

“DAD” - Digital Aided Guide for Fathers-to-be



The DAD Project provides fathers-to-be and other interested persons with a digital guide on baby care basics, ranging from an infant's well being to health and child safety issues. The service responds to new social and family role models by motivating men to actively participate in infant care.

Issues being addressed

Micro census studies in Europe prove that baby and infant care do not only concern a large part of mankind in the private sphere, but also have far-reaching implications on politics and economy. This seems especially obvious when taking into account the decreasing fertility rate and resulting demographic consequences. Low female employment rates and economic and legal burdens to improving male parental leave rights, as well as a societal neglect of the father's role in the education of small children, have jump-started an initiative to develop a baby-care guide customized to men's needs. The DAD-Project addresses all these issues by providing a guide, which enables fathers-to-be to easily deal with the basics of baby care such as baby health, baby safety and baby well being.



Goals of the project

The overall goal of the project is to provide a user-friendly, free e-Service on baby care customized to men's needs, supported by a broad network of experts in the fields of health, pedagogy and child safety. In order to guarantee the service is free for the end-user, a sustainable network of sponsors from the private sector as well as governmental organisations will be established.

The DAD Project contributes to the health of the newborns as well as to the emotional bond between father and child by empowering men to actively participate in baby care. From a women's perspective, this e-service aims at enhancing the chances of re-entry into the labour market by creating more equal sharing of parenting. Further, it should provide an incentive for reconsideration of and improvement of parental leave legislation in Europe.

After the successful implementation of this service in the participating countries, the final goal of the DAD-Project is to present a Deployment Plan and Business Strategy, which should pave the way for European-wide deployment of the service.

Target user addressed

The main target group are fathers and fathers-to-be in five participating European countries. In respective service evaluations among users, women will participate as well in order to gain information on gender differences.

On the sponsors' side, private companies dealing with baby care products, health and baby safety issues as well as governmental organisations and stakeholders will be addressed. In Austria, statistics show that since its introduction to the market in 2004, more than 150,000 users have profited from the service.



Trans-European coverage

Baby care does not only affect each European country but is also closely connected to many different aspects of life, such as parenting, the workforce, and family and gender equality. Second, the year-long call for more equal sharing of parental roles and for an increase in women's employment rates requires a trans-European approach. In order to reach a broader public, an English Master Version of the service will be produced and made available via the projects homepage to all interested people or organisations.

Contribution to EU policies

The DAD Project serves the inclusion goal of the eTEN Programme by providing a free e-service to all men, independent of their social status or origin. It concentrates on one of society's most vulnerable groups – babies – and highlights the importance of infant health care. The user gets information on how to deal with child safety aspects and is informed of risks associated with the wrong use of baby-care products. In this sense, the project also addresses important product safety and injury prevention policy issues.

Further, the project responds to major requirements of the European Gender and Equality policies by motivating a more equal parenting split.



Expected results and deployment potential

Based on the successful experiences of DAD in Austria, the overall aim of the project, which started in June 2007, is to evaluate the capacities of the service deployment to other European markets.

Its acceptance among users, general conditions, and peculiarities of local markets are validated in detail in the course of the 18 months project duration. Additionally, opportunities for sustainable implementation and financing in the partner countries by public authorities and sponsors will be evaluated.

The major outcome will be a business model and deployment plan with guidelines and recommendations for a viable implementation of the service in other European markets.