should examine how cultural contexts influence implementation and outcomes.

11. Ethical Considerations in Virtual Environments: Given the potential impact on behaviour and perception, ethical considerations in using virtual environments for training individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders need exploration. This includes issues related to privacy and informed consent.

12. Long-Term Effects and Sustainability in Virtual Environments: Most studies focus on short-term improvements, highlighting the need for research on the long-term sustainability of skills acquired in virtual environments.

13. Individual Differences and Personalization in Virtual Environments: A deeper understanding of individual differences within neurodevelopmental disorders is needed to personalise virtual training approaches effectively.

14. Neuroscientific Correlates of Virtual Training: Investigating neuroscientific correlates could provide insights into underlying mechanisms of skill acquisition and generalisation in virtual environments.

15. Stakeholder Engagement in Virtual Environments: Incorporating stakeholders' perspectives in the design and evaluation of virtual training programs is essential to ensure alignment with end-users needs and preferences.

16. Long-Term Studies on VET Program Effectiveness: Future research should concentrate on collecting long-term data to understand how VET programs influence the employability and well-being of individuals with autism over time.

17. Identification of Best Practices in VET Programs: identify successful models of VET programs for individuals with autism to provide guidelines for future programs.

18. Evaluation of Stakeholder Experiences in VET Programs: incorporate the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders involved in VET programs to improve existing programs and identify effective support options.

19. Broader Measures of Well-being in VET Programs: Expanding the exploration of well-being beyond happiness to include life satisfaction, social relationships, and mental health would offer a more comprehensive view of VET program outcomes.

20. Comparative Effectiveness of VET Programs: Comparative studies assessing the effectiveness of VET programs against traditional methods or other innovative approaches would provide a comprehensive understanding of strengths and limitations.

Addressing these research gaps will lead to a more nuanced understanding of VET for people with autism and inform the development of more effective and inclusive interventions. The Green ASC Vet project could play an important role in trying to overcome these gaps by:

1. Creating a Safe Environment for Skill Development: The project should prioritise creating a safe and supportive environment for individuals with autism to reduce anxiety and facilitate skill development. This involves structuring training programs in clear and actionable steps, considering the needs of each participant, and gradually introducing different types of extended reality (XR) technology, such as video modelling and virtual reality (VR) simulations, based on individual readiness.

2. Diversification of Study Samples: the project should aim to include diverse demographics and levels of functioning within the autistic population to enhance the generalizability of findings and improve the relevance of interventions. It should also ensure diverse representation in their interventions to accommodate the heterogeneity within the autistic population.

3. Longitudinal Studies: Collaborative efforts are necessary to design and implement longitudinal studies that track participants over extended periods. These studies are essential for understanding the sustained impact of interventions on individuals with autism and for informing evidence-based practices.

4. Comparative Studies: the project should incorporate control groups and alternative interventions to assess the relative effectiveness of different approaches in vocational training. The project can use findings from comparative studies to guide decision-making and optimise intervention strategies.

5. Tailored Interventions: The project should adapt interventions based on individual differences within the autistic population, recognizing and accommodating diverse strengths and challenges. This customization enhances intervention effectiveness and ensures that interventions meet the specific needs of each participant.

6. Inclusion of Parental Involvement: Integrating structured feedback from parents enhances intervention effectiveness by providing insights into participants' progress and needs. The project should actively involve parents in the intervention process to ensure a collaborative approach to skill development.

7. Addressing Generalization Challenges: Interventions should include real-life scenarios and provide ongoing support to facilitate the generalisation of learned skills to diverse contexts. The project should design interventions with a focus on ensuring the application of acquired skills in real-world situations.

8. Holistic Outcome Measures: The project should broaden their assessment criteria to include a range of outcomes beyond specific behavioural changes. This holistic approach provides a comprehensive understanding of intervention impact and ensures that interventions improve overall life experiences.

9. Utilising XR Technology: The project should leverage XR technology to design cost-effective and accessible training modules that are engaging and relevant for learners with neurodevelopmental disorders. Features such as tailored prompts, corrective feedback, and multisensory cues should be incorporated to enhance training effectiveness.

10. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity: Designers of XR solutions should consider cultural factors to ensure that virtual environments are sensitive to diverse backgrounds and experiences. Involving stakeholders, including individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, educators, and caregivers, in the design process promotes inclusivity and enhances the relevance of interventions.

Conclusion

This literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and requirements faced by individuals with autism in employment and vocational training. It guides the development and implementation of evidence-based practices, policy recommendations, and interventions within the project.

While global initiatives like Project SEARCH and Ambitious about Autism demonstrate successful models for supporting individuals with autism, there remains a gap in official programs and guidelines for vocational training in various countries, including Portugal, Croatia, or Denmark. The review also identifies gaps in the literature, such as the lack of documented examples of autistic students in VET in these countries. This highlights the need for collective efforts to enable more autistic individuals to access tailored educational programs and progress in their education and careers. Thus, it is urgent to tailor approaches and specialised support services within mainstream educational systems to address this gap and enhance vocational training for individuals with autism.

The review also highlights the importance of holistic, person-centred approaches that prioritise skill development, social integration, and long-term success in the workforce. By synthesising existing research, the project aims to create impactful

interventions that empower individuals with autism to thrive in vocational settings. The conclusions drawn offer valuable insights into the significance of effective interview preparation, virtual settings, and workplace environments for individuals on the autism spectrum. It underscores the importance of tailored interventions, such as those provided by Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, in enhancing the skills, independence, and employability of individuals with autism. It also emphasises the need of co-design involving neurodivergent individuals in the development of initiatives and training programs. It sheds light on the shortcomings in existing initiatives and underscores the importance of broader developments that encompass both neurotypical employers and neurodivergent applicants.

Overall, the research's significance for initiatives like the Green ASC VET - Metautism project lies in addressing these gaps and proposing strategies to adapt successful international models to enhance vocational and professional training for individuals with autism. By synthesising existing research, the literature review provides a roadmap for the project to develop evidence-based practices, inform policy recommendations, and create impactful interventions that empower individuals with autism to thrive in vocational settings.

References

Adjorlu, A. (2020, 2020). *Adolescent Under Construction: An exploration of how virtual reality can be used to teach social and daily living skills to children and adolescents diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.* The Technical Faculty of IT and DesignSection for Media Technology - Campus Copenhagen, Department of Architecture, Design and Media Technology. Aalborg Universitetsforlag. Retrieved 2024, from https://vbn.aau.dk/en/publications/adolescent-under-construction-an-exploration-of-how-virtual-reali

Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje (2008). Poučavanje učenika s autizmom - školski priručnik. Zagreb. Translated from English courtesy of The Ministry of Education of British Columbia, Canada. Available at www.azoo.hr and http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/autism.pdf

Barbir, T. (2021). Inkluzija učenika s poremećajem iz spektra autizma (u redovne škole) – perspektiva roditelja (Diplomski rad). Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Edukacijsko-rehabilitacijski fakultet. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:158:381798 on 27.12.2023

Baumgartner, F., Dalferth, M., & Vogel, H. (2009). Berufliche Teilhabe für Menschen aus dem Autismus-Spektrum: Wege aus der Isolation [Professional participation for people from the autism spectrum: Ways out of isolation]. Retrieved from https://www.winter-verlag.de/de/detail/978-3-8253-5596-9/Baumgartner_et_al_Berufliche_Teilhabe/

Begović, M. (2019). Poučavanje učenika s poremećajima sa spektra autizma (Završni rad). Osijek: Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:740537 on 27.12.2023

Beenstock, M., Pinto, O., & Rimmerman, A. (2020). Transition into adulthood With autism spectrum disorders: A longitudinal population cohort study of socioeconomic outcomes. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 1044207320943590. 10.1177/1044207320943590.

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., et al. (2016). Psychiatric service use and psychiatric disorders in adults with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 60*(1), 32–43.

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Hong, J., Smith, L. E., Makuch, R. A., Greenberg, J. S., & Mailick, M. R. (2016). Characterizing objective quality of life and normative outcomes in adults with autism spectrum disorder: An exploratory latent class analysis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 46*(8), 2707–2719. 10.1007/s10803-016-2816-3.

Budek, T. (2021). Posebnosti odgoja i obrazovanja dječaka s poremećajem iz spektra autizma-studija slučaja (Diplomski rad). Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:810893 on 27.12.2023

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Persons with a disability: Labor force characteristics- 2019* (DHHS publication No.USDL-20-0339). Government Printing Office.

Burgess, S., & Cimera, R. E. (2014). Employment outcomes of transition-aged adults with autism spectrum disorders: A state of the states report. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 119*(1), 64–83. 10.1352/1944-7558-119.1.64.

Cedefop (2022). Teachers and trainers in a changing world: building up competences for inclusive, green and digitalised vocational education and training (VET): synthesis report. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper, No 86.

Cedefop. Professional development for inclusive teaching and training. Problem Statement.

Cedefop (2021). VET Teachers and Trainers' Competence in Creating Inclusion and Excellence – European Policy Agenda, Approaches and Challenges

Christine M. Freitag, Luise Poustka, Inge Kamp-Becker, Kai Vogeley, and Ludger Tebartz van Elst (2020). Transition bei Autismus-Spektrum-Störungen. In Kinder und Jugendpsychiatrie und Psychotherapie. Retrieved from https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/abs/10.1024/1422-4917/a000715?journalCode=kij

Clarke, E., Sterrett, K., & Lord, C. (2021). Work & Well-Being: Vocational Activity Trajectories in Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Res, 14*(12), 2613–2624. doi:10.1002/aur.2606.

Cordell, A. T. (2023). Creating a vocational training site for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 1–7. DOI:10.1177/10534512231156882

Curtiss, S. L., Lee, G. K., Chun, J., Lee, H., Kuo, H. J., & Ami-Narh, D. (2021). Autistic young adults', parents', and practitioners' expectations of the transition to adulthood. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 44*(3), 174–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143420967662.

Danish and British Protection from Disability Discrimination at Work - Past, Present and Future. (2015). *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations, 31*(1). doi:https://doi.org/10.54648/ijcl2015006

Dinter, I. (2004). Integration von Menschen mit Autismus in Ausbildung und Arbeit [Integration of people with autism in training and work]. Retrieved from https://bidok.uibk.ac.at/library/imp-29-04-dinter-autismus.html

Eastman, K., Zahn, G., Ahnupkana, W., & Havumaki, B. (2021). Small town transition services model: Postsecondary planning for students with autism spectrum disorder. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 40*(3), 157–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/87568705211027978.

Employment Autism's online resources https://employmentautism.org.uk/interviews-alternatives-and-adjustments/

Flower, R. L., Hedley, D., Spoor, J. R., & Dissanayake, C. (2019). An alternative pathway to employment for autistic job-seekers: a case study of a training and assessment program targeted to autistic job candidates. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 71*(3), 407–428. doi:10.1080/13636820.2019.1636846

Gal, E., Dyck, M. J., & Passmore, A. (2015). The employment of individuals with autism spectrum disorders: A literature review. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 42*(3), 215-224.

Gal, E., Selanikyo, E., Bar-Haim Erez, A., & Katz, N. (2015). Integration in the vocational world: How does it affect quality of life and subjective well-being of young adults with ASD. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 12*(9), 10820–10832. 10.3390/ijerph120910820.

Gal, E., et al. (2015). Participation in Leisure Activities and Tourism Among Adolescents with High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 38*, 338–343.

Ganz, A. S., Roeren, E. W., Wieczorek, J., & et al. (2020). Herausforderungen von Ausbildung und Beruf für Menschen mit Autismus-Spektrum-Störung [Challenges of training and profession for people with autism spectrum disorder]. Retrieved from https://edudoc.ch/record/211442

Gfeller, Raffaella (2018). Informatik und Autismus: Was sind Herausforderungen und Gelingens-Faktoren, damit die Ausbildung von Menschen mit Autismus-Spektrum-Störung im Informatikberuf gelingen kann? Retrieved from https://digitalcollection.zhaw.ch/handle/11475/14473

Handicaptillæg. (2024, 03). Retrieved from Uddanelses- og Forskningsstyrelsen: https://www.su.dk/su/saerlig-stoette-til-foraeldre-handicappede-mv/handicaptillaeg/

Hanns Rüdiger Röttgers, Katrin Rentmeister (2020). Alltagsorientiertes Lernen von Menschen mit Autismus. Retrieved from https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=FrL1DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=autism+Ausbildung&ots=RygWtwhwo1&sig=rIEhQGKpRLSC3VqzL7aURHZ1cfM#v=onepage&q=autism%20Ausbildung&f=false

Hillier, A. J., Fish, T., Siegel, J. H., & Beversdorf, D. Q. (2011). *Social and vocational skills training reduces self-reported anxiety and depression among young adults on the autism spectrum.* Springer Science+Business Media, LLC

Howlin, P., & Magiati, I. (2017). Autism spectrum disorder: Outcomes in adulthood. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 30*(2), 69–76.

Howlin, P., & Moss, P. (2012). Adults with autism spectrum disorders. Canadian journal of psychiatry. *Revue canadienne de psychiatrie, 57*(5), 275–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/070674371205700502.

Howlin, P., Goode, S., Hutton, J., & Rutter, M. (2004). Adult outcome for children with autism. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry and allied disciplines, 45*(2), 212–229. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00215.x.

Joller, Michael (2023). Ausbildung von Jugendlichen mit einer Autismus-Spektrum-Störung. Retrieved from https://digitalcollection.zhaw.ch/handle/11475/28849

Kállai, B. (2018). *Perceived Psychosocial Work Environment and Support among Employed Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Cross-sectional Survey Study in Sweden.* Department of

Psychology. University of Lund. Retrieved from https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=8959843&fileOId=8959851

Kandalaft, M. R., Didehbani, N., Krawczyk, D. C., & Allen, T. T. (2013). The use of computerized working memory training in youth with autism spectrum disorder: A review. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 43*(6), 1406-1412.

Ki-moon, B. (2015, April 02). Secretary-general invites business to commit to hiring people with autism, as he launches 'call to action' initiative on world day. https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm16639.doc.htm

Kiš-Novak, D., Špehar, A. (2018). Strategije obrazovanja i aktivno učenje u razrednoj nastavi kod učenika s autizmom na primjeru prirodoslovne teme (studija slučaja). Časopis Educatio Biologiae, 4:87-98. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.32633/eb.4.6 on 27.12.2023

KLAP Job. (n.d.). Retrieved from KLAP Job: https://klapjob.dk/

Klart til start. (n.d.). Retrieved from Klart til start: https://klartilstart.dk/

Kudek Mirošević, J. Formativno vrednovanje – temeljna uloga inkluzivnoga učenja i poučavanja učenika s teškoćama (Stručni rad). Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu. Retrieved from https://hker.hr/data/documents/rad-kudek-mirosevic.pdf on 11.03.2024

Kun Zhou, Siyue Ma, Zhiqin Gu, Shuting Li, Xinchao Liu (2022). Meta-analysis of Vocational Skills Intervention in Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, Volume 35, pages 523–549.

LaRue, R. H., Manente, C. J., Maraventano, J. C., Budge, J., Butler, C., Hoffmann, M. R., & Kahng, S. (In Leaf, J. B., Cihon, J. H., Ferguson, J. L., & Gerhardt, P. F. Eds.). (2022). Employment and vocational skills for individuals with autism. In *Handbook of Quality of Life for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (pp. 377). Springer.

Læringsfilm til VR på autismeområdet. (2024, 01). Retrieved from Velfærdsteknologi & hjælpemiddler Aarhus: https://velfaerdsteknologi.aarhus.dk/opi-pulje-til-velfaerdsteknologi/projekter-velfaerdsteknologisk-opi-pulje/laeringsfilm-til-vr-paa-autismeomraadet

Levačić, D. (2019). Poremećaj iz spektra autizma:stavovi, znanja i potrebe stručnjaka (Diplomski rad). Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Edukacijsko-rehabilitacijski fakultet. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:158:325174 on 24.03.2024

Liptak, G. S., et al. (2011). Disparities in Diagnosis and Access to Health Services for Children with Autism: Data from the National Survey of Children's Health. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, 32*(9), 724–731.

Matthew J. Konst (2017). Vocational Training for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Handbook of Treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorder.* pp 289 – 310.

Mange autistiske unge står uden job og uddannelse. (2022, 06 30). Retrieved from Autismeforeningen: https://www.autismeforeningen.dk/news/nyheder-2022/mange-autistiske-unge-staar-uden-job-og-uddannelse/

Measures for placing disabled persons in employment. (2023, 05 22). Retrieved from Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment: https://www.star.dk/en/active-labour-market-policy-measures/measures-for-placing-disabled-persons-in-employment/

Michalski, S. C., Ellison, C., Szpak, A., & Loetscher, T. (2021). Vocational training in virtual environments for people with neurodevelopmental disorders: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*. Advanced online publication. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.627301

Miličević, M. (2022). Informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije u obrazovanju učenika s posebnim odgojno-obrazovnim potrebama (Diplomski rad). Pula: Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Fakultet informatike. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:137:973900 on 11.3.2024

Mona Larsen, V. J. (2023). Handicap og beskæftigelse 2022. Det Nationale Forsknings- og Analysecenter for Velfærd. Retrieved 2024, from https://www.vive.dk/da/udgivelser/handicap-og-beskaeftigelse-2022-yz21gq0v/

Müller, K. (2015). Inklusion von Menschen im autistischen Spektrum in den Arbeitsmarkt [Inclusion of people in the autism spectrum in the labor market]. In Autismus und Arbeit. Retrieved from https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=sAONCgAAQBAJ

Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje te opće obvezno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje (2011). Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa Republike Hrvatske.

Newbutt, N., Flynn, R., & Bradley, R. (2016b). "A Veil of Mystery": Technology, Teachers, and Autism Education in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 46*(4), 1285-1293.

Nextjob. (n.d.). Retrieved from Gentofte Kommune: https://nextjob.gentofte.dk/da

Nicholas, D. B., Mitchell, W., Dudley, C., Clarke, M., & Zulla, R. (2017). An ecosystem approach to employment and autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 48*(1), 264–275. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3351-6.

Nordisk, N. (n.d.). Including the excluded. Retrieved 03 21, 2024, from Novo Nordisk: https://www.novonordisk.com/sustainable-business/diversity-and-inclusion/including-the-excluded.html

Office for National Statistics. (2021, February 18). *Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2020*. UK Statistics Authority. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2020

Pfeiffer, B., Brusilovskiy, E., Davidson, A., & Persch, A. (2018). Impact of person-environment fit on job satisfaction for working adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 48*, 49–57. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-170915

Platzer, D. L. (2019). Autism at Work: Labor, Reason, and the Value of Difference. Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved 03 2024, from https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/items/af820dbe-48c0-4dcf-b323-2c9bde6fb2fe

Popčević, K., Ivšac Pavliša, J, Bohaček, A., Šimleša, S., Bašić, B. (2016). Znanstveno utemeljene intervencije kod poremećaja iz spektra autizma. Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja 2016, Vol 52, br. 1, str. 100-113.

Rachel Seaman-Tullis, Helen Malone (2016). Vocational Skills Interventions for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities 28*(3). DOI:10.1007/s10882-016-9479-z

Recognition of Youth Work - Denmark. (2024, 03). Retrieved from Council of European Union: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/national-situations/-/asset_publisher/yTXkP9XUfXHe/content/denmark#:~:text=In%20Denmark%2C%20youth%20worker%20is,for%20third%20sector%20youth%20workers.

Rosen, R., Weiss, P. L., Zancanaro, M., & Gal, E. (2017). Usability of a video modeling computer application for the vocational training of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 80*(4), 208–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022616680367

Schuster, N., & Schuster, U. (2022). Vielfalt leben- Inklusion von Menschen mit Autismus in die Arbeitswelt [Living diversity - Inclusion of people with autism in the working world]. Retrieved from https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=8xdIEAAAQBAJ

Shattuck, P. T., et al. (2012). Services for adults with an autism spectrum disorder. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 57*(5), 284–291.

Sigur, D. (2019). Individualizirani odgojno-obrazovni program za učenika s poremećajem iz spektra autizma (Diplomski rad). Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Učiteljski fakultet. Retrieved from https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:147:911791 on 23.12.2023

Singer, J. (1999). "Why can't you be normal for once in your life?" in *Disability, identity, and culture: An international and interdisciplinary reader*.

Smith, M. J., Pinto, R. M., Dawalt, L., Smith, J. D., Sherwood, K., Miles, R., Taylor, J., Hume, K., Dawkins, T., Baker-Ericzén, M., Frazier, T., Humm, L., & Steacy, C. (2019). Using community-engaged methods to adapt virtual reality job interview training for transition-age youth on the autism spectrum. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 61,* 101498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2019.101498

Smjernice za vrednovanje procesa i ostvarenosti odgojno-obrazovnih ishoda u osnovnoškolskome i srednjoškolskome odgoju i obrazovanju (2019). Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja Republike Hrvatske. Retrieved from https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/PristupInformacijama/eSavjetovanja-2019/Smjernice%20za%20vrednovanje%20procesa%20i%20ostvarenosti%20odgojno-obrazovnih%20ishoda%20-%20eSavjetovanje%204-12-2019.pdf on 08.02.2024

Smjernice za rad s učenicima s teškoćama (2021). Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja Republike Hrvatske. Retrieved from https://mzo.gov.hr/vijesti/smjernice-za-rad-s-ucenicima-s-teskocama/4450 on 08.02.2024

Stošić, J. (2009). Primijenjena analiza ponašanja i autizam – vodič kroz terminologiju. Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja 2009, Vol 45, br. 2, str. 69-80.

Sovi. (n.d.). Retrieved from Sovi: https://sovi-autisme.dk/

Special Minds. (n.d.). Retrieved from Special Minds: https://specialminds.dk/

Special Minds IT. (n.d.). Retrieved from Special Minds IT: https://specialmindsit.dk/

Specialisterne . (n.d.). Retrieved from Specialisterne Denmark: https://dk.specialisterne.com/

Tamara Barbir (2021). Inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder (in regular schools) - a parent's perspective.

Taylor, J. L., et al. (2014). The Post-Secondary Enrollment Experiences of Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 44*(12), 3007–3017.

Taylor J. L., Center, V. K., & Mailick, M. R. (2014). A longitudinal examination of 10-year change in vocational and educational activities for adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Developmental Psychology, 50*(3), 699–708. 10.1037/a0034297.

Taylor JL, Smith LE, & Mailick MR (2014). Engagement in vocational activities promotes behavioral development for adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 44*(6), 1447–1460. 10.1007/s10803-013-2010-9.

Toft, G. L. (n.d.). Assessment of educational attainment and employment among individuals with autism spectrum disorder in Denmark. JAMA pediatrics(2021;175(6)), 601-608. doi:doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.0124

Unge med autisme ser verden i øjnene gennem VR-briller. (2021, 01). Retrieved from Special minds: https://specialminds.dk/2793-2/

Velki, T., Romstein, K. (2018). Priručnik za rad s učenicima s teškoćama u razvoju u srednjim školama. Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Fakultet za odgojne i obrazovne znanosti. Osijek
Vican, D., Karamatić Brčić, M. (2013). Obrazovna inkluzija u kontekstu svjetskih i nacionalnih obrazovnih politika - s osvrtom na hrvatsku obrazovnu stvarnost. Časopis Život i škola, br. 30 (2/2013.), god. 59., str. 48-66.

Virtual reality til social træning. (n.d.). Retrieved from Autismeplatform: https://autismeplatform.dk/projekter/virtual-reality-til-social-traening/

VIRTUS project: https://www.project-virtus.eu/

Volkmar, F. R., & Reichow, B. (2014). Autism in DSM-5: progress and challenges. *Molecular Autism, 5*(1), 1-3.

Walsh, L., Lydon, S., Healy, O., (2014). Employment and Vocational Skills Among Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Predictors, Impact, and Interventions. Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, Volume 1, pages 266–275

Weinel, J., Cunningham, S., & Pickles, J. (2018). Deep subjectivity and empathy in virtual reality: A case study on the Autism TMI virtual reality experience. In M. Filimowicz & V. Tzankova (Eds.), *New Directions in Third Wave Human-Computer Interaction: Volume 1 - Technologies* (pp. 183-). Springer International Publishing AG. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73356-2_11

Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi (2008). Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa Republike Hrvatske.