

CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN CYPRUS

Erasmus+ KA2 project: “REACT - Creation of a Collaborative Environment in e-classrooms”

Intellectual Output 2 “Creation of a set of innovative activities, tools and educational collaborative methods adapted to a virtual classroom curriculum”

Erasmus+ Project
KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Project Number: 2020-1-DE02-KA226-VET-007926



“TRACES – Supporting youth to manage their digital & social media presence”

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution is transforming the way young people play, access information, communicate and learn. Youth today have unprecedented learning opportunities. Digital and social media literacy training is now necessary to ensure that young Europeans can harness the potential of online opportunities to build skills, careers, and relationships effectively but also safely.

OVERVIEW

Project TRACES is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Youth. It created tools for youth professionals (youth workers, youth trainers/ facilitators, social workers, educators, careers advisers) to support the young people manage their online presence.

The digital media are changing every day. The moment we master one, a new one more advanced appears. This is true in all kinds of digital media and for the media we use in Youth Work.

Digital technologies have revolutionized young people’s lives in many ways and policies need to consider both opportunities and challenges, by tapping the potential of social media, equipping youth with digital skills and fostering critical thinking and media literacy.

The capacity of youth professionals to embed the new digital and social media literacy resources into their daily routines is critical to realizing the aims of the TRACES project. To support their continuous professional development an appropriate in-service training resource has been provided.

The project is a program of ERASMUS + and was coordinated and supported by SEAL CYPRUS from 06-2019 to 01-2021.

APPROACH

The digital revolution is transforming the way young people play, access information, communicate and learn. Youth today have unprecedented learning opportunities. Digital and social media literacy training is now necessary to ensure that young Europeans can harness the potential of online opportunities to build skills, careers and relationships effectively but also safely.

The main objectives of TRACES are:

- to support the continuous professional development of youth professionals;
- to develop key digital and social media literacy training material for youth with fewer opportunities;

- to create a policy paper to advocate for the promotion of responsible digital citizenship of youth with fewer opportunities.

To achieve this, the project partners have developed and pilot innovative tools and five main intellectual outputs:

1. Digital and Social Media Literacy Curriculum Resources;
2. In-service Training Programme Handbook;
3. Collaborative online Learning Database;
4. Policy Paper "Policy recommendations on the promotion of digital citizenship for all young people through digital youth work in Cyprus, Finland, Ireland and Romania";
5. Guidelines for Youth Workers working with Digital Media.

IO1 - DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Consortium partners have developed a suite of digital and social media literacy training resources. This suite of resources comprises of 2 resources addressing each of the following themes:

(1) Secure On-line Engagement - how to manage on-line information and keep it safe from on-line risks like identity theft, phishing, Internet scams. This theme will also address analyzing and understanding privacy policies and what they really mean for subscribers

(2) Real & Virtual Identity - how to reconcile on-line and off-line identities raising awareness of effects on ones sense of self, ones reputation and relationships. This theme will help young people explore their own digital lives

(3) On-line Communication - how to use inter-personal and intra-personal skills to build positive on- line communication and relationships. This theme will encourage young people to understand digital citizenship and digital ethics

(4) Cyberbullying - how to deal with a cyberbullying situation. This theme will encourage young people to take an active positive role and be an up-stander helping to create supportive on-line communities

(5) Your Digital Trace - how to protect your own privacy and respect the privacy of others. This theme will encourage young people to self-reflect before they self-reveal and consider the impact of what they share on-line can have today and, in the future.

(6) Credit & Copyright - reflecting on the rights of content creators and the responsibilities of content users. This theme will address issues like plagiarism, piracy, copyright, and fair use

(7) Information Literacy - how to find, evaluate and use information effectively. This theme will help young people assess the quality, credibility and validity of on-line information, websites, and social media platforms

(8) On-line Safety - how to enjoy the collaboration opportunities that the Internet offers without endangering themselves. This theme will help young people distinguish between inappropriate contact and positive connections

Each resource produced comprises some or all of the following elements:

- (1) A short video/animation/quiz/puzzle/multi-media presentation
- (2) A tutor/youth worker manual in pdf format
- (3) A learner handout in pdf format

IO2 - IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

The in-service training curriculum for the continuous professional development of youth professionals has been developed in the form of an in-service Training Programme Handbook.

The in-service training introduces the 16 new digital and social media literacy resources that has been made available and the 8 thematic areas they address. The new resources are media-rich and interactive, and the in-service training familiarizes the youth workers with the new approaches required to effectively use and integrate the new resources into everyday activities.

Working with the local youth workers, partners presented in-service training materials for sampling and validation before including them in the final training programme.

IO3 - COLLABORATIVE ONLINE LEARNING DATABASE

The TRACES Collaborative online Learning Database supports the delivery of all on-line learning components of the project. Through the e-learning section of the Collaborative online Learning Database users can access the full range of the on-line training material developed and to fully use the interactive and collaborative tools provided.

IO4 - POLICY PAPER

The policy paper considers the role to be played by all implicated parties in ensuring that the maximum benefits can be extracted from ubiquitous technologies through responsible digital citizenship based on digital and social media literacy.

The policy paper also addresses the essential role that in-service training for youth professionals plays in achieving quality learning outcomes especially when working in technology enhanced environments.

IO5 - GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

The partners have witnessed a gap in Continuous Professional Development programs for youth workers and youth trainers/ facilitators in the use of Digital Media in Youth Work.

The Guideline document is complementary to all the other resources created. The guidelines document is enriched with the feedback of the youth workers and youth trainers/ facilitators who have participated in the in-service training.

The guide offers advice on the role organizations and youth workers can play in supporting young people to use digital media and new technologies safely and productively.

RESULTS

Digital and social media literacy training resources are available free of charge in all partner languages on the Learning Environment – Repository of the Project.

The in-service training introduces the 16 new digital and social media literacy resources that has been made available and the 8 thematic areas they address. The new resources are media-rich and interactive, and the in-service training familiarizes the youth workers with the new approaches required to effectively use and integrate the new resources into everyday activities.

The Collaborative online Learning Database is constantly updated all through the project life and will continue to be updated and reviewed for a period of 3 years after the lifetime of the project.

The policy paper assesses the experience of the project partners in 3 different countries and make recommendations for policy change on the basis of that experience. It considers why a change of policy approach might be relevant and the cost benefits to be derived from the new model developed. In addition to the project website, the Policy Paper is also published on ISSUU.

The Guideline document offers advice on the role organizations and youth workers can play in supporting young people to use digital media and new technologies safely and productively

CONCLUSIONS

TRACES will equip the youth professionals with practical tools to use in their work. The youth workers will support the young people with fewer opportunities to make the most out of digital and social media for their competence development and to protect themselves from digital threats. Most importantly, young people, whatever their status, who complete the curriculum resources developed as part of the project will bring a considerable skill-set with them wherever they go in their life in the connected world. With the use of a Policy Paper, the partners will start a dialogue on the digital citizenship of young people with fewer opportunities.