INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

PROMO VET

INVESTIGATION STUDY
Executive Summary

PROMOVET
Investigation Study
Executive Summary

Prepared by
Meath Partnership, IE
with the support of and contributions by the
PROMOVET Project Partnership

March 2018

PROJECT
From e-learning to "e" in learning: Quality improvement, professionalization and modernisation of VET training for young low-skilled learners through modern ICT use

PROJECT ACRONYM
PROMOVET

PROJECT NUMBER
2017-1-AT01-KA202-035009

The PROMOVET Investigation Study is part of the first Intellectual Output of the Erasmus+ project *From e-learning to "e" in learning: Quality improvement, professionalization and modernisation of VET training for young low-skilled learners through modern ICT use*.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the PROMOVET Investigation Study

The PROMOVET project aims to develop a new approach to engage low-skilled young people from generations Y and Z in education and training. The project is based on the premise that VET trainers find it increasingly difficult to reach socially disadvantaged and low-skilled young learners through traditional education and training methodologies. As such, the project team has identified that there is a need to innovate in the field of VET provision for low-skilled young people.

Our proposed approach is to up-skill VET teachers and trainers in modern IT tools, applications and social media platforms where young learners are actively engaged through communication and information-sharing activities learning with their peers; so that teachers and trainers can begin to incorporate these new communication channels in their teaching practice and to support the learning of disadvantaged and low-skilled young people. The idea behind this approach is that by interacting with young learners and providing educational content to them on the platforms that they are already using; this will help to provide innovative, quality educational content to young learners through a medium that is interesting and engaging for them. Additionally, due to the nature of the social media platforms, applications and communication channels that young learners are engaged on, content delivered through these platforms will be more visual, aural, interactive and stimulating than traditional methods of education and training currently used in VET in Europe. Rather than providing all learning materials through text-based resources such as books, handouts, journals and essays; the anticipated outcome of PROMOVET is that VET teachers will be empowered and supported to create interactive and engaging content to include short videos of YouTube, 'Stories' on Snapchat or project work which is logged on 'Instagram'; thus modernising how VET is provided to low-skilled young learners across Europe.

As such, the PROMOVET project is aiming to develop an innovative training programme and compendium of supports to enable VET trainers to upskill in this domain. As a direct result of this training and support, PROMOVET will work to improve the quality of VET provision for low-skilled young learners by supporting teachers and trainers to include the most recent and modern Web 2.0 instruments, tools, platforms and programmes in how they plan and deliver their learning content. By undertaking to develop this innovative project, the PROMOVET project team is aiming to solve a key methodological challenge which is facing VET providers and socially disadvantaged young learners in Europe today; namely, how can generation X trainers successfully engage generation Y and Z learners in education and training. Our proposal is to train these teachers in how to use the communication tools and processes practiced by young learners and to develop sound didactical approaches to support teachers and trainers to integrate these tools in their teaching practice. In order to develop this innovative approach to up-skilling VET teachers and trainers, PROMOVET

project partners undertook an extensive research process to ensure that the resources and training materials developed by the project team are of relevance to the actual online communication habits and processes of young learners, and of sufficient quality to support experienced VET trainers to implement this new approach to training and education provision for young learners. This report presents the findings from this extensive research process undertaken by partners in Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Italy and Spain.

Aims of the Investigation Study

This Investigation Study Report is the first intellectual output for the project: 'From e-learning to "e2 in learning: Quality improvement, professionalization and modernisation of VET training for young low-skilled learners through modern ICT use' [PROMOVET]. The aim of the Investigation Study is to better understand the dynamic world of IT and communication tools that young learners are using. The purpose of this Study is to conduct a thorough consultation process with young learners so as to ensure that the highest level of accuracy and relevance is achieved in developing the PROMOVET training materials and resources; and to ensure that project partners fully understand the different channels and instruments used by young low skilled learners so as to be able to accurately train and guide VET teachers and trainers to use these tools in their teaching practice. It was necessary to undertake this research and consultation process to ensure that the training materials developed are relevant and fit-for-purpose. Without consulting young learners, and the educators who work with them, it is not possible for project partners to accurately understand which communication channels are used by young people today, how frequently they use them and how they would like to see these channels re-purposed for use as educational instruments. As such, the Investigation Study acts as a reliable and up-to-date evidence-base which will inform the development of PROMOVET project outputs.

The Investigation Study process has been led by Meath Partnership, and implemented locally by all six implementing project partners. The outcomes from this Investigation Study process have been summarised and collated by all partners and the findings from our collective research activities will inform the future development work of all project outputs, namely:

- IO2 – Web-based Compendium, and
- IO3 – PROMOVET Training Programme.

Overview of the Investigation Study Process

The Investigation Study phase which was undertaken in each partner country included conducting research and analysis of the current practices among target groups, i.e. low-skilled young learners and VET trainers working with these low-skilled young people, to encourage their participation in VET and to improve VET provision to this group of disadvantaged learners. To support the implementation of the Investigation Study process, the following activities where undertaken by project team members in each partner country:

- Desk-based research: collection of data obtained from electronic sources;
- Field-based research: empirical data obtained through participatory approaches involving the target groups.

The desk-based research activities in each country focused on identifying the current national policies and programmes used to engage low-skilled young learners in online learning and a literature review process to identify the most commonly used IT tools and platforms in VET education in each partner country and current quality standards for using IT in VET in each country. In addition, as part of the desk-research activities, each partner also research and profiled 5 social media platforms, apps and communication channels which were allocated to them from the list of 30 tools generated by the PROMOVET project team at the first partner meeting. This best practice research process aimed to directly inform the development of the PROMOVET Web-based Compendium (IO2).

The field-based research process involved conducting a series of 25 questionnaires with both project target groups; namely: low-skilled young learners and VET teachers and trainers who work with low-skilled young learners. The research conducted through these questionnaires was also supported by each partner holding one-to-one and group interviews with education professionals, managers and decision-makers. Project partner each conducted a series of 10 interviews with professionals who had experience and expertise in the field of second-chance education, e-learning, social media, youth education and social inclusion.   These interviews served to validate the research findings obtained through the surveys; as prior to each interview, a summary of the findings from the questionnaires was prepared by each partner and sent to the interviewee to review and provide comment on the accuracy and validity of research findings.

The findings from these activities were summarised by all project partners to produce 6 national Investigation Study reports. An abridged version of the main research findings from these reports has been prepared and presented below.

Explaining the Link between Intellectual Outputs 1, 2 & 3

To inform the development of the Web-based Compendium (IO2), project partners identified 30 social media and online communications tools, platforms and applications which were then research and profiled by all project partners to assess the following aspects of each tool:

1) Name of Social Media or IT Tool
2) Description of the tool – comprehensive description of the IT instrument, social media tool, platform and forum, etc.
3) Functionality of the tool – how does it work?
4) Usability of the tool – who uses the tool and for which purposes?
5) Platform information – Android, iOS, etc.
6) Privacy issues – how is user data treated?
7) Core advantages of using the tool for PROMOVET
8) Core disadvantages of using the tool for PROMOVET

The purpose of undertaking this research process was to identify best practice in how these tools and resources could be used by VET teachers and trainers in their teaching practice. As such, by completing this best practice research task, partners completed a profile of the tools which can be used to directly populate the first part of the Web-based Compendium (IO2).

To inform the development of the PROMOVET Training Programme (IO3), the consortium undertook an extensive desk and field-based research process. The aim of the desk-research was to gather information on the current use of IT tools in VET provision in each partner country, to identify which tools are being used in VET provision in each country and also to present any national policies or standards for integrating IT into VET practice which may influence how PROMOVET is implemented and adopted in each partner country. As part of the field-research process, project partners undertook to complete a series of 25 questionnaires with young learners, 25 questionnaires with VET teachers and trainers who work to support these young learners and also a series of interviews with 10 other education stakeholders. The aim of this comprehensive consultation process was to identify firstly, what are the primary communication channels and applications used by young learners and how are they actually engaging on these platforms; what is the level of understanding of VET teachers and tutors with regard to the communications channels and apps that young learners are using; what are the IT tools that are being used by teachers to engage with young learners inside and outside of the classroom and what are the key areas where additional training and support is required to ensure the successful implementation of the PROMOVET approach in each partner country. While the questionnaires and interviews collected other useful data which will be useful for guiding the development of PROMOVET in each partner country, these are the key findings which will be extrapolated

from the individual national research reports and used to influence how the PROMOVET Training Programme (IO3) is designed and developed in the next phase of the project.

Comparative Analysis of the use of IT in VET Provision

As part of the desk-research activities, each partner undertook to research the current use of IT tools and resources in VET provision in their countries. The aim of this task was to identify which tools are currently being used by VET institutions in Europe, and also to ascertain to what degree IT is currently integrated into vocational education for young learners.

From a review of the national research reports, we learn that in Austria the use of IT tools in the education of low skilled young people is still in its infancy. For that reason, it was not possible to acquire statistics or information about using IT tools in education; and although a large number of institutions in Austria were contacted, it was not possible to obtain information about the use of IT Tools in education. However, from the field-research conducted directly with the target group in Austria, we can deduce that within the group of young research participants, 68 % of teens surveyed use the internet to obtain information about various topics and the IT tool which is most widely used by this group is WhatsApp with a frequency of 100 % among the 25 young people who took part in the survey; however this is only reflective of our relatively small research group and not representative of the national situation in Austria.

In Cyprus, IT tools are more widely integrated in VET provision, but not in any coordinated manner. As such, the use of IT tools, new technologies and modern communication channels varies in terms of its extent, but also in terms of its practical applications. In Cyprus, it is common to use LMS platforms (such as Moodle and Blackboard) for hosting VET courses and it is also common practice to provide an online environment for interaction between the users, for exchange of ideas, for communication, for sharing resources and for completing assignments. In terms of the practical application and integration of IT tools, this varies from the simple use of Email for asynchronous communication between learners or between teachers and learners, to the use of Skype for synchronous communication in groups or one-to-one guidance meetings, to more advanced efforts to integrate tools and platforms in the didactics of a course, such as in educational activities and assignments, and even in assessment and evaluation of student progress, student self-evaluation, or peer-to-peer review and feedback. Despite the various uses of these IT tools and platforms, as mentioned above, there has been no nationally coordinated implementation of IT tools and instruments in VET provision. This is perhaps influenced by the fact that VET National Curricula do not provide specific guidelines or ideas on how to integrate IT tools in teaching. Where recommendations for tools are made by VET policy makers, they typically only recommend the use of IT tools for the benefits that they offer in learning, but they do not provide specific activities or direction to guide teachers and trainers in how to use them.

In contrast to the situation in Austria, and in Ireland as we will discuss, in Finland, recent studies show that IT and digital tools are already quite widely used in VET studies and that,

in general, Finnish VET teachers also have quite a high level of competence in the areas of e-learning, digital teaching and online counselling using digital tools and platforms. In Finland, the problem seems to be that the use of IT and digital tools depends on the digital skills and competences of the individual VET teacher: so therefore, if the VET teacher has excellent or good IT competence they are more likely to use digital tools in their teaching and counselling work, and vice-versa. While the implementation of IT tools in Finland is largely dependent on the skills and competences of the teacher, the digitalization of education is a key priority in Finland. New learning environments and digital materials for schools is one of the key projects being coordinated at a Government level. Additionally, the proposed Government-led reforms of vocational upper secondary education advocates for individualization of VET studies, the development of versatile learning environments and with the upper secondary education matriculation examination being digitalized, the whole examination for all upper secondary learners will be available in digital format in spring 2019. With these measures being implemented in VET provision in Finland, there is an apparent appetite for technology-enhanced VET locally and nationally, and so the PROMOVET project will support local VET centres to deliver education content that is 'individualised' for young learners and in-sync with their overall aims and objectives.

At present, the situation in Italy is that there is no published study or literature which assesses the use of IT tools in VET provision. Despite this, there is an on-going national debate on this issue, as practitioners and policy-makers come to the realisation that a change is needed in how VET is taught and delivered to Italy's disaffected young people. NEETs in Italy number 1 in 5 young people. With such a high percentage of young people not engaged in the labour market or in education or training programmes, there is an obvious need to find new strategies and solutions to re-engage these young people in education and training, so that they can fulfil their potential by securing sustainable employment. Through desk-research activities, it has become apparent that while IT tools could really improve the education system in Italy, especially for this target group, it is unlikely that these changes will take place in the formal education system; and so VET is an obvious avenue for piloting this type of innovation. At present in Italy, programmes on 'digital teaching' are offered to teachers as an active teaching strategy; meaning that online learning is has the potential to enhance the learner's participation and transform the application of training content so that it becomes "real" for learners. As such, there is scope within the sphere of VET in Italy to offer the type of training proposed by the PROMOVET project to teachers working in this field.

Similar to the situation in Italy, in Ireland, there is currently no study or report which has been undertaken to assess the quality of how IT tools are integrated into VET provision nationally, nor to estimate how many VET institutions currently use these tools in their education provision or how many VET learners are engaged in e-learning or learning which is supported through online tools. From our field-based research, we are aware that teachers use Email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google Classrooms and OneNote to contact their

learners outside of the classroom and to provide some additional support and study notes to learners to supplement what is taught in class. Through experience of working with VET institutions in County Meath, we know that local vocational education and training providers use the Moodle platform to host their e-learning content; however, there is no other data or statistics available to assess the popularity or effectiveness of this platform for delivering VET content. While at present there is no defined policy for integrating IT tools and platforms into VET provision in Ireland, SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority of Ireland, is responsible to setting the quality standards for integrating IT into VET provision. To guide the development of technology-enhanced VET in Ireland, SOLAS published a strategy document which outlines the four key elements to be followed when developing technology-enhanced VET. As such, these four elements act as the guidelines for all VET institutions seeking to integrate IT tools and technology into VET provision. According to this strategy, the four elements where technology should be integrated include: programme design; learning content, continuous professional development of teachers and investment in technology infrastructure. The PROMOVET project addresses the first 3 elements listed in this strategy, which shows how apt this project is for supporting the ongoing development of VET in Ireland.

Lastly, the study conducted in Spain focuses on the use of IT tools in the region of Andalusia. The latest Educational Success Plan 2016-2020, which is currently being implemented in this region, comprises of a series of measures that are being applied at different levels. This is a generic plan which was adapted by each VET centre and implemented according to the resources available to the centre, and the specific needs of their learners and target groups attending the centre. The main areas covered in this plan include: teaching and management function; teacher training; methodology and curriculum; diversity of interests; capacities and motivation of students; evaluation and self-evaluation and greater participation for success. The Plan for Improving Educational Success provides a specific section on measures in relation to new information technologies: "for the promotion the use of ICT in the framework of the Digital Strategy Plan in Education in Andalusia" and to create blogs and web spaces in which students and teachers can disseminate their work and experiences. This collaborative working environment between teachers and learners is conducive to the PROMOVET approach to improving VET. In addition, research shows that among the tools most used by teachers and trainers in this region are the Moodle platform and blogs. There is a regional government blog that lists a series of digital tools that are available for teachers but to date there has been no study to assess to what extent they are used by teachers. PROMOVET project partners should review this list of available digital tools when developing the Web-based Compendium, and when localising the content of the Compendium for implementation in Spain.

The results from across the project consortium show that, with the exception of VET in Finland and somewhat in Cyprus, the use of IT tools and instruments in VET provision in partner countries is under-developed; and this supports the hypothesis that there is scope

for PROMOVET to have a significant impact on how VET is delivered to young learners in each respective country. However, despite this, with a perceived lack of IT infrastructure in place in VET institutions in some partner countries, project partners may find it challenging to implement the training if they do not first plan to provide additional IT equipment and improved Wi-Fi access to VET schools and centres for the purpose of delivering the training. This is something that all partners must be aware of when planning the testing of the Web-based Compendium and the implementation and delivery of the PROMOVET Training Programme.

Findings from Investigation Study

In this section, we will briefly present some of the findings from the Investigation Study process undertaken in each partner country, with a specific focus on highlighting the key findings that can influence the development of the Web-based Compendium (IO2) and the PROMOVET Training Programme (IO3).

These findings are taken primarily from the field-based research completed by partners. Through this research, partners have involved a total of 184 young learners aged between 14 and 23 years, 164 VET teachers, trainers, tutors and mentors who work with low-skilled young learners and 57 education stakeholders and decision-makers who were recruited to support the research process through one-to-one and group interviews. As a result of the research conducted with these target groups, project partners feel that we have generated sufficient accurate and up-to-date empirical data to support the development of the PROMOVET project outputs and to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of our target groups locally.

Findings to Inform the Development of IO2 – Web-based Compendium

When developing the Web-based Compendium for VET teachers to use as inspiration and guidance for integrating social media and communication channels in their teaching practice, partners should reflect on the responses obtained to four specific questions from the surveys conducted with young learners which asked learners firstly to identify which websites, platforms or communication channels they use to source information online; which apps, channels and platforms they use to communicate with others online; then to list the websites, platforms and communication channels that they would like to use to support their learning and finally, which platforms and channels they would like to use to develop and create assignments. The responses to these questions are provided below:

   a) *Most common IT tools used by young learners surveyed to search for information online:*
      1. Google
      2. Wikipedia
      3. Facebook

These were the top 3 online tools and platforms listed by young learners surveyed in Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Italy and Ireland. The top websites mentioned by young learners in Spain were Google, Wikipedia and YouTube; with Facebook ranking fourth by this test group.

b) *Most common communication channels used by young learners surveyed in each partner country:*
   1. WhatsApp (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Italy and Spain)
   2. Facebook (mentioned in: Austria, Italy, Ireland and Spain)
   3. Instagram (mentioned in: Cyprus, Finland, Ireland and Spain)
   4. Snapchat (mentioned in: Finland, Ireland)
   5. YouTube (mentioned in: Austria)
   6. Telegram (mentioned in: Italy)

Other online communications channels that were mentioned by young learners in Cyprus include: Viber, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Email, Face-time, WeChat and iMessage.

c) *Preferred IT tools and communication channels that young learners who were surveyed in each country would like to learn through or to use to support their learning:*
   1. YouTube (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Ireland and Spain)
   2. Facebook (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Ireland and Spain)
   3. WhatsApp (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Italy and Spain)
   4. Instagram (mentioned in: Cyprus, Finland and Spain)
   5. Snapchat (mentioned in: Austria, Finland and Ireland)

d) *Preferred IT tools, platforms or communication channels that young learners surveyed would like to use to develop and create assignments:*
   1. YouTube (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Ireland and Spain)
   2. Facebook (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Ireland and Spain)
   3. WhatsApp (mentioned in: Austria, Cyprus, Finland and Italy)
   4. Instagram (mentioned in: Cyprus and Spain)
   5. Snapchat (mentioned in: Ireland)
   6. Office 365 (mentioned in: Finland)

From an analysis of the responses collected to these questions, we can clearly see similarities in the social media and communication channels that are typically used by all young learners who were engaged in this research study. The platforms and applications that they typically use for their communication with peers reappear when we ask them which platforms and channels they would like to use to support their learning and to create and develop assignments. As such, PROMOVET project partners should ensure that all social media and communication channels, and all online tools and platforms, mentioned above are included in the Web-based Compendium, and also that sufficient focus is placed

on these platforms and apps, when developing learning content for the PROMOVET Training Programme to be completed by VET teachers and trainers.

In addition to the responses collected through the surveys with young learners, the development of the Web-based Compendium will also be informed and influenced by the recommendations and responses collected through the survey with teachers and trainers and the interviews with education stakeholders in each partner country. In particular, in the interviews with education stakeholders, managers and decision-makers in each country, specific questions were included in the interviews to elicit recommendations and advice from these experts as to which tools should be included in the Compendium and how VET teachers and tutors should be instructed to use these tools.

Across all research reports compiled by the project team, the tools that were most frequently recommended for use in the PROMOVET Web-based Compendium by educators include:

a) Moodle
b) YouTube
c) Tools available through the Google platform such as Gmail, Google Maps, Google Drive, Google Classroom, etc.
d) Office 365
e) WhatsApp
f) Skype
g) Facebook

What is interesting to highlight at this stage is the difference between the types of applications and platforms that young learners would like to learn through, and those that teachers and trainers recommend for inclusion in the Compendium. In general, the apps that young learners would like to learn through tend to have more of a 'social' focus and are more visual to look at and use; whereas teachers and educators who participated in this research process typically suggested applications and platforms that can be used to share information and communicate with learners in a more traditional e-learning process. So for example, young learners stated that they would like to use Instagram and Snapchat to support their learning; whereas VET teachers and trainers included apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Email which can be used to send information and to communicate one-on-one or in groups and Moodle and Office365 which are used to design and deliver educational content in various formats.

In addition to the tools listed above, Blackboard was mentioned by interviewees in Cyprus. Interviewees from Ireland recommended that the online platforms and apps that were most commonly used by young people in Ireland should become the focus of the PROMOVET

Compendium so that the project achieves its intended objective; this would mean including advice and training on how to use Instagram and Snapchat for education in the Compendium.

In Austria, interviewees also mentioned that Kahoot, Wikipedia and Blogs also have some didactic value and should be included in the Compendium. These interviewees made a very interesting point which reinforces the ethos of the PROMOVET project. The interviewees commented that with the help of IT tools and online platforms, it is possible for teachers to meet young learners on their level and to provide education content and impart knowledge on their learners using these social applications and tools. Therefore, while some tools may not have a natural, intrinsic didactic value, by repurposing these tools so that they are used to transfer knowledge to young learners, this gives the tools a didactic purpose that was not previously envisaged. This point highlights the true innovation of the PROMOVET project.

Interviewees from Finland also made some interesting recommendations on how the PROMOVET Compendium should be developed; namely that it may not be possible to propose a list of 30 tools that are suitable to support VET teachers and trainers, because online tools and environments used varies across subjects in the field of VET, and VET covers such a diverse range of subjects that it may not be possible to distil the required tools into a Compendium of 30 instruments. These interviewees suggested that to support VET teachers to implement the tools profiled, for different subject areas covered by VET, teachers and partners could develop a digital map which highlights the use of digital tools in this field of study. This is based on their opinion that there are different purposes for different tools, for example the digital tools that are used for counselling would naturally differ from the digital tools that are used for documenting on-the-job learning. As such, interviewees recommended that these thematic digital maps be included by partners in the Compendium; perhaps as part of the 'practice examples' to be developed as the second part of the Compendium. The aim of these 'practice examples' is to give VET teachers and trainers support in identifying practical applications for each of the tools listed in the Compendium.

What is interesting to note from the surveys that partners conducted with young learners and teachers is that in both surveys, target group members were given a list of 30 online platforms and social media and communication channels, and from the list of 30, both target groups were asked to highlight which tools they had experience of using for personal or educational purposes. When asked to review the list of 30 tools provided, there was a noticeable discrepancy in some countries between the number of tools that young learners had experience of using, and the number of tools that teachers had experience of using. In particular, in Austria, learners had experience of using 28 of the 30 tools, where teachers only had experience of using 10 of the 30. Similarly, in Ireland learners had used a total of 25 of the tools listed, whereas teachers has only used 11 out of 30; and also in Spain, learners surveyed were familiar with 29 out of the 30 tools, whereas teachers only had experience of using 13 out of the 30 tools listed. This shows that within this test group, partners will have

to undertake additional work with VET teachers and trainers, perhaps through dissemination of the Compendium or through additional support and training, to raise teachers' level of awareness of, and participation on, the vast range of social media and online tools and platforms available today.

Additionally, from an analysis of the responses to this question, we can deduce that in general, the following tools are least well-known by members of both target groups:

1. Google Allo
2. Twenty
3. Web Forums
4. Google Duo
5. WeChat
6. Blogspot
7. Google Hangout
8. Ask.fm
9. Tumblr
10. Periscope
11. LinkedIN
12. Telegram

The list of 30 tools was generated by project partners during a brainstorm session at the first partner meeting in Ireland, when the research framework and data collection tools were being finalised. It was thought at this time, that these 30 tools would become the basis of the Web-based Compendium to be implemented with VET teachers, as they were 30 online and social media tools and channels that fit the purpose of what the PROMOVET project is aiming to achieve. However, project partners were aware at the time that not all of these tools would be widely known and that additional tools might be mentioned by the target group members during the research process that would be better suited for inclusion in the Compendium, as they are already being used by both target groups. As such, the following tools were mentioned by research participants in partner countries as potential tools to be included in the Compendium, as replacements for those that listed above:

1. Moodle
2. OneNote
3. Prezi
4. Weebly
5. Edmodo
6. Wix
7. Kahoot
8. Screencast-O-Matic
9. Office 365
10. Google Docs
11. DropBox

12. iMovie
13. Google Classroom
14. SMS

Based on this outcome from the surveys, it is recommended that project partners update the list of tools to be included in the Compendium to incorporate some or all of these online platforms and tools.

Findings to Inform the Development of IO3 – PROMOVET Training Programme

In order for partners to better understand the extent to which IT is used by VET teachers and trainers in their local area, teachers who were surveyed were asked to provide some details on whether or not they use IT in their teaching practice and which online, social and digital tools and platforms they use in teaching. The purpose of asking teachers these questions was to ascertain their current level of interaction with IT tools for teaching purposes, and also so that partners could gain an insight into the level of IT competence among local teachers, many of whom will become training participants, or potential multipliers, at latter stages of the PROMOVET project. By understanding how IT is currently being used by these teachers, partners can better pitch the level of the PROMOVET Training Programme to be developed so that it responds directly to their training needs and preference.

When asked if they currently use IT tools, platforms and applications in their teaching practice, all 50 teachers who took part in the survey across Cyprus and Spain stated that they do integrate IT tools into their teaching practice. In Austria, 92 % of respondents, or 23 out of 25 teachers surveyed, stated that they use IT in their teaching; and this was followed by Finland where 88 %, or 36 out 41 teachers surveyed, used IT in their teaching and Italy where 76 % of teachers, or 19 out of the 25 surveyed, use digital or online tools in their teaching practice. Ireland had the lowest percentage of VET teachers and trainers who integrated IT in their teaching practice with just 65 %, or 15 out of the 23 surveyed, using IT to support their students' learning.

Next teachers were asked to list the top 3 platforms that they would typically use in their teaching practice. The aim of asking this question was to ascertain which platforms the teachers have experience of using, and also to be able to compare and contrast the online tools, platforms and applications that teachers are using for education purposes, with the types of tools and platforms that young learners identified as 'wanting' to use to support their learning in their survey. The most common online tools and platforms used by VET teachers and trainers surveyed include:

1. Email (used in: Austria, Cyprus Italy, Ireland and Spain)
2. Facebook (used in: Cyprus, Finland, Italy and Ireland)

3. WhatsApp (used in: Austria, Finland, Ireland, Spain)
4. YouTube (used in: Austria, Cyprus and Italy)
5. Moodle (used in: Finland)
6. Google (used in: Spain)

In addition to these online platforms and tools, the following platforms were also mentioned by teachers and trainers in Cyprus: Prezi, Digital games, Discussion forums, Facebook Messenger, Google Drive, Skype, Google Calendar, Google Docs and e-learning platforms.

Next teachers were asked to provide some insight into how these tools are currently being used in their teaching practice. The findings from this question provides partners with a key insight into how teachers are engaging with these tools; and whether they are being used to research topics to be covered in class, for finding relevant notes and additional learning materials for learners, for communicating with learners outside of the classroom or for delivering learning content to learners. Project partners wanted to ascertain if the tools being used by VET teachers are currently being applied didactically or purely for the purposes of communicating with learners and colleagues and sourcing information online. From analysis of the responses collected from teachers who were surveyed, we can deduce that for the most part, where IT tools such as WhatsApp, Email, Skype, Facebook Groups and Messenger are being used by teachers, they are being used purely for communication purposes such as to send and receive homework assignments to learners, to communicate with learners about events in the school or to send notes or reading materials to learners outside of class. Specific examples provided by the teachers surveyed include:

- *WhatsApp* for communication with students and for sending information to learners about events, homework and project work;
- *Email* for communication with students and other teachers, and for sending homework assignments and corrected essays back to learners;
- *Facebook* for posting school notices or posting pictures of school tours or project work.
- *Skype* for contacting learners when they have missed some face-to-face sessions for personal reasons and need to catch up with the classwork that is missed.
- *Facebook Messenger* for sending one-to-one messages to learners and *Facebook Groups* for sending closed-group messages to learners.

In addition, some teachers also mentioned that they use Google and YouTube to find videos which they then show to learners in class to reinforce what is being covered in the lesson; Google+ is used by learners for making presentations and sharing the final product with others; Blogger is used for asking learners to keep a learning diary for a particular project or event that is covered in the school and also that Twitter is used for posting homework notes for learners and also for getting learners to post a short summary of an event or project

they have taken part in. These latter examples show a more pedagogic approach to using these online tools and platforms; they provide insight into the teachers' ability to integrate IT tools into their pedagogic process and also provide some practical examples as to what is possible when applying these IT tools in VET provision.

These findings from the survey with teachers have allowed partners to establish a baseline understanding of what is currently being implemented by local VET teachers, and to identify how partners can most effectively build on these practices in developing the PROMOVET Training Programme, to ensure that modern social media and communication channels can be applied to the VET environment. In addition, from these findings, partners have gained a better insight into the types of supports that VET teachers will need to implement the PROMOVET approach with the young learners.

The training and up-skilling of VET teachers to use these tools constitutes the primary focus of the PROMOVET training programme; however, a second seminal component of this training is to train low-skilled young learners to deliver training to their educators on how to use these online tools in their teaching practice. This is a highly novel and innovative approach to up-skilling experienced VET teachers and trainers, and as such, project partners felt the need to elicit input from education professionals on how best to develop and implement this aspect of the PROMOVET training. As such, during the interviews with education stakeholders, partners asked interviewees to make recommendations, based on their extensive experience of working with young people, to support the development of this innovative training approach. The following is a summary of the recommendations made by education professionals who were interviewed across the project consortium:

1. Make the learning experience fun – ensure that students take it seriously and that they do not use it as an excuse to 'get their own back' on teachers but made it fun and engaging for students too.
2. Incentivise the students to perform the task well by offering a certificate or accreditation for this work – something that can be put on their CV or that will give them confidence.
3. Support the teachers to engage with these platforms and apps – come up with tasks and projects where teachers and students can collaborate together. For example, set a theme for a project on Instagram, set up an account for the task and then get the students and teachers to post photographs or pictures to this page based on the theme.
4. Schools will need to be supported with additional equipment if this training is to be delivered in-house. Laptops, projectors, iPads and Wi-Fi hotspots will all have to be provided in order for the training to be a success.
5. Through the training the role of the teacher should evolve towards a profile of "facilitators of knowledge".
6. Partners should ensure that a suitable online environment or platform is created for the purpose of supporting the delivery of this training, where students and teachers

can share ideas and information, creating an attractive and useful tool to disseminate information and get feedback.

7. The VET teachers and trainers should be the first group to be trained to better understand how students are acting in relation with social networks and IT tools and know how social networks work.

8. It is important that the training starts from the basics and the flipped learning approach would be used.

9. Young learners should be involved in the development process not just delivering the training; because, even though they will not understand the pedagogic theory behind designing the curriculum, they might have good input with regard to the technical features of some of the tools.

10. VET teachers need to be provided with simple training on how to use new technologies and digital tools that young learners would prefer to see integrated in their teaching.

In addition to these recommendations, VET trainers in Cyprus expressed the need to be provided with instructional material and supporting activities that are complementary to the objectives of the VET National Curricula. Another need that was highlighted during the interview process in Cyprus is to ensure that the training materials developed and provided for VET teachers as part of the PROMOVET project have been peer-reviewed and are considered to be of high educational value and valid pedagogic quality. When developing the curriculum framework for the PROMOVET Training Programme, and when planning the implementation of this training locally, partners should bear these recommendations in mind.

Core Messages for Teachers and Trainers

To conclude the research process with young learners, project partners asked learners to share a 'core message' that we could communicate to their educators to encourage them to adopt the approach being advocated by the PROMOVET project. The purpose of asking for these core messages was to be able to describe to teachers the impact that this new approach to VET practice could have on their learners, through the words of the young learners themselves. The learners who contributed to the PROMOVET research process shared the following core messages with us:

- Teachers should make sure that they know how to use the IT tools before introducing them to the class.
- If assignments are posted online, instructions must be clear. Computer-based assignments and online exercises etc. are fine at school, not at home unless clear instructions are given.
- Teachers should be open-minded and patient with learners and vice-versa.
- Important to adapt and grow through new tools of the modern era and take part in learners' learning.
- To understand that we are more used to and comfortable with using the internet because we have grown up online.
- Allow students to learn online as IT is taking over society and I feel we would engage quicker.
- Learning through IT can give students a more varied learning experience.
- Think of your students' needs and help them to help themselves.

Young learners were also invited to make recommendations to the PROMOVET project team, to support us in making sure that project outputs are as relevant to the needs of young learners as possible. The following points summarise some of the key recommendations made by young learners:

- Learners want to see more videos used in teaching practice – they all use YouTube for additional support and in their free-time so they would like to see this integrated into the classroom.
- Focus on making learning more interactive by using some of the instant messaging apps that young learners use – this is how they are used to communicating, so try and integrate this into how they learn also.
- Learning with the help of IT tools is easier as it allows a constant exchange of information with others and answers to all questions posed by learners can be found online.

- Teachers could offer online tutoring to students if they miss a day of school or are struggling with a homework assignment, they can post a question on a Facebook Group and the teacher can post an answer.
- IT can improve and enhance learning for young people by making classes more interactive, more student-centred and more open to global learning, distance learning and self-paced learning;
- Interest in studies could increase if assignments were easily available on apps that people use every day anyway.
- All information can be posted to online groups such as Facebook Groups or on WhatsApp including the days homework so that if learners cannot make it to school that day, they can still cover their homework tasks.

Recommendations for how the IT tools can be used

To conclude the field-research with all target groups and to further inform the development of the PROMOVET outputs, young learners, VET teachers and trainers and education stakeholders who were interviewed were each asked to make recommendations on how they would like to see social media and online communication channels and tools used in VET provision. In this final section, we will review the key recommendations made by each target group.

Recommendations from Young Learners

Learners recommended that:

- WhatsApp be used for homework and for students to ask questions about homework. The learner group or class could have a common group (in addition to students, this group could also include teachers and tutors) and the group could be used to ask questions about homework assignments and get a response quickly and for sharing links and information (e.g. photos).
- Facebook Messenger and Viber be used to set up a group chat for a group-work task or for a class project.
- Email should be used to communicate with teachers, for teachers to send homework assignments to students and for learners to send their completed homework and assignments to teachers.
- Instagram to be used to find pictures online for projects, to document the development of art projects and as a sketchbook or portfolio for art projects;
- Pinterest can be used to find pictures for projects and to find inspiration for art projects in particular.
- Snapchat can be used by teachers to create stories for notes from class work. S
- Skype could be used by learning to consult with teachers and to gain additional support from tutors.
- YouTube can be used to watch videos to further explain what is covered in class and also for specific subjects, for example when looking for videos about science experiments or documentaries about events in history. Where teachers use educational videos in class, they can then send a link to the video to learners via email so that learners can watch the video later to reinforce their learning.

Recommendations from Teachers and Trainers

Teachers recommended that:

- WhatsApp should be used for sending information to learners about events, homework and project work.
- YouTube for finding clips that can be shown in class.
- Email for sending information to learners and for receiving homework and project work that is completed using a PC.
- Twitter for posting homework notes and for getting learners to post a short summary of an event or project completed.
- Moodle can be used to provide learners with access to training materials and content when they are at home or when they cannot make it to class.

Recommendations from Education Experts

- Digital tools and social media are part of modern society, so they should also be part of VET; but it is important that media literacy is taught to young learners and that they are taught to critically evaluate the sources they use when using Wikipedia, for example, to search for information online.
- Learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle or Kahoot are basic tools that can help to provide learning content to young learners in flexible formats; but where teachers can also maintain a level of control and monitoring over who engages with online content, who attends webinars and online sessions.
- Office 365 can be used to improve the collaboration and team-work skills of learners. The ability to work in teams is a vital skill that ought to be improved through the provision of VET as well as the ability to work in virtual teams.
- WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Groups are suitable for quick information sharing.
- Facebook Groups or WhatsApp can be used as closed groups composed exclusively of young people in the target group and educators, where educators act as administrators and moderators. Using Groups, teachers and learners could create an environment in which they deal with various topics and brainstorming, focus groups, ideas and documents are shared, innovative solutions to problems are found together and learners learn key skills in team-work and collaboration. WhatsApp also allows it´s users to send voice messages - this is a good feature for VET-students with special needs. Voice messages also enable the development of VET students' verbal communication skills.
- Facebook is good for counselling purposes, also enables peer-counselling.

- It is important to become visual e.g. Instagram enables learners and teachers to share photos from learning experiences and environments. For young learners, it is more engaging to see images and short videos ten to just read text-based content all of the time. Using Instagram, even text-based content can be presented in a more visual way, for example, through using infographics.

- The combination of a blog (maintained by the VET student) and Skype / Facetime or other tool that enables distant counselling is very good. The VET students can document their learning experiences on the blog, for example during a period of work placement, and receive counselling and feedback from their VET teacher through Skype or Facetime.

- YouTube can be used to appeal to different learning styles than what is catered for in traditional, mainstream education - Visual or Aural learners - more engaged in learning through YouTube. Learners can also find educational content on YouTube to reinforce the learning acquired in class. In addition, the skills required to be successful on YouTube comprise many of the skills required in the modern-day labour market – digital literacy and IT competence, creative thinking, adaptability, media production skills and knowledge of modern marketing techniques such as keywords, search engine optimisation, etc. - getting learners active on YouTube as creators and publishers of their own content represents a real opportunity for teachers to enhance the labour market potential of low-skilled young people through engaging, embedded-learning activities.

- Pinterest is used less by young learners than by adults; however, it could be used as a career guidance and planning tool for young learners. For example, as part of their career guidance work in school, learners could be asked to create a 'board' on Pinterest and to 'pin' images associated with their dream job on the board. In class, teachers can then review the boards from all learners and either through classwork or in one-to-one settings, teachers and careers advisors can coach learners in the courses they will need to take and the qualifications they would need to achieve in order to attain their dream job.

- Twitter has limited didactic value as students and learners can only post 140 characters at a time; however, at the end of an event, a school trip or a project such as delivering a play or school musical, Twitter can be used to ask learners to post 'one key thing' they have learned from the experience. This is valuable because it forces learners to reflect on the full experience and to distil down their thoughts and feelings into 140 characters. Setting up a Twitter page for a full class group can also be useful to track all work and activities completed by the group in one school year. Twitter can also be used to support other work undertaken in class; for example, if students are learning about human rights as part of their political studies course in school, they might decide to use a hashtag on Twitter and to develop a campaign to draw attention to a particular movement in history or perhaps some rights that are being withheld from a particular group – one example of this could include a Twitter

campaign to draw attention to the homeless crisis in Europe at the moment. This could teach students of the value of online social media channels for social activism and campaigns.

- Google Drive is a cloud archive for documents; using it in an education setting can ensure that document shared are accessible to young learners and educators constantly and when the learners need access to it. Educators can share handouts, notes and other files with their learners through this application.

Conclusion

All members of the PROMOVET project team undertook a comprehensive investigation study process. The outcomes of these research activities will now act as the evidence-base for the development of the PROMOVET outputs, and the project's innovative model for training low-skilled young learners to facilitate the learning process of their educators in how to use social media and communication tools to modernise how VET programmes are delivered to young people. Throughout the research process, partners have been committed to involving members of all target groups; with the result that a total of 184 young learners aged between 14 and 23 years, 164 VET teachers, trainers, tutors and coaches who work to support these low-skilled young learners, and 57 education professionals and decision-makers were engaged to contribute to the PROMOVET investigation study process.

Following on from desk and field research activities, partners now have a clear understanding of the actual social and online tools, channels and platforms that are most frequently used by young learners in Europe, the processes and behaviours that young people follow in using these tools and how they would like to integrate these tools into their learning processes. Project partners now also have a greater insight into the current practices for integrating IT tools into VET provision across consortium countries, the level of competence of local VET teachers and trainers in using IT in their teaching practice and of the actual needs and supports which these teachers and tutors will need to successfully adopt the PROMOVET approach to providing VET to low-skilled young learners. Where IT tools are already in use in VET provision, young learners, teachers and education professionals who were interviewed all provided concrete examples of how these tools can be integrated into VET. Where IT tools are not used for these purposes, young learners in particular, provided valuable recommendations as to how the social media and online communication channels that they use on a daily basis can be re-purposed to support their learning. As such, project partners now have access to a wealth of up-to-date, relevant and accurate empirical data that will inform the development of the PROMOVET project outputs: IO2 – Web-based Compendium and IO3 – PROMOVET Training Programme. Project partners will consider all of these research findings when designing and developing these core project outputs.

PROMO VeT

Jugend am Werk Steiermark GmbH
Graz (Austria)
robert.schuen@jaw.or.at

PARTNERS

Meath Partnership
Kells (Ireland)
info@meathpartnership.ie

LÄNSIRANNIKON KOULUTUS OY WINNOVA
Pori (Finland)
jonna.malmivuori@winnova.fi

E.N.T.E.R. GmbH
Graz (Austria)
office@enter-network.eu

A.R.E.S. scarl
Campobasso (Italy)
p.pietrangelo@ares.cb.it

CARDET
Lefkosia (Cyprus)
sotiris.t@cardet.org

FUNDACION DOCETE OMNES
La Zubia (Spain)
jose.dessy@doceteomnes.com

www.promovet-project.eu