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Perspectives on Autism Spectrum Disorder

edited by
Loredana Al Ghazi, Tamara Zappaterra

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Foreword

Loredana Al Ghazi, Tamara Zappaterra

This book represents one of the intellectual outputs of the European project “Innovative Academic Course on Integrative Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders - IACIIC-ASD” (KA2 – Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices – KA203 Strategic Partnership for Higher Education), which lasted from November 2017 to November 2019 (and its publication is funded by the Erasmus + Programme).

The coordinator of the project was the West University of Timisoara (Romania), and the partners were the Sveuciliste u Zabrebu Educacijsko-Rehabilitacijski Acijski Facultet (Croatia), and “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu (Romania) and Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italy). Università degli Studi di Firenze was also the leading organisation for this output.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) refers to a group of complex neurodevelopmental disorders characterized by repetitive and specific patterns of behavior and difficulties with social communication and interaction (APA, 2013). At international level, the theme of ASD has received particular attention in recent years from the point of view of educational policies and educational institutions, from which the need to take stock of this issue at European level. According to the Higher Education Reform the partnership proposed an innovative approach to the ASD, that enhanced the quality and relevance of student’s knowledge and skills in the field. This not only enrich the curricular offer of partner Universities, but also respond to a specific need will increase the number of qualified and high-skilled graduates who will work with children with ASD and their families. The four Universities jointly delivered a Course in a blended manner (face-to-face and via an online platform), and the students from three different countries (Romania, Italy, Croatia) gained access to a set of activities supported by ITC, in line with the EU policy paper on Rethinking Education.

The book is structured in three parts: the first one is theoretical, the second one includes contributions concerning specific aspects of ASD, and the third gathers some studies emphasizing the national contexts.