



Inclusive Investment: an exciting year ahead

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For the a4i project, 2021 will be year of inclusive investment training! Thanks to the piloting of the project's brand-new training course in Belgium, Czechia and Spain, investors and social care providers will enjoy a tailor-made training programme to create real quality social investment opportunities across the continent.

The Alliance for Inclusive Investment in Social Care and Support (a4i project), funded by Erasmus +, was launched in 2019 to support collaboration between investors and social care providers by developing common skills and understanding thanks to a unique and innovative content structure and teaching approach. Indeed, the “a4i project” coordinated by the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), brings together representatives of higher education institutions, private investors and social services from Belgium, Spain and Czech Republic.

The year 2020 saw a great number of accomplishments for “a4i”, despite the challenging context of the coronavirus crisis. We launched the first version of the [State-of-the-art report](#) providing a clear European assessment on social investment in social care and support and [European Guidelines on Quality Social Investment](#), which aim to provide the basic guidelines on social investment from a cross-European perspective.

In 2020, the universal Professional Development Programme's framework and content (13 modules) has been developed. It will provide the key training courses on social investment which would apply across Europe focusing on private Investment, human rights, private finance, social care, social business, financial instruments, social impact and risk assessment and mitigation.

According to Josune Prieto Alonso, Researcher at Mondragon Innovation & Knowledge and Team Coach at Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation programme in Mondragon University , “this is the first time social providers, investors and universities have come together to develop a joint training course and it is the better for it. By bringing together the different stakeholders (social providers and entrepreneurs, private financial entities and public institutions), the outcome is that we now have a universal training course which is in sync with the practical realities and needs in the field.

Moreover, the [Knowledge Centre](#) available online is spreading a4i outputs as well as materials on social investment in the EU. Finally, 2020 has been the year of the first a4i piloting. In October 2020, Czechia was the first country to start its piloting with a face-to-face training, with participants from both private investors and the social care sector! Collaboration is already visible thanks to expert panels, case studies and the support of mentors to participants.

According to Jiří Horecký, President of the Czech Association of Social Service Providers, “the first session for the piloting of the a4i professional development course in the Czech Republic went down extremely well with the trainees. The fact that the training was done by key experts from the field meant that it was far more focused on the real social investment needs from the trainees on the ground”

In 2021, the Czech piloting will be joined by Belgium and Spain. Furthermore, an universal MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and three national MOOCs will be created. Based upon the professional development programme and enriched by the three piloting experiences, these MOOCs will ensure the long-lasting spread of lessons learned during the "a4i project". These MOOCs will also aim to stimulate a mutual understanding between private investors and social care providers, learn about social investment, as well as promote real quality inclusive investment.

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