

TRY OUR RESULTS!

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TRYing to look through the looking glass

During more than 36 months, a group of school and public administration staff and decision makers, teachers, youth workers and students from nine different organisations from three different countries embarked on an adventure not so unlike the one of Alice 'Through the Looking Glass': they tried to analyse the complexity of learning, motivated to discover a new and somehow unusual world. And like it happened with Alice, "what could be seen from the old room was quite common and uninteresting, but that all the rest was as different as possible". (Carroll, 1946).

The transnational scope of the project provided an unique opportunity to observe good practice examples and learn about different methods as well as policies concerning education, training and youth on international scale, that in greater sense is a prerequisite which ensures continuous improvement of the work of organisations and institutions. So, aiming to increase the quality and relevance of VET by introduction of NFE methods in VET teaching methodology, and to introduce financially self-sufficient school principles in VET organisations in order to improve the organisation's management practices by becoming more cost-efficient and sustainable, the TRY project partners developed a comparative study.

| "If the teacher is monochordic and doesn't interact in a lighter way, if he or she is more imposing, it is harder and more boring to learn." |
 "For instance, through movies that tackle the learning subject, it is better to be interested and to learn." | "I like the English lessons because we can be on Facebook". | "I like those teachers' classes because they propose different kinds of activities." |
 "It is very important that they explain the lessons well." | "It is important that the teachers motivate the students, support them and teach in an interesting, more playful way." | "More explanation is needed and simpler formulation of lessons and the teacher should be more patient and enthusiastic." | "Neither the 'loose' nor the too rigorous classes are good." | "The teacher should let the students also speak, have discussions." | "The sitting position in the class doesn't help." |



| "I would like to be able to ask my colleagues or the teacher to explain it in a different way." |
"I also like to learn by myself, to debate with the teachers who are close to us, to search the
Internet, to share doubts with colleagues that may know more." | "Certain subjects are more
motivating because they are practical". | "The teachers that come from the regular education
setting don't know how to teach the classes that are practical." | "What I like best in learning is
to understand what explains things around me." | "I appreciate any learning activity that
allows me to talk with different people and overcome that challenge (like internships, being
in charge of hosting visitors to the school)." | "I am more willing to learn when I recognise the
relevance of what I am learning in relation to possible future work and with real life". | "I want
to make use of what I learn." |

These were some of the results from the stage before introducing NFE, when the partners dedicated themselves to the educational context characterization, and to the analysis of teaching methods and management practices. After a period of learning by observation and learning by doing, the teachers took it to themselves to implement NFE as the approach to facilitate the students' learning in their classes, after which the impact of such experience was assessed. After this long endeavour, accompanying three school years (2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020), having collectively looked at both sides of the mirror, and as the project's Impact Study demonstrates, we can affirm that in fact Non Formal Education increases the quality and relevance of Vocational Education and Training and is an important approach in the education process, not only enhancing the skills and competences of young people, but also supporting those who face challenges within the formal learning setting, at the same time creating the conditions for a more participatory, democratic and sustainable management of the VET institutions.

But the main lesson taken from this process is that a project of this nature must in fact become a strategy, to which we invite all education providers to adopt. "When Alice fell down the rabbit hole, it was an accident, but when she stepped through the looking glass, it was of her own free will, and a braver deed by far." (Salman Rushdie)

RESULTS

During the last 39 months, Project TRY organized 3 Transnational Project meetings, 3 Learning/Training/Teaching Activities, 6 Multiplier Events and the following 5 Intellectual Outputs:

TRY OUR STUDY

(<http://try-project.eu/study-of-vet-teaching-approaches-and-management-practices/>)

This impact study of vet teaching approaches and management practices aims to underline the similarities and differences, dynamics and directions of change of work processes and describe

the emerged new competence needs before and vvafter the new teaching methodologies and management approaches were introduced. The report gives a common picture on the work process and its changes in all partner countries.

Proper conclusions were drawn and recommendations developed.



TRY OUR DOCUMENTARY

(<http://try-project.eu/documentary-film/>)

This documentary film covers all relevant aspects of project implementation process, using step-by-step approach and captures real life action and real-life dialogue as it happens. A great emphasis will be put on “before and after” result comparison, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and management practices throughout the project. The documentary includes interviews with the main stakeholders – experts, teachers, public authorities and students.

TRY OUR WEBSITES

(<http://try-project.eu/try-our-websites/>)

During the project’s implementation the main tasks for this intellectual output were, in each VET institution partner, (1) to check the existing websites; (2) Brainstorm with relevant stakeholders; (3) Define a new look and concept; and (4) Introduce interactive elements. In the end all VET institution partner’s websites were improved and Project TRY website was developed. All websites produced and improved are freely available and promoted through the Internet and compatible with a wide variety of devices (computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, etc.).

TRY OUR METHODS

(<http://try-project.eu/try-our-non-formal-education-methods/>)

This pedagogical material includes practical tools and tips on how to implement NFE methods in teaching methodology. It provides a list of tools and strategies with easy-to-follow step-by-step approach that is easily applicable to various teaching subjects and situations mainly devoted to the ones with learning difficulties. The methodologies were developed focused on the needs of disadvantaged groups, and used not only to deliver the study material, but also to improve basic knowledge and skills as well as provide with necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic competences for public enlightenment.



TRY OUR GAMES

(<http://try-project.eu/try-our-non-formal-education-games/>)

These games involve NFE elements and ideology and are aimed at facilitation of active learning as well as adoption to different environments. The specific format, topic and attributes of each game was developed according to the main areas of expertise of VET institutions involved in the project (e.g. carpentry, agriculture, tourism, etc.). The tasks from idea generation to actual game

production were performed by students accompanied with the teachers and NFE method practitioners.

Through this process students undergo full cycle of business project management process – starting from idea generation and pitching, project plan development to actual game production, distribution, selling and advertisement. Such experience would develop school children creativity, entrepreneurial capabilities and project management skills.

