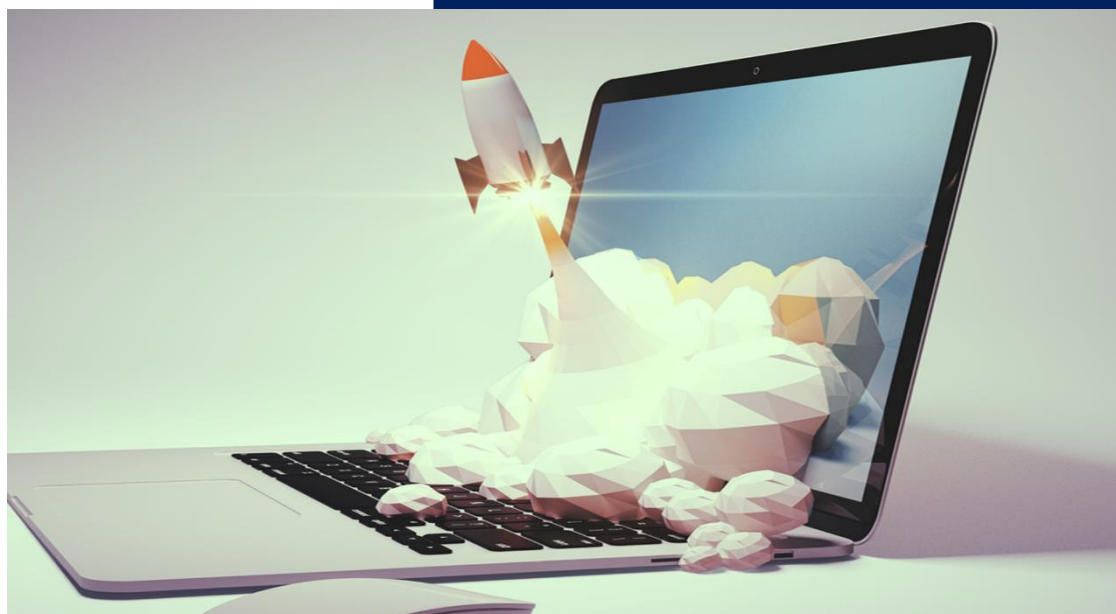


DIG IN Program Guide: LESSONS LEARNED



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Project funded by: **Call 2019 Round 3 KA2 -
Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good
practices/
KA205 - Strategic Partnerships for youth
PROJECT NUMBER: 2019-PL01-KA205-077693**

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



The DIG IN partnership implemented **national pilots** to ensure that the IO2 Guide, its contents and tools are concretely effective in meeting the demands of learning and guidance of the target groups, ensuring its take-up by other interested learners in partner countries and beyond. The piloting took place in the four partner countries – **Poland, Greece, Italy, the Republic of North Macedonia**- lasted approximately 6 months (March 2022-September 2022), and the partners followed all steps of the piloting; Pre-assessment questionnaires; Local activities; Focus groups with the educators; Post-assessment questionnaires.

In total, **109 NEETs** and **46 Educators/Mentors** participated in the process accomplishing the initial goals and quantity indicators set both per country and per organization (in total **80 piloting participants, 40 educators**). Some partners conducted the pilot activities **in person**, while others **online**, due to the Covid-19 risks and to accommodate participants from remote areas that were not able to attend all sessions in person. Regardless the method of conducting the activities, the partnership gained knowledge about the content suitability of the Guide and possible improvements.

The organized piloting sessions focused on topics developed in IO2: ‘Guidebook for educators’, as the initial aim was to test the workshops that partners created under IO2. In total **10 workshops were implemented per country** (accomplishing the KPIs)-amounting to a total of 40 workshops that took place within the partnership. All partners included icebreaking, energizing and teambuilding activities, some of them focused, among others, on managerial and entrepreneurial skills, as demonstrated in the table below.

The facilitators used the learning methodologies developed in the IO2 ‘Guidebook for educators’ (e.g., collaborative classroom, mind mapping, roleplaying, jigsaw technique, etc.) and the facilitation styles suggested (directive, participative, interpretive, etc.). All activities focused on developing skills related to ICT, employability, entrepreneurship, communication, (self-) management and self-regulated learning and planning – thus, accomplishing the Key Performance Indicators (10 skills to be developed throughout the activities). The table presented below shows:

IO2 LEARNING OUTCOMES	SKILLS DEVELOPED
LINK WITH TERRITORY, CULTURE & LOCAL COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Collaboration • Collaborative techniques • Interrelationship management
INNOVATION & IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team building • Emotional intelligence • Mediation • Negotiation • Conflict management

COMPETITIVENESS, CORRECTNESS, ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managerial skills • Critical thinking • Adaptability to change • Flexibility
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage, prevent and analyze risk • Ability to use resources efficiently
TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE’S HEALTH & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial awareness • Social responsibilities • Accountability

The participants provided their feedback and suggestions answering the relevant questions to improve the content of the DIG-IN Guidebook. The vast majority was happy with the activities’ implementation and methods used during the training delivery, providing positive feedback. Some of their responses were the following:

FEEDBACK	
NEETs	Educators/Mentors
<i>The material was very useful for cultivating my social skills and acquiring knowledge of the labour market’s needs.</i>	<i>I think that the material was well-organized.</i>
<i>Some of the activities could have a little bit more time that attributed to them.</i>	<i>I prefer for the content to provide more practical information on Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability.</i>
<i>I would prefer to include more diagrams and infographics in the Guide.</i>	<i>I would add more interactive and technology-based activities.</i>
<i>I would prefer more pictures.</i>	<i>I found the training content developed relevant and useful.</i>

➔ What went right

Overall, the material produced achieved its initial goals and offered new ways for NEETs outreach and engagement both online and offline, but also their personal development through the targeted workshops. Having tested NEETs and educators/mentors’ previous knowledge with the pre-assessment questionnaires we can say that their level of knowledge in regard to online learning, communication skills and (self-)

management skills have been increased thanks to the piloting, while their social and entrepreneurial competences have developed. In addition, NEETs reported that they strengthened their personal, social, and collaborative competences, as well as their entrepreneurial knowledge, the skills required for today's labor market, and their ability for self-learning. All participants reported in the post-assessment questionnaires being adequately satisfied with what they will be able to accomplish through this guidebook and revealed the extent of the increased newly acquired skills, as shown in the report. In addition, no one chose the 'not at all' (minimum) scale when filling in the questionnaire.

Educators and mentors were offered a new strategy and tools useful to youth association and NGOs to plan new ways for engaging, reaching, and motivating NEETs affected by socioeconomic barriers. Some educators were so excited that they wish to replicate the program in their practices.

On the whole, the feedback showed that the material produced was very useful for cultivating skills closely linked to the labour market and the ICT skills of the 21st century. Moreover, the material was found to be well-organized, the time accurately structured, and the Guidebook well-structured and useful training tool. The partnership collaborated well, followed a clear planning process, and produced a result of high quality. Finally, the partnership achieved all Key Performance Indicators, namely:

- **10 skills** developed in the course of the activities (thus described in the proposed contents and practices in the on/off-line activities)
- **10 external educators** involved in the independent evaluation
- **4 pilot testing**
- **10 workshops** organized in each pilot (**40 in total**)
- **80 participants** to the piloting
- **40 educators** in the piloting

➔ **What went wrong**

Of course, there were some answers with negative connotation as well as some suggestions on behalf of the participants, something that the partnership really appreciated, as it showed increased participation and interest on behalf of the participants. There were a few NEETs who answered on the 'moderately' scale, for example that they moderately increased their knowledge regarding the required skills to enter the labour market, or that they moderately increased their communication and self-management skills and their entrepreneurial competences, and in regard to their confidence in working independently using the Guidebook. Also, there were a few comments that the estimated time moderately corresponded to the real time needed for the implementation of the exercises. However, the vast majority of the participants found the duration and time allocated to the training sessions to be adequate. In addition, there were a few



suggestions regarding the enrichment of the Guidebook with some visualized content (such as infographics, pictures, diagrams) in order to create a more engaging and attractive to the user educational content.

➔ **What needs to be improved**

The partnership will consider all comments and suggestions that came through internally (inside the partnership) and externally (from the participants through the pre and post assessment questionnaires) – and will plan what's next to follow. For instance, the DIG IN partnership will arrange a meeting to analyse the lessons learned and conduct a root cause analysis to better understand what aspects to improve. The partnership will proceed to alteration and optimisation of the training materials based on cost-effectiveness, budget allocated for these tasks and feasibility of the corrective actions. An important aspect that will be addressed is a more visualized content to be added in the Guidebook, following participants' suggestions. Only after joint agreement will the partnership proceed to its finalization, translation, and distribution, so that educators and mentors can use this great tool in their practices.