DIG.I.T.ABLE

Digital Inclusive Trainers for Accessible Education

Description

The project aims at achieving three main results:

1. **The curriculum of the inclusive digital trainer** aims at identifying basic skills and competences for trainers to access the course and become digital trainers, defining characteristics of the inclusive digital trainer (knowledge, skills and attitudes), and designing training programmes, methodologies, tools and learning outcomes to develop the profile of the inclusive digital trainer.
2. **The online certified professional training course** is a **certified vocational training course** addressed to inclusive digital trainers involving 120 participants. The course will focus on innovative teaching approaches and methods to help trainers gain confidence in the online learning environment, enhance its diversity and make classes accessible and inclusive; it will also focus on **easy-to-use digital tools** for the development of learner-centred teaching fostering interaction within the class group.
3. **The toolkit for replicability**: guidelines on how to implement inclusive online teaching for people with sensory disabilities, including teaching approaches, methodologies, tools, recommendations, and good practices. The toolkit will be supported by a pilot training provided by the new inclusive digital trainers to people with sensory disabilities, in order to collect their feedback, as well as by a follow-up activity (focus group with the new inclusive digital trainers showcasing their teaching experience in the pilot course).

Beneficiaries

Young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN)

Learners with sensory disabilities (i.e. deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired): distance learning environments usually do not fully respond to the needs of people with sensory disabilities and technological accessibility is not sufficient to guarantee a fully inclusive experience based on active participation. As an indirect target group of the project, people with sensory disabilities in VET will benefit from the innovative tools and methodologies developed under DIG.I.T.ABLE.
The project targets 50 participants with visual and hearing impairments.

Target group:
Professional trainers who want to move towards a more inclusive approach in training, with a specific focus on people with sensory disabilities.
Starting from the challenges faced by trainers in terms of lack of digital skills for the effective use of platforms and lack of distance learning methodologies, the project intends to provide professional trainers with the mindset and the motivational and practical tools to make the most of the potential of an inclusive digital training.
The project will accommodate 120 trainers taking part in the piloting.

Countries

Austria　　Belgium　　Bulgaria　　Greece

Italy

Education level and sector

Vocational education and training
Lifelong learning

Type of policy/initiative

🏷 **Intervention**

Level of implementation / Scope

🏷 **National level**

Start date: 20/01/2022 - End date: 10/10/2024

In the first year of the project (from 20/01 2022 to 20/01/2023) the following activities were conducted:

- analysis of the training needs of people with sensory disabilities and report highlighting the main needs and preferences of people with low vision and hearing impairment in terms of training;
- analysis of existing assistive technologies available for the hearing impaired and the visually impaired, which must be integrated into synchronous distance learning; definition of virtual architectural barriers in interactive online training for the hearing impaired and visually impaired; development of strategies to overcome obstacles and enhance the skills and attitudes of the class group;
- guidelines for alternative use of existing digital tools and software adapted to inclusive training;
- new inclusive digital learning paradigm describing methodologies, tools and best practices needed to make online education effective and truly inclusive;
- inclusive digital trainer curriculum detailing the profile of inclusive digital trainers and defining their knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- training programme including Learning Outcomes, Teaching Programme, Activities, Methodologies, Tools and Evaluation Methods.

Aims of policy/initiative

- Boosting the importance of the concept of accessibility to synchronous distance learning environments where the accessibility parameters concern three levels: access to web platforms, contents, and activities.
- Implementing inclusive and accessible VET programmes for people with sensory disabilities, to help increase their participation in the labour market (the unemployment rate for blind/visually impaired people is 75% in Europe). Focus is placed on digital skills, flexibility, and creativity of trainers, who must develop technical and andragogic skills for distance learning and need tools and methodologies to increase effectiveness, usability and active involvement of learners. This is even more urgent for VET that plays a key role in the upskilling

process and the prevention of the digital gap and suffered a strong suspension of work-based learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In order to better define the aims of the project, the most important challenges that trainers face in their daily work have been underlined:

- lack of digital skills for the effective use of platforms, the creation of digital educational content and the inclusion of students with disabilities;
- lack of distance learning methodologies.

In this context, the project intends to provide professional trainers with the mindset and the motivational and practical tools to make the most of the potential of an inclusive digital training, in particular by:

- improving the alignment between the skills of professional trainers and the needs of the labour market through new skills and specialised digital competences applied to accessible and inclusive online training;
- expanding the job opportunities of professional trainers through the acquisition of inclusive teaching skills allowing them to involve also groups of learners with special training needs;
- improving the attractiveness of online continuing professional training, both for learners and trainers, through dynamic, interactive and engaging digital training approaches and tools;
- broadening the career opportunities of workers with sensory (visual and hearing) disabilities through the increase of accessible and inclusive online VET opportunities;
- increasing the quality and impact of the activities implemented by continuing VET organisations, through the exchange of good practices for developing the inclusive digital skills of their staff, in order to reach a wider number of learners.

Features and types of activities implemented

- Analysis (TOWS, SWOT, etc.)
- Training Design
- Piloting of the training course
- Definition and development of guidelines
- Dissemination and communication

Resources

DIG.I.T.ABLE Project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, under the Action KA220-VET - Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training. The overall grant for the project implementation amounts to EUR 339 331.

Evaluation of the measure

As the project is ongoing, no evaluation has been performed yet concerning the outputs produced. At the end of the course period, a focus group will be organised in order to gather feedbacks on the learning outcomes and general impact on the target audience. Concerning the project as a whole, an interim report was submitted to the Italian Erasmus+ National Agency (INAPP), which received a positive evaluation.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

As the project is still at its early stages of implementation, it has not been possible yet to provide evidence of effectiveness of the project initiatives. Nevertheless, the project aims at defining methodologies and practices to be disseminated and integrated at the European, national, regional and local level in VET environments.

Success factors

The innovative elements of the project include:

- teaching approaches that facilitate trainers in the alternative use of existing digital collaboration tools;
- the dissemination of best practices and new tools (including a video conferencing tool created specifically for the project) that support the community of trainers in developing their role in a digital context;
- the development of trainers' competences to adapt their profile to the demands of the labour market and the needs detected by organisations and individuals in a logic of greater inclusiveness of learners with sensory disabilities. Focus is placed on trainers' transversal skills and ability to listen and meet the learners' needs in digital learning environments.

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Related intervention approaches

Digital inclusion and well-being

Professional development for inclusive teaching and training