Newsletter 3

Activities in the project from December 2023 to April 2024

WP1 Teachers Training

TEACHERS TRAINING in Ljubljana-Slovenia

From the 18th to the 22nd of April 2024, educators and trainers from the partner's countries congregated in the city of Ljubljana, Slovenia, for a transformative Trainers' Training Programme.

Hosted in Ljubljana's, this five-day event was a hightlight of professional development and exchange of innovative teaching methodologies.

The event kicked off on Thursday, the 18th of April, with an invigorating session led by Mr. Osman Çakır, introducing the Digital Stories Project. Participants were captivated as they explored the potential of digital storytelling in education. Dr. Büşra Tombak İlhan then went into crucial topics such as early school leaving, school climate, friendship dynamics, bullying, and socialization, setting the tone for insightful discussions to come.

During the afternoon there was also the presentation of the Module One, Two and Three.

Friday, the 19th, was dedicated to exploring innovative teaching approaches. Dr. Joze Rugelj led a session on game-based learning, igniting participants' creativity and enthusiasm. Dr. Irena Nancovska Serbec followed with an exploration of digital storytelling, empowering trainers with tools to engage learners through narrative-driven content. The afternoon session was finished by presenting Module Four and Module Five.

Saturday, the 20th, brought forth discussions on uncovering the hidden treasures of student character strengths, led by Dr. Polona Gradisek. Dr. Neslihan Karakuş and Dr. Eda Tekin then enchanted the audience with the art of storytelling, emphasizing its profound impact on communication and learning.

Sunday, the 21st, saw a continuation of module presentations (Eight, Nine and Ten), providing a comprehensive overview of various educational modules. From character strengths to digital competencies, participants absorbed a wealth of knowledge, enriching their pedagogical toolkit.

Amidst workshops and the presentation of the Modules Six and Seven, participants also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich history and culture of Ljubljana with a guided excursion to the old town, an optional yet cherished experience.

As the event ended on Monday, the 22nd, participants engaged in a final workshop on digital storytelling led by Dr. Durmuş Barış Kır, culminating in a reflective session to consolidate their learning journey.

The Trainers' Training Programme in Ljubljana-Slovenia was not merely a series of workshops and presentations; it was a platform for educators to connect, collaborate, and inspire each other, igniting a passion for transformative teaching practices that will resonate in classrooms around the world.

The Evaluation of the Trainers' Training Event in Ljubljana received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. Here's a summary of some of their comments:

- "Nothing to add."

- "Great job! Thank you."

- "I am enthusiastic to use the materials."

- "Thank you very much for the pleasant time we had all had in your beautiful city. You made us feel at home. Thank you."

- "It was an amazing experience for me. Thanks for your hard work."

- "If there's a heaven on earth, it must be Ljubljana. If there's serious work to do, leave it to this great team. These people are great. Thank you for all the marvelous things during the whole week."

The feedback shows the appreciation for the hospitality, enthusiasm for utilizing the materials, and admiration for the city and the organizing team's efforts. Overall, participants expressed gratitude for the transformative experience and the warm welcome extended to them.

WP2 *Digital Storytelling Techniques* Training Programme

As mentioned, the teachers participating in the training were instructed about the several educational modules prepared by the partnership. As you might remember from our last newsletter, the ten modules include activities that require students to use all five senses to strengthen four very important basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. By reducing the learning difficulties caused by a lack of these skills, we want to help prevent students from dropping out of school. Each module has a specific theme, and the main activity of each module is the creation and presentation of the students' own digital stories. Let's remember the themes they cover!

Module 1 - Fears: Students identify and discuss fears, focusing on those related to school and personal decisions.

Module 2 - Honesty: Students explore honest and dishonest behaviour through hypothetical situations, reflecting on its impact on relationships.

Module 3 - School Relationships: Aimed at improving teacher-student relationships by acknowledging contrasts in school life.

Module 4 - Prejudices: Students recognize and confront their prejudices, exploring connections with courage and seeking ways to overcome them.

Module 5 - Friendship: Encourages reflection on friendship qualities, sharing positive and negative experiences, and improving classroom relationships.

Module 6 - Sharing and Caring: Students reflect on sharing belongings, caring for others, and the emotions involved.

Module 7 - Fables and Morals: Students explore fables as moral stories, discussing their characteristics, history, and cultural variations.

Module 8 - Knowledge is Power: Emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge to avoid negative consequences, analyzing real-life situations.

Module 9 - Green Skills: Raises awareness of environmental issues, empowering students to take positive actions for the environment and their communities.

Module 10 is titled "**Flex Your Boundary**". Throughout this module, students will search through the concept of personal boundaries and their significance in various contexts.

1. Identifying the main idea of the story, emphasizing the importance of understanding central themes and messages.
2. Analyzing verbal and visual expression, enabling students to interpret and evaluate communication in different forms.
3. Explaining the issues on which they are generous, encouraging students to reflect on their values and areas where they are open-minded and accommodating.

By engaging with the main objectives, the students will gain insight into the dynamic nature of boundaries and develop skills in critical thinking and self-awareness.

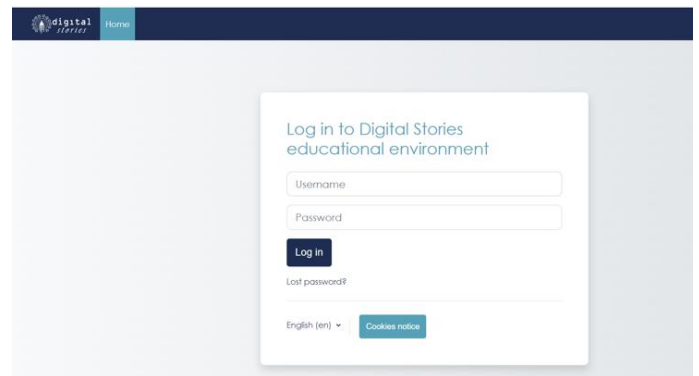## *WP3:* Online interactive learning and teaching platform

The online educational platform, the main output of work package n°3 of the project, is a flexible and dynamic environment designed to facilitate the learning and teaching activities of teachers, educators, and trainers dealing with school drop-outs due to students' learning difficulties.

This platform hosts a customised training course based on the innovative interactive approach of storytelling. The aim is to help teachers, educators and trainers to improve their professional skills in the field of storytelling.

The training consists of ten modules structured on the basis of the 5E model to promote the learning process and the competencies development. In this way, teachers can help students overcome their difficulties and thus create a more positive school environment by reducing the dropout rate.

The platform is available in the project site (https://www.digitalstories-project.eu) in English, Turkish, Italian, Slovenian and Portuguese. It is currently still under construction.

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