



DIGITAL STORY MAPPING IN PRACTICE

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT







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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. introduction	3
1.1 Project background	5
2. Methodological framework	7
2.1 Resources	7
2.2 Sessions' structure and length	7
2.3 Group dimension	8
2.4 Methodology	8
2.5 Facilitators' evaluation	8
2.6 Participants' evaluation	9
2.7 Sampling	10
2.8 Main premises	11
3. Results	12
3.1 Findings from the participants	12
3.2 Findings from the facilitators	16
3.3 Learning outcomes	21
4. Conclusions	25
4.1 Challenges	25
4.2 Recommendations	27
Bibliography	28
Annex I: Facilitators' questionnaire ex ante	29
Annex II: Facilitators' questionnaire ex post	32



1. INTRODUCTION

The pilot implementation of the My Story Map workshops has been carried out in five countries (Italy, France, Spain, Austria and Belgium) and materials produced in previous phases of the project were tested. The pilot implementation has involved 75 young early-school leavers and 8 facilitators. Results have been collected in this analysis of impact. Based on that feedback, some valuable recommendations for the future use of the workshop materials were made. The story-maps produced are published as an online exhibition which can serve as a reference point for all future users.

As a method of data collection special questionnaires have been produced specifically for the facilitators, and they have been filled both before and after the workshops. Participants were assessed through group evaluation activities, and also via an individual self-assessment, both before and after the workshops.

It was found that in general, satisfaction with participation in the workshop was estimated as medium - high in all five partner countries. This leads to the conclusion that the content of the workshops and its methodology were successfully designed for this target group. The feedback of the facilitators on the learning modules¹ was positive in all five countries. The learning modules were described as very useful for preparation, offering a balance of theory and practical activities which can be transferred to different learning context and used with participants of different ages, as well as social and cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the mode of presentation of the workshop to the youngsters, establishing previous relationship with potential participants was found to be a key factor that can significantly contribute to raising the quality and dynamics of the workshop realization.

Maintaining the motivation for participation turned out to be a common challenge in all partner countries. Besides this, several other challenges were detected during this piloting phase as for example: language and understanding, lack of confidence with facilitators and the group (mostly due to an absence of a previous relationship), lack of capacity of self-analysis and self-reflection. The facilitators also indicated the importance of creating safe and comfortable spaces - environments where the workshops take place, and the importance of ratio of participants and facilitators for the learning process. Working with smaller groups is highly recommended.

The most valuable and significant learning outcomes were identified as stimulating reflection of past life choices and their consequences; reflecting on the future and setting goals; improving skills of public speaking and listening; gaining empathy; improving self-awareness and self-confidence and digital skills. In 9 of the 10 competence areas participants improved their abilities. The analysis collects evidence from five different countries, and for that, it can be considered as a valuable resource of experiences and be used as a “basis for action” from all those who are likely to find My Story Map workshops useful for their professional or personal environment.

1. Learning modules “How to tell a life (story)” and “Media Production Skills”, from now on called LEARNING MODULES



This analysis examined the results obtained during the implementation of the piloting phase. Both youngsters and the facilitators who participated in the implementation of the learning modules, gave their contribution in order to identify the crucial points and possible areas of improvement.

Based on that, this document has a double function:

- Internally, it helps to draw conclusions in order to improve and finalise the learning modules;
- Externally, it addresses teachers, educators and youth workers and gives them an overview of the development of the work and important suggestions for the future uses of the tools.

To serve its purpose, the content of this analysis has been organized and divided into three main sections:

- The first outlines the methodological framework, setting the premises of the educational approach envisioned by the workshop and the methodology used within this piloting phase;
- The second contains the results of the piloting phase which was implemented in the 5 partner countries;
- The third transforms the results in recommendations for the future use of the tools and a better adaptability and transferability in the different sectors of school, VET, non - formal education for youth, adult education.



1.1 Project background

My Story Map is a strategic partnership project for Innovation in the field of School Education. The project aims to develop and test an educational strategy, based on the pedagogical uses of the methodology of digital story-mapping, in order to motivate young people who dropped out of school to re-engage again in educational activities, and, at the same time, to exploits the produced outcomes as prevention tools with young people at risk of drop-out. The countries which took part in the project are: Italy, Belgium, France, Austria and Spain.

During 2 years of project implementation, a series of actions were implemented with the aim to create tools and methodology targeting teachers, trainers, youth workers and all educators who are dealing with phenomenon of Early School Leaving.

The main aims of My Story Map project are:

1. Motivate young people (aged 15–25 years old) who interrupted their studies so they return to the educational system;
2. Avoid the premature withdrawal from school and the training of those students that are at risk of dropping out (pupils aged 15–19 years old).

The specific objectives of the project are:

- 📍 To investigate the possible causes of Early School Leaving through the methodology of digital story-mapping;
- 📍 To improve digital and communication competences among participants, since they are two key skills for both those who have already abandoned school and those who are at risk of dropping out;
- 📍 To raise awareness about the reasons for Early School Leaving and the possible consequences of such decision on the person's future;
- 📍 To promote the conscious awareness of one's own educational pathway, to define personal life goals, both in terms of educational possibilities and job opportunities;
- 📍 To share tools for documentation and guidance against Early School Leaving, exploitable also by future generations of participants at risk of dropping out;
- 📍 Contribute to reduce drop-out rate from school.

The project is developed on an intersectoral and strategic approach which can be adopted and implemented in schools, institutions, learning centres, youth centres and youth organizations, with the final goal of integrating social innovation with education. The implication of formal, informal and non-formal educational institutions make this project wider and more comprehensive to attend the objective of engaging youngsters.

Among the numerous projects and initiatives which have been implemented to prevent, intervene against and compensate early school leaving at national and European level, the approach of “My Story-Map” aims to bring innovation in several regards:

- 📍 **cross-sectoral approach:** the project develops strategies which can be received and implemented by schools, vocational training institutions, life-long learning centres, youth centres and youth organisations;
- 📍 **application of pupil-focused strategies:** the project makes use of the motivating potential of new media and the media preferences of young people;
- 📍 **focus on teachers, trainers, educators:** the project develops relevant training modules designed specifically to prevent and tackle the phenomenon and it combines in a synergic way actions of prevention, intervention and compensation;
- 📍 **extra-curricular activities:** the informal learning approach of the project is fit to meet the pre-conditions of successful educational work with the target groups, as it raises self-esteem, improves motivation and supports learning processes;
- 📍 **personalised learning:** the digital story-maps can be highly customized and thus offer very personal learning pathways which are designed on the specific learning needs of every individual. (LEARNING MODULES: 95).

The first part of this project was oriented to investigate the current situation on ESL and to create a theoretical framework that would contribute to define further actions. The exploitation of digital story-maps to fight against Early School Leaving is the study, which lays the foundation for the ensuing development work of the My Story Map project. The study sums up the results of national and transnational desk-based research activities and it includes the latest articles, projects, initiatives and for several additional partner countries.²

The second phase of the project was the production of the learning modules “How to tell a (life) story” and “Media production skills”, which target teachers, educators, youth workers and all those professionals involved in work with young early-school leavers, in order to equip them with an educational tool, based on the pedagogical use of the methodology of digital story-mapping, for the purpose of motivating early-school leavers aged 15- 25 to re-engage in learning activities.

The modules are to be intended as complementary resources to local circumstances, as through the combination of the learning materials contained, teachers, educators and youth workers can design learning experiences according to their needs and where the young people are encouraged to investigate and organise in a story flow, the causes and the reasons which led them to the decision of dropping out of the educational and/or training system (LEARNING MODULES, 2019:2).

The materials presented within the learning modules have been tested during the “**pilot workshops**” in five countries, in which the youngsters produced their life stories through digital maps. The digital materials produced during this piloting phase have been organized and showcased in an online exhibition (StoryWall) which also represents part of a communication campaign aimed at using social networks as channels of dissemination for the project outcomes.

2. For further details, consult the study “Telling digital stories to fight against Early School Leaving” available on the website: <https://www.mystorymap.eu/results>

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following section, the methodology used during the piloting phase is explained. The chapter starts with a brief description of the resources used during the implementation (learning modules and online platform), and it goes on with the sessions' structure and length, group size, and further information on the development of the used methods, sampling and finally the impact of the pilot workshops implemented in the five partner countries.

2.1 Resources

The main resources available for the pilot workshops were the learning modules: "How to Tell a (life) Story" and "Media Production Skills" and the software of ArcGIS³. The modules aim to foster personal development using personal storytelling and the sophisticated digital platform ESRI Story Maps as a main medium.⁴

The My Story Map workshop uses interaction with the ESRI Story Maps platform to engage young early-school leavers in the process of contextualisation and re-elaboration of their own experience and personal drop-out stories in the form of a digital story-map. (LEARNING MODULES,2019: 13). The learning process is based on interaction, reflection, identification and sharing with others. The process aims to create the conditions in which the learner is able to learn both from oneself and from others.

During the piloting phase, the partners have implemented workshops in five countries based on the same materials, following the guide-lines and basic protocol agreed within the consortium in order to collect data and make a comparative analysis of impact in each country.

2.2 Sessions' structure and length

In each of the five partner countries the workshops were implemented following a modular structure in four phases. Each partner country introduced activities from the four envisioned phases, choosing those activities which were marked as highly recommended and mandatory. Partners then adapted the activities depending on the group size, hours of implementation, group dynamics, etc.

In this piloting phase it was expected that some of the activities could have been adapted, rescheduled, or replaced with others. The main purpose of piloting workshops was also to identify what was working well and to detect potential areas of improvement.

According to the learning modules (2019), the timing of implementation can be adapted by the facilitator, following available resources and the needs of the group and the single local realities. In the five countries sessions ran within a range from 15 to 25 hours. Sessions can be organised over a period of time of one or several weeks, even though the recommendation would be to not let too much time to pass in between two sessions and to try to maintain as much as possible a regular structure. Each country partner had the possibility to adapt the duration of the implementation process according to the particular characteristics and needs of the group and country.

3. ArcGIS Online is a Cloud-based mapping and GIS platform, developed by the international company Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute) and which provides a comprehensive set of professional tools for compiling, visualizing, analysing, editing, managing, and sharing geographic data.

4. For more information please consult the learning modules "How to tell a (life) story" and "Media production skills" available on the website: <https://www.mystorymap.eu/results>

2.3 Group size

During the piloting phase, group size in partner countries was between 15 to 20 participants. Finally, the total number of participants reached in the five countries was 75 early-school leavers. The final distribution of participants among the partner countries was the following: Spain 12, Belgium 16, France 11, Italy 21, Austria 18. As eligible participants were considered only the ones who took part in more than 50% of the whole length of the workshop. For that reason, in some countries there was a big difference between participants who started and participants who finished the workshops, which is explained more in detail in the following paragraphs.

Due to the delicate and personal nature of the main focus of the workshops, the experience had been originally tailored for small size working groups, therefore the recommendation is to create the groups maximum of 10 young people. The dimension of the work in a small group sets the conditions for the workshop to go deeper in its long-term assets, encouraging deeper reflection, feedback and self-directed learning and, at the same time, ensuring more time for the process of inclusion and free expression of all participants and strengthening of the group relationship, increasing the level of intimacy, trust and confidentiality (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 19). During the piloting phase, partners mostly didn't have the possibility to work in smaller groups as recommended, due to the fact that there was limited time for implementation and in some cases this was related to the circumstances of partner organizations who were providing participants and/or space for the workshops implementation.



2.4 Methodology

In order to produce this analysis of impact, partners developed a specific methodology for data collection. In all countries, both participants and facilitators who participated in the pilot workshops were assessed, first before and after the workshop implementation. The aim was to get an insight at the initial state, and afterwards to screen the final state in order to evaluate the efficiency of the programme and the quality of the materials produced in the previous stages of the project.

2.5 Facilitators' evaluation

Facilitator evaluation consisted of filling in two questionnaires, one before the workshop started and the second one afterwards (annexes I and II). Questionnaires included questions related to the strategy of presentation of the workshop and participants' recruitment, expectations in terms of motivation and engagement, quality of preparation materials, possible challenges, etc.

Once the workshops were completed, the facilitators were assessed through another questionnaire, which a similar structure and topics, but this time with the aim to collect real feedback and recommendations for future use. The results are presented in the "Findings from the facilitators" section.



2.6 Participants' evaluation

The evaluation of the participants' experience during the workshops consisted of two parts:

- Self-assessment;
- Group evaluation during the workshop;

Both self-assessment and group evaluation activities were introduced during the first and last sessions of the workshop, in order to compare the results.

Self-assessment represents a very important element of the methodological approach of the My Story Map workshop, as it is the first and main tool through which it is possible to really promote and start a process of learner-centred learning (LEARNING MODULES, 2019:31)

According to the learning modules (2019: 31), self-assessment has been specifically designed around the identified competences which can be developed throughout the four different phases of the workshop, and was introduced:

- during the first workshop session in order to be used as a form of formative evaluation, so that the learners can have a first moment of reflection during which they can raise their awareness about themselves in relation to those specific competences and start to take on a more active role in the assessment of their own learning by identifying their goals;
- during the last workshop session in order to be used as a summative evaluation form, to evaluate the impact of the workshop experience on the participants, comparing it with the results of the first version of their self-assessment. By this summative evaluation, participants obtain a wider perspective and understanding about their own learning by identifying future perspectives and strategies.

Evaluation through workshop activities was introduced in order to collect qualitative feedback from participants during the first session. Thanks to this evaluation, the facilitators obtained a better and deeper understanding of participants' expectations and motivation, and could adapt activities in order to better meet their expectations and needs.

Activities consisted of two main parts:

- During the first session.** The activity called "The expectations square" was introduced in order to find out participants expectations, motivation, and potential fears, which were collected in one common poster;
- After finishing the workshop.** The activity called "Bringing back the Expectations square" was introduced in order to check whether participants' expectations about the project and the activities had been fulfilled. The activity consisted of going back to the poster elaborated in the first session and checking if the expectations, motivation and potential fears that were shared have changed or not.

Apart from that, another evaluation activity called the "World Cafe" was introduced to create an informal atmosphere in which participants could have another opportunity to reflect with all the group about what they learned during sessions. During this activity participants gave feedback about what they liked most about the course, about the way they felt during the different activities and within the group, and if they would recommend the workshops to their friends, etc.

The results of these activities are presented in section "Findings from the participants".

Evaluation is a key part of the learning process, and gives valuable feedback on learning activities. For Weis (2001) the evaluation of an educational project consists of measuring the effects of a program by comparison with the goals set out to achieve, in order to contribute to decision-making about the program and to improve future implementation. For that reason, this evaluation is considered as one of the more important elements of this project, which contributes to its sustainability.

2.7 Sampling

Pilot workshops were implemented in all five partner countries. The total number of early-school leavers engaged in the workshops was 75, and the number of facilitators involved was 8 in total.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE	
Age	Range between 14 - 21 years
Gender	Male: 31 Female: 44
Nationalities	Spain, Morocco, Dominican Republic, Romania, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Romania, Albania, Colombia, Austria, Hungary, Capo Verde, Bosnia, Chechnya, Italy, Bangladesh, Belgium, France
Social status	Low economic status (5/5)
Social background	Facilitators reported that participants had different cultural backgrounds, traditions, habits, language, etc. Personal and family situation were also diverse. Some of them live with their family, others with brothers/sisters or other relatives, some of them on their own. Cases of young mothers, participants tutored by Regional Administration, young immigrants were also reported. Background of family migration mostly led to struggle with educational pathway, facing language difficulties and adjustment to different social and cultural context. All these factors varied between participants, and also had an impact on dynamic and atmosphere during the workshops.
Educational background	When it comes to the education of participants, facilitators reported the following characteristics: undergraduate, lower secondary education, primary school or secondary school as maximum level of education. In general, the vast majority had an academic record of school failure for numerous reasons: migration, adaptation to the regulated system, lack of motivation, learning problems, language difficulties. Some participants had very difficult family situation and/or social status, which had a deep influence on their educational pathway. A lot of them have negative connotations with respect to the education and apart from that problematic youth situation.

FIGURE 1. - Description of participants' profile



2.8 Main premises

Through the questionnaire filled in by the facilitators before the pilot workshop implementation some key premises and hypothesis concerning their characteristics were identified. The most significant ones were related to motivation, learning outcomes and challenges that facilitators expected to face.

- 📍 **Motivation:** Before the workshops started, participants' motivation was perceived as medium. All facilitators agreed that motivation is one of the most important factors in this activity, therefore this should be kept in mind both when it comes to presenting the idea for the first time and to working on participant's motivation along the workshops;
- 📍 **Outcomes:** Most significant areas of improvement were expected to happen in the area of personal development, improving self-confidence, communication skills, establishing new relationships, interest towards future training possibilities;
- 📍 **Challenges:** The expected challenges were mostly related to the specifics of the target group in terms of interest, maintaining attention and focus, establishing relationships with others and understanding the ArcGIS platform.

Some of the evidences which support those premises are provided below:

Motivation

- 📍 *"The feeling is that their motivation will probably increase once they start to see in practice the potential of the workshop activities, identifying their learning goals and shaping up their expectations in a more accurate and realistic way."* (IT)
- 📍 *"Big factor was also the fact that the vast majority of participants originally decided to come because this was a recommended activity from somebody they trust."* (AT)
- 📍 *"Some participants were very happy to participate in something different than usual classes. "* (ES)

Learning Outcomes:

- 📍 *"I hope that they will feel strengthened & more secure about what they want to do with their life, and in the meantime also learned different skills."* (BE)
- 📍 *"For some of them could be the first time that someone directed their attention that way and the first time they've been asked to think about their future and what they actually want in their life."* (FR)
- 📍 *"They will have to opportunity to get to know other people and be inspired by them, learn from them and establish new relationships which can be significant (or not) in their future."* (ES)

Challenges:

- 📍 *"... this specific target group also have the tendency to drift away very easily, shifting their attention and focus quickly. (...) In addition to that, as possible challenge was perceived working with a very mixed group in terms of background, experiences and age, as it would make it more difficult to design a flow of activities which would respond to all those different needs at the same time."* (IT)
- 📍 *"We are not sure if the workshop will be perceived as attractive, if the young people will accept us as trainers, and will actively take part.."* (AT)
- 📍 *"We don't know if the young people will accept talking about personal failure in there educational career – and publishing a story from it..."* (AT)
- 📍 *"... For them to understand the goal of this activity and also to understand how the software is working could be most challenging. "* (FR)

In the following chapter findings from participants and facilitators are presented as one of the main results from the piloting phase of this project.

3. RESULTS

In order to obtain a global vision and evaluation of the project, both facilitators and participants evaluated their experiences and their feedback has been collected to be analysed. In this section valuable findings are gathered with the objective of comparing initial expectations with the final results obtained after the implementation of the workshops.

The evaluation strategy of the piloting phase included evaluation questionnaires for participants and facilitators, which are the main resource for this analysis. Questionnaires were created in order to collect data before and after the workshop implementation, both from participants and facilitators, providing that way the opportunity to identify the critical issues and possible areas of improvement. Findings have been collected and interpreted in the following sections with the aim to provide a first feedback on the My Story Map pilot workshops.

3.1 Findings from the participants

As mentioned before, participants took part in two types of evaluation: self-assessment and group activities. In the following sections, results from both evaluations are gathered and based on the information obtained, some conclusions are formulated.

Self-assessment results

The “FIGURE 2. - Self-assessment results (before and after workshops)” below shows the evaluation results obtained after the self-assessment contributions from the participants, in the referred two moments: before and after the implementation of the workshops. Self-assessment was realized through an online questionnaire, which contained the list of the 10 competences that are addressed through the My Story Map workshop. To support the correct understanding of the information presented, each competence is described with a further explanation. Each participant had to go through the list individually and try to rate him/herself by selecting the appropriate level, starting from 1 (“I don’t feel competent”) to 4 (“I feel very competent”). The survey was carried out anonymously.

The results collected from the 75 participants from the five countries are presented in the figure below, which shows also all 10 competence areas. For each area, the average answers were calculated in order to find out which was the initial state, and afterwards to measure the progress after workshop implementation. In the table both answers, before and after the workshops are indicated, plus the level of progress of the participants.



	BEFORE WORKSHOPS	AFTER WORKSHOPS	DIFFERENCE
Communicate meaningfully	2.3	2.9	26%
Digital communication	2.9	3.1	7%
Digital content creation	2.4	2.8	17%
Personal awareness and responsibility	2.6	3	15%
Flexibility and adaptability	2.5	2.8	12%
Learning to learn	2.2	2.6	18%
Organize effectively	2.5	2.6	4%
Creativity and sense of initiative	2.5	2.8	12%
Problem solving	2.5	2.5	0%
Working with others	2.5	2.9	16%
TOTAL AVERAGE	2.5	2.8	12%

FIGURE 2. - Self-assessment results (before and after workshops)



Before workshops the average perceived competence level was 2.5. The highest ratings were found in competences related to digital communication (2.9) and personal awareness and responsibility (2.6). The lowest results were related to the competence referred to learning to learn (2.2) and communicate meaningfully (2.3).

After the workshop, the average perceived competence level was 2.8, increasing globally by 12%. The area of most significant progress according to participant's self-assessment was "communicate meaningfully" (26%), which was one of two weakest perceived areas before the workshops. The experience generated considerable perceived progress in this domain, especially if we take into account that among the aims of the present project, the second specific object was: "to improve the digital and communication competences among participants, since they are two key skills for those who have already left school and for those who are at risk of leaving it".

Other areas of great improvement were: digital content creation (17%), personal awareness and responsibility (15%), learning to learn (18%) and working with others (16%). Each of these is core to the objectives of the My Story Map project, therefore the increase in the perceived score can be considered as a positive impact of the project. No noticeable perceived competence development was registered in the area of problem solving by the participants. Little perceived progress seems to be achieved in the areas that initially had the highest scores, namely organize effectively (4%), and digital communication (7%).

Considerations:

Results indicated that the participants' self-assessment of their competences in all categories were mostly between 2.2 and 2.9 before workshop, and between 2.5 to 3.1 after the workshop implementation. Self-assessment results showed that in 9 of 10 competence areas some positive progress was registered. The exception was in problem solving, where participants felt like they didn't perceive any improvement. Although differences in results before and after the workshop were not excessively high, the results obtained were significant as participants noticed that their competences had increased. Also, it should be pointed out that results obtained are based on a piloting phase with a duration of 20 to 30 hours. We believe that implementing the My Story Map approach over a longer period could produce significantly higher impacts.

When interpreting results, it is advisable to consider the difficulty faced by most of the participants before the workshop to understand the concept and practical meaning of the different competences evaluated. This element could have affected the scores given to each evaluated item. So afterwards, when they were asked to fill in the assessment at the end of the workshop, they became much more "conscious" of their own strengths, so they were able to evaluate themselves more "realistically" than before. That could be one of the reasons why big difference in the results before and after haven't been found.

Finally, it should be taken into consideration that the process of self-assessment was new and difficult for most of the youngsters involved as they are not used to assess themselves. Many of them, according to facilitators, during the final self-assessment actually realized that they had assessed themselves with higher scores that they should have in the first self-assessment, as they were now more aware of what it meant. This means that the percentage of progress could actually have been much higher if they had been able to assess themselves in a more realistic way during the initial assessment.



Group evaluation through workshop activities

In the five countries, group evaluation activities were introduced during the first and the last workshop session, in order to check whether participant expectations have been fulfilled, and to collect group feedback on satisfaction with activities, learning outcomes, and them as a group. From these data some important outcomes have been collected. First of all, it should be pointed out that in all countries facilitators reported that participants' expectations have mostly been fulfilled. In Italy for example, facilitators reported that *"...some of the participants pointed out how they would have liked to go more in depth with the reflection and how they felt challenged by the fact that not all the group shared the same wish and they didn't feel totally safe in sharing."*

In general the learning outcomes were very positive. Results below (Findings from the facilitators) go more in deep explaining the different group dynamics and situations in each partner country, and explain how participants showed different levels of interests during workshop implementation.



3.2 Findings from facilitators

In this section the most important results of facilitators' feedback on the piloting implementation are presented. The contributions have been collected and elaborated into more sections in order to help the reader to follow and understand the most important points of the analysis:

- 📍 The first section contains the information about the way workshops were introduced to the participants and the organizations at the local level, with the aim to offer some possible idea for approaches to future users of the project;
- 📍 The second and third sections contain feedback on general satisfaction and motivation, emphasizing the importance of motivation within the learning process;
- 📍 The fourth section contains reflections about the tools available for the implementations;

Presentation of the workshops

According to facilitators' reports, the workshops were mostly introduced to the participants by the reference persons of local organizations in the first instance, and later teachers/tutors/facilitators provided more details individually to participants. Each country had a different approach when it comes to the presentation, as partners had to deal with different backgrounds, type of organization, previous relationships with local partners, characteristics of target group.

Experiences in all countries showed that to motivate young early-school leavers to participate in and contribute to this kind of workshop can be quite challenging, and requires a lot of engagement because of the characteristics of this target group.

In Spain, for example, after the project was introduced by tutors, the facilitator who implemented the workshops also visited the organization in order to get to know the potential participants, meet them in their everyday life, establish first connections and try to create connections that contributed to strengthen the impact of the project. This action was also made with the purpose of providing additional motivation to some of potential participants in order to have them taking part in the workshop. It turned out to be a good practice because later on, during the workshops, some participants explained that they had some doubts previously and after that visit of the facilitators they finally decided to take part in the workshops. The relationship between facilitators and participant turns out to become crucial.

📍 *"The main link has been the positive relationship that the teachers had with the former students, as that reinforced the trust of the youngsters in the project as they perceived it as something promoted by adults who cared about them." (IT).*

Freeman confirms that teachers can be most instrumental in providing the increased and improved emotional support to participants as they move further along through their schooling. All these elements show how teachers are the ones who can have a major impact on the participation and engagement of youngsters in this kind of activities. The adult reference becomes one of the most important elements in relation to the impact of the project.

In all countries except Italy, the workshop was integrated into the regular activities of the organization and thus it was a mandatory program for participants. In Italy, on the other hand, participation was proposed as a voluntary activity. They believed that given the specific personal nature of the workshop, it can be much more beneficial for the youngsters not to feel the pressure of having to be there for anybody else but themselves.



Considerations:

The strategy of introducing the workshop depends on the specifics of the target group, their cultural, social and educational background. Besides, a very important factor is any previous relationship established with the participant, as it proved to be a key motivation factor for participants engagement. When the proposal was presented as part of a regular program, it became much easier to make the participants go through and engage. Doing it this way, even those who in the beginning didn't show much interest, could start feeling motivated during the process and finally ended up engaging and being happy to participate. On the other hand, if participation is voluntary there is more possibility that youngsters feel more motivated and engaged, and that turns out to feel more useful for their personal growth. Finally, it all depends on the context in which you are doing this kind of activity and depending on whether it is necessary to estimate which is the best approach for your situation. Each group has its own reality, needs and contexts. Respecting these variables contributes significantly in the impact of the program.

Meeting workshop goals

According to what was reported by the facilitators, once the workshops started, all participants had a clear idea about the workshop aims and objectives.

“In general, the experience of both learners and the trainers was very positive and valued so we consider that the objectives of this project have been acquired in very satisfying level.” (ES)

Engagement, on the other hand, depends on personal interests and motivation of each participant. Some differences were identified when it came to preferences regarding working methodology and different kinds of activities - some students prefer writing, while others prefer drawing or working on the computer. This depends from the different learning styles and multiple intelligences. An evidence that sums up experiences in all countries is the following:

“In general, even though everybody understood them, some participants definitely embraced the objectives more than others and therefore showed a higher level of commitment during the different activities of the workshop.” (IT)

A very positive attitude to the workshop was identified in Italy, where some participants showed interest towards the project itself and had a curiosity about participants from other countries who were experiencing the same process. This fact leads to the hypothesis that knowing about other youngsters and other countries involved in similar workshops could be another motivating factor in terms of engagement.

In Spain, facilitators reported positive reactions towards the activities, noticing how participants “... were actually more engaged and more focused than usual and they majority didn't lose interest until the end of the workshops.” (ES) This testimony shows that bringing learning experience on a personal level can also be one important engagement factor. Another way to stimulate participants' engagement during the learning process is to help each other and learn together

“...the facilitator also asked the other members of the group to contribute in order to support those participants who were struggling to understand. This helped to make participants feel more responsible and in charge of the process.” (IT). Workshops on digital story-maps are designed for peer learning and aim to make each youngster protagonists of the learning process. Engaging participants as much as possible in phase of the workshop contributes positively to the impact of the learning process.

Considerations:

In general, workshops were perceived as positive and participants' motivation was perceived as satisfying in all countries. In spite of that, the specific target group motivation can oscillate daily and needs continuous reinforcement. Additional motivating factor were found to be: (1) bringing learning experience on the personal level, (2) framing the experience into the context of a larger community going through the same activities, and (3) peer work, which contributes to stimulate participants' interest and engagement.

How to deal with dropping out – motivation as a key factor

According to Pintrich (2003), the term “motivation” is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means to move. In literature, there are different motivational theories, which attempt to answer questions about what gets individuals to move (energization) and toward what activities or tasks. Knowing the specifics of this particular target group, it’s important to have in mind that they might need motivation reinforcement in all stages. In all countries, facilitators reported that the motivation was mostly medium. Related to that, one of the main challenges that facilitators in all countries had to face was to maintain the engagement of all the participants throughout the whole period of the workshop. This difficulty on a motivational level was a key factor for project beneficiaries, who present high levels of drop outs, due to their difficulties with lack of perseverance and engagement within their own personal and academic pathway.

In all countries, the number of participants initially interested was much higher than the final number of participants who eventually took part. Facilitators mostly agreed that “to ensure the participation and commitment of this specific target group had proved to be extremely challenging.” In all countries, the number of participants varied from the first to the last session. Some participants missed one part of the sessions, others started but didn’t manage to finish, and others who joined late, only participated in later phases of the workshops. The reasons for not showing up were quite different:

- 📍 “... because of changes in their personal circumstances at the last minute.”(ES);
- 📍 “...due to different family and health reasons” (IT)
- 📍 “...were particular struggling with their social backgrounds and situations” (AT)

All this leads to the conclusion that, when it comes to workshop design and planning, it is very important to have in mind which is the best approach for your specific target group. It could be useful to collect some basic information about participants before starting the workshop, in order to organize it in the best possible way. “Most of the young people who had been contacted come from very difficult backgrounds and have to deal on a daily basis with different challenges, therefore the formula of a 20-25 hours workshop to most of them sounded very demanding” (IT). It must be taken into account that this target group normally has a high degree of absenteeism for numerous reasons. Therefore, the presence of those who participated in all sessions should be valued and appreciated, and they should have some kind of acknowledgement for their achievement.

Consideration:

It is recommendable to collect as much as possible information of participants before to start working with them, get to know their backgrounds and the daily challenges they face. Another recommendation is to have more facilitators during the workshops, providing a more “personalized” approach to each participant. One single person can hardly give personalized support to all participants in a group bigger than 5-7 people. Apart from that, it’s important to keep in mind that bringing back some memories can cause strong feelings and/or reactions, which can affect future motivation and willingness to participate till the end.



Reflection on tools (the ArcGIS platform and the learning modules)

After the piloting implementation, facilitators expressed their opinions also regarding the learning modules.

Generally the learning modules were evaluated useful and relevant for the preparation of the workshops, as they provided a summarized reflection on the phenomenon of Early School Leaving, and a full explanation on the uses of storytelling with this specific target group.

- “The modules were quite useful to understand the power of stories and how to tell and help young people to tell stories.” (FR)
- “The modules were good for me as background, very elaborated, good explanation, very concrete tips and tricks” (BE)

Its logical structure makes them easy to follow and the activities which can be easily adapted to different learning context are their strong points.

- “Many of the activities can be easily adapted and the flow can variate much still maintaining its original aim. It also allows a lot of flexibility in terms of personal customization, both in terms of timing of implementation and content.” (IT)
- “We pick and used the one that sound the most relevant for that specific training with that particular group. It means thanks to the modules, we could find great activities to help us turn into practice and concrete the story-mapping.”(FR)

Both participants and facilitators had mixed impressions related to the use of the ArcGIS platform. From the evidences it emerges that the platform can be a very good tool for working these topics, but still there are some important considerations to keep into account. For example: “Some templates are quite complicated, so youngsters faced difficulties to use them. For that reason, we mostly used Journal and Cascade templates, as we found them simpler” (ES). Moreover, although the learning modules proved to be very useful for the preparation of the facilitators, some of them mentioned they had to create some additional instructions for work on the platform, so that the youngsters could be more independent in their work.

Apart from that, the low level of digital competences of the target group needs to be taken into consideration, since because of that not all participants have been able to manage the work on their own. “The attitude of the participants towards the platform was quite mixed. Some of them picked it pretty easily and were very independent (...) Some others encountered a few difficulties, especially in terms of the log-in process (they don’t use much their email address, some didn’t even have one)” (IT)

When it comes to work with public accounts, it was reported as a disadvantage how the story-maps, once they are published, immediately become public. Using an organization account it’s possible to share stories just inside of the organization, which for some participants may be preferable. It should be borne in mind that youngsters have to take care while sharing material “e.g. they would even share very personal issues that might harm them afterwards - like pictures and names of parents who were involved in a legal issue with them, or youngsters whose application for asylum has not been accepted/arranged yet or similar” (BE). For that reason, it’s recommended that, before publishing them, the story-maps are revised by a responsible person, in order to avoid possible problems.



Methodology:

Some facilitators pointed out how, logically, there can be a great difference between youngsters when it comes to their preferences on different activities.

- 📍 *“In this workshop it was very impressive to see that the young people preferred very different communication media; for example, some were able to work well by visualising things on a poster, others did not accept this well and wanted to talk about things using question lists, others had difficulties with digital tools, etc” (AT)*
- 📍 *“... They had different preferences when it comes to working methodology and type of activities (writing, drawing, etc.)...” (ES).*

Different learning styles have been studied for a long time. According to Taase (2015;1) “learners may differ in their ability to understand concepts and reasoning to adapt effectively to their environment and learning experiences”. Related with that, the theory of multiple intelligences can serve as base of explanations at this point. Gardner (1983) holds the opinion that people possess many intelligences, and each individual has their own particular mix of different intelligences (musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic). In education this means that individuals with different intelligences may possess different learning styles, and for that is important to provide didactic materials and activities that match their intelligence types (Gardner, 2000). That leads to the conclusion that the facilitator should use different approaches in training to cater for different types of intelligences and to support their learning, while implementing different activities.

Activities:

Some references were made regarding activities structure and realization. Some of the facilitators suggested to introduce more activities related to the multimedia production in the first sessions of the workshop, so that participants can have a clearer picture of what the final outcome will be and how it will be achieved. “We also want to point out that students were wondering how the activities from the first three phases were related with the digital part of the workshop, so maybe in the future it would be good to combine more activities from both parts in order to make it more dynamic.” (ES). Furthermore, one of the facilitators suggested to use different stimulations, spaces, etc., in order to include as many senses as possible while implementing activities: “We believe that offering a wider range of activities involving also movement and a more kinesthetic approach could have better supported the participants to feel more engaged” (IT). Again, this can be related to the multiple intelligences which also supports the idea to involve more diverse activities that can stimulate the learning process of each individual learner. Besides, literature shows that learning is more effective when more senses are engaged, students learn more effectively (Baines, 2008).

Evaluation:

In Spain, the facilitators considered that some kind of evaluation activities was missing at the end of each session, so they propose to add a “...short evaluation activity (the X Journal) in the end of each session in order to stimulate reflection and assimilation of contents done during that particular day.” (ES) Being evaluation an important part of the learning process, there is the proposal to integrate this short activity, so that participants may have a wider perspective and understanding towards their own learning.

Timing :

During the pilot phase partners agreed to implement between 20 and 30 hours of workshop involving at least 15 participants in order to be able to compare the results. Timing of implementation depended also on the group size.

In Italy, workshops were run with different numbers both in terms of days and of participants, which permitted to elaborate some very important conclusions in terms of timing of implementation. Facilitators reported that when the workshop was organised in 4-hours sessions over a time of 6 different days this “required from participants a higher level of commitment as it was organised over a longer period of time.” On the other hand, when sessions were implemented over a shorter number of days (3 days, 7h per session), this “made things simpler logistically for the participants who like this only had to invest 3 days, but it proved to be quite demanding in terms of energy and focus.” (IT). The conclusion is that before running a workshop, facilitators must take into consideration group characteristics, time and space limitations, in order to choose the best approach and organize the session adapted to the specific context.

3.3 Learning outcomes

Learning objectives and outcomes of the My Story Map workshop have been established with the aim of developing the improvement of a specific set of soft skills. The learning modules outline 10 main areas (divided in to 50 specific competences) which can be developed by the young participants through a set of learning materials (LEARNING MODULES, 2019).

According to the evidences of the facilitators, the most significant areas of competence development and outcomes achieved from the participants during piloting phase, were the following:

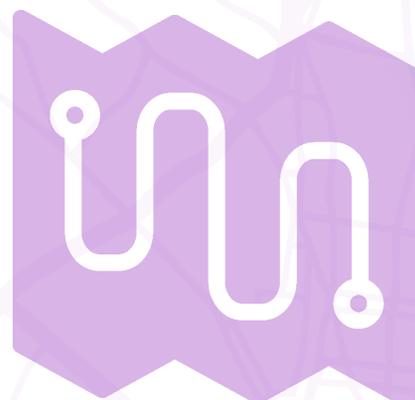
- Reflection on past choices
- Reflection about personal goals
- Reflection about the future
- Public speaking
- Expressing one’s own opinion
- Self-awareness and self-confidence
- Empathy
- Skills on data protection and copyright issues

If we bring this to the context of competences areas set in the learning modules, it emerges how the areas of most intensive competence development were:

- PERSONAL AWARENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY
- COMMUNICATE MEANINGFULLY
- WORKING WITH OTHERS
- DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION

PERSONAL AWARENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The process of looking at one’s own drop out experience is consistently influenced by the awareness that one has about one’s own situation, of what has happened, what choices one has made, what kind of influence others had on him/her and by the fact of feeling ready and strong enough to take responsibility for one’s own actions. This is a very crucial point and one of the key elements of empowerment, because as long as one sees oneself as the victim of the events, as somebody who has always something interfering with one’s own dreams, satisfaction, aspirations and plans, then that is the time when there is no development happening, no growth, and one simply feels stuck, unable to move forward and victimised.” (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 25)



Testimonies:

- 📍 Reflection on their own life: some participants were very impressed and astonished that they could gain new insights along the reflection activities in the workshop (AT)
- 📍 Some really felt strengthened & more secure about what they want to do with their life (BE)
- 📍 Increase the sense of self-responsibility - everybody is responsible for his/her own life (AT)
- 📍 Seems like none of the participants ever actually thought actively about their past, present and especially their goals for the future (..) the moment when they managed to define their future goals is one of the most important outcomes of this workshops cause none of them actually did that before. (ES)
- 📍 Also, we noticed that they don't know how to set goals, in other words they were firstly thinking of "long-term goals" like getting married or having a family, but not about "near future" and how to actually achieve them. (ES)
- 📍 They also developed the ability to look at one's own future thinking in small short-term objectives, identifying a main goal and working out on figuring out the different steps which can lead us to its achievement. This was also translated in terms of developing and improving their organisation skills, becoming more capable of structuring their work and summarizing their thoughts and ideas. (IT)
- 📍 To experience interest, appreciation and understanding for their situation as well as a trusting handling of personal stories (AT)
- 📍 Students pointed out they learned how to present their ideas, share opinions, speak in public and to summarize their thoughts. (ES)
- 📍 Participants had the opportunity to practice talking about themselves, opening up and making connections between different events and elements of their lives. Personal reflection for most of them is a process which feels very far and they are not easily willing to engage in it. Especially the reflection about their strengths - looking up at their talents, their qualities and resources - is perceived as extremely difficult but once they manage to look into it they rediscover a sense of self-worthiness which is extremely important milestone to achieve in terms of personal development. (IT)

Important attitudes were found in Italy and Spain where facilitators detected lack of self-awareness when it came to skills development in some learners:

- 📍 Trainers also noticed that they were not conscious of one big part of the learning which happened during the workshops like - active listening, debating, having personal opinion, using creativity, being free to create and design things as they want/like, set goals, tell the story, etc.. (ES)
- 📍 Most of the participants didn't seem to be much aware of the fact that many of the things that they listed as learning outcomes could actually be easily transferable to their lives in the future. Somehow the feeling is that for many of them the concept of "learning" is still very much related to theoretical notions and practical skills and it's difficult for them to see it with a different perspective. (IT)

This leads to the conclusion that probably many pupils today are misunderstanding the idea of learning, and the reason for that is the educational system which is mostly oriented to promote evaluation oriented learning.

COMMUNICATE MEANINGFULLY

"It is one of the main competences that is developed throughout the different phases of the experience and addressed from different perspectives. When people hear the word 'storytelling' it is quite common to think about the art and the process of telling a story, as it is a very explicit part of it, so explicit that it is also part of the word itself. People are usually quite eager to seek opportunities aimed at learning, enhancing and improving one's own personal 'telling' abilities and skills. What is often forgotten is that communication is a competence which is made of both the act of telling and listening. During the workshop participants learn how to develop both of these aspects. Communication is seen here as an integrated practice of both meaningful telling and listening." (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 22).



Testimonies:

- 📍 Improve communication competences – try to express thoughts and feelings that, at least some of the participants were not used to talk about and not able to find words or other descriptions (e.g. pictures, symbols etc.) (AT)
- 📍 The most significant learning outcome were definitely achieved in the areas of communication and self-awareness.(IT)
- 📍 They were also able to structure in a chronological order their stories. This was not granted for sure at the beginning of the workshop. (FR)
- 📍 Students pointed out they learned how to present their ideas, share opinions, speak in public and to summarize their thoughts. (ES)
- 📍 Listening and learning from each other was also one main learning outcome of the workshop (IT)

This experience shows us how the communication area was one of the areas of higher development, thanks to the storytelling techniques. As already mentioned, communication doesn't include just speaking but also listening, and that was one of the most important aspect of the competence which was developed within the piloting workshop.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

“The whole experience of the My Story Map workshop is about engaging the participants in a process of sharing stories together which are somehow all connected, as the participants are all early-school leavers and, even if their stories are all different, they all have in common the fact of being drop-out stories. To educate participants to this attitude of cooperation and putting oneself in service of the group aims at discovering that they can support each other in their learning and in their growth, being eventually also a reference point for one another as in the case of the creation of the digital story-map where participants are engaged in a buddy system practice, monitoring, giving feedback and checking-in with each other.” (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 29).

Testimonies:

- 📍 To try out, to be courageous and to open oneself to other (AT)
- 📍 Listening and learning from each other was also one main learning outcome of the workshop. Participants in most cases were genuinely interested in hearing each others' stories and be supportive and attentive. (IT)
- 📍 To learn about others in similar situations and backgrounds: some of the participants were very interested in the stories of the others, it seemed to help them to experience that other people did not have it easy either (AT)

A lot of My Story Map activities were designed to be implemented with smaller groups, in order to achieve also social competences which cannot be developed through individual work. For that reason, the role of the facilitator is to create an environment and set conditions for participants to feel comfortable to share their experiences with the group, once they completed the tasks individually. Listening is an important part of the learning process and key action of peer learning, which is the aim of My Story Map project.



DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION

“In the context of the My Story Map workshop the competence of digital content creation is strictly linked to the idea of expression and more specifically of self-expression, meaning how digital technologies and media are used to express one’s own thoughts and emotions. Once again this competence circles back to communication, even though in the workshop the focus is very much on technical and practical skills related to different wide-known media such as: photography, video-making, audio-recording, music and the use of sound and writing through platforms such as blogs or other web pages.” (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 24).

Testimonies:

- 📍 Some also enjoyed working with the story-maps and/or learning with the computer. (BE)
- 📍 Learn about handling data protection and copy-right issues (AT)
- 📍 They learn how to use software like ArcGIS (FR)

Youngsters today have a tendency to be attracted to computers and digital devices, and because of that their motivation was higher when it came to creation of digital content.

Considerations:

From the point of view of the trainers, 20 - 30 hours of the workshops with this specific target group was not really enough to develop all the foreseen competences, as the participants needed more time to accept and learn how to work, and especially how to participate actively in all the activities, which is something they are not used to. On the other hand, it was clear that all of the competences were at least partially acquired, some of them less so and others more. “Participants reported that they were not really used to “speak in public” or share their opinions with others, or to actively about their life and plans for the future.” (ES) Learning more about oneself is always beneficial and, most importantly, it is a process that requires time to see the impact it had on the person. This is also one of the reasons why participants have been encouraged to engage in the process as much as possible, even if they already knew that they didn’t want/feel ready to share the outcomes with others. The fact that the process happened in the first place is already an important learning outcome for the participant.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Challenges

The main aim of the piloting phase was to test the materials produced during the previous phases of the project (learning modules) in combination with the platform ArcGIS, and to elaborate a number of recommendations for the future users of those materials.

In order to facilitate the understanding of the challenges identified by the facilitators and provide some guide-lines which could be useful for future users, the reported challenges have been divided into two categories:

- Aspects to keep in mind before the start of the workshop;
- Aspects to keep in mind during the implementation of the workshop;

Before the start of the workshop

1) Space

In the space where the workshop takes place, participants should feel comfortable to express themselves, their thoughts and their feelings and providing a clear and, at the same time, flexible frame which could be adjusted to meet the possible needs, changes and challenges that could emerge during the process can help to foster and enhance that safety (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 19:) In Italy, they found that choosing the former school of some of the participants as the venue for the workshop was not a good choice. *"... in general having people who dropped out of school to come back to their former school or to a school premises in general didn't exactly contribute to the idea of creating a safe and neutral environment for the workshop to happen."* It's very important to make sure you create a safe environment where students can be creative, feel free to express themselves, to use the space to move, to create.

Classroom management is a large topic which has been discussed in different learning contexts, but always with the assumption that positive environment enhance cognitive, personal and social growth of the students, developing in particular self-motivation, self-control, self-understanding, self-evaluation and self-management (Hue & Li, 2008). Besides, My Story Map workshop aims to ensure an environment of safety and trust, where non-violent and non-competitive attitudes are applied, where nobody is or feels judged and where everyone is invited, regardless of one's own role, to be open and aware about one's own identity without having feelings of guilt and/or fear (LEARNING MODULES, 2019:21).

2) Internet Connection

In France, facilitators were struggling with technical issue, as the ArcGIS platform requires a good Internet connection in order to be used smoothly. *"The internet connection was not so good so the software was very slow. We need to have enough computer and good one as well as good Internet to run the workshop. This is not that easy to ensure in youth work nor in school where our material are often out of age."* (FR) A fundamental aspect of preparation is good IT equipment and a reliable and strong Internet connection. It is also necessary to make sure that computers run well and online connection is satisfactory, especially if there is limited time for working on the platform with participants.

3) Language and understanding

In the scenario that trainers are going to work with a group of participants that they do not know, it's very important to collect all possible information about them before starting. There can be different limiting factors that can influence working dynamic, as for example language barrier or lack of IT competences. *"..one of the participants was a girl from Bangladesh who didn't speak Italian and needed constant support with translation in English and it hasn't been easy for her to interact with the rest of the group during the activities."* (IT)



4) Number of facilitators

For groups above 10 participants it is recommended to have at least 2 facilitators, *"... it is important both for diversity and support on the personal and technical level"* (IT). The number of facilitators required can be related to the group size on one hand, and to specific needs of participants on the other. Personalization of the training is a core issue to attend when preparing the workshop.

5) Creating a bond with the participants before the workshop

An important factor when it comes to connecting with participants during the workshop was to create some previous relationship with them. In this way, from the beginning there will be some kind of "trust" between facilitator and participant, which can contribute to the quality of the workshop implementation and facilitate relationships and the atmosphere in the group.

During the workshop implementation

1) Assistance

This specific target group can show lack of motivation, which often, because of their life circumstances, is not easy for them to handle. Sometimes factor can be external, as for example they are looking for a job, have small children or family to take care of, illness problems, etc. *"Most of the young people who had been contacted come from very difficult backgrounds and have to deal on a daily basis with different challenges"* (IT) This can be considered as the area on which the facilitators have less influence, but still internal motivation can be stimulated through establishing personal connection between facilitator and participant.

2) Focus, motivation and self-reflection

To maintain the attention and motivation of participants has proven to be challenging, for that reason, once participants start the workshop, is very important to feel their needs in order to keep their interest alive so they don't drop out. Besides that, group size in this case can be an important factor *"... due to the small number of participants, sometimes it hasn't been easy to keep the youngsters focused as the process ended up revolving mostly around individual tasks/work and closer to some sort of coaching experience at times. For young people who aren't used to talk about themselves and going in depth into reflection, all those hours on which the focus was exclusively on them felt heavy in some moments."* (IT). In Austria, they faced a similar challenge, where because of the lack of interest of some participants the whole group dynamic was changed: *"The division of the group into those that wanted to participate actively and a group of four or five people together with some following youngsters that expressed disinterest more or less continuously, and the longer the workshop was going they became more and more disturbing (by being loud). It was also not easy to go so deeply into detail when it came to self-reflection and the presentation of personal experiences."* (AT)

Also the age can be a determining factor here, as participants are in different life stages and therefore are facing different kinds of challenges. The approach to some topics changes according to the levels of maturity, awareness and commitment towards the process. The example from Italy shows exactly that this kind of issue can create tensions and have repercussions on the experience of the single participants: *"... who had difficulty to follow and stay focused and that made the minimum during the activities, not really committing to the process and becoming louder and louder with their interaction between each other. This created some tension between them and the rest of the group..."*.

3) Lack of trust

If participants do not feel comfortable with the space, the people and the facilitators, some important objectives of this activity can be missed. In case that participants do not feel safe and don't want to share their personal experience with the others, the workshop will be limited in its impact. *"The reticence of youngsters to share their stories as well and their strong opposition with sharing for some of them, even with the other members of the groups". (FR).* It happened in Italy: *"The result was that part of the potential for sharing within the group was lost, as some people didn't feel safe enough to share their stories and experiences in the group."* This can also be related with the group size, and for that My Story Map workshop recommends working in small group. Small group sets the conditions for the workshop to go deeper on its long-term asset, encouraging more reflection, feedback and self-directed learning and, at the same time, ensuring more time for the process of inclusion and free expression of all participants (LEARNING MODULES, 2019: 19).

4.2 Recommendations

As a result of the piloting phase, all participants produced their on digital story-map with their personal experience of Early School Leaving. Those digital stories produced are showcased within the online gallery StoryWall (mystorywall.eu), divided into public and private, available to the audience which thus can read them, listen to them and be inspired by them. In this way the digital story-maps, besides being a tool of self-reflection and compensation for the young people engaged in this learning pathway of self-discovery, become also a bridge connecting their past together with their possible future(s). (LEARNING MODULES, 2019:96).

As described in the LEARNING MODULES (2019:21), even if the experience of the workshop has a strong emphasis on the elements of motivation, empowerment and personal development, it is fundamental to clarify how its main purpose is an educational one and not a therapeutic one. The facilitators should be ready and prepared to manage the possible emotional responses of participants, being aware of the possible fragile nature of both the target group and the process, but they should also be ready to accompany and redirect the young person towards getting specific support, if needed.

This analysis does not allow the elaboration of final conclusions on the effectiveness of the workshops on participants to be made, as the sample is limited, but still the experiences from five different countries (in terms of culture, background, participants profile) are anyway valuable and worth of consideration for the future users of My Story Map approach and activities.

After analyzing the strong and weak points of this piloting phase, and despite the diversity of the environments where it was applied, the My Story Map resources present a potentially useful and attractive methodological and pedagogical approach which favours personal and academic development. It contributes favorably to the prevention of Early School Leaving, but it can't be considered as a solution for it. Therefore, its use can be recommended in different learning environments, and it can be used as a valid complementary tool to other similar techniques and methodologies.



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ANNEX I – FACILITATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE EX ANTE (BEFORE THE WORKSHOP)

1.) GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRAINER	
Country, city	
Gender (M/F/Both)	
Age	
Profession	
Previous working experience with the target group? (Yes/no)	

2.) GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP	
Number of Participants	
Gender: (M/F/Both)	
Age	
Education Level	
Nationalities	



BEFORE

1. How did you introduce/present/promote the workshop in the youth center/training center? (Who? Which kind of material? Individually/group..).

2. Describe your target group. Which are the characteristics of the participants (age, educational background,..?)

3. Was it proposed as compulsory or voluntary activity?

4. How useful was the guide/the description of the learning modules for your personal preparation of the workshops? What was especially good? Was there anything missing?



5. What are your assumptions about possible challenges with the group in this moment?

6. How do you see the motivation of participants?
Would you describe them like low/medium or highly motivated?

7. What do you think will be the most significant learning outcomes for learners from this workshop in general?

8. How do you think the activities will contribute to their interest and competences for the future?



ANNEX II – FACILITATORS’ QUESTIONNAIRE EX POST (AFTER THE WORKSHOP)

AFTER	
Mark from 1 - 5 your satisfaction with the following aspects of the workshop implementation:	
a) Group in general	1 2 3 4 5
b) Preparation materials/resources (guide)	1 2 3 4 5
c) Working conditions (space, equipment,...)	1 2 3 4 5
d) Support from partner organization	1 2 3 4 5
In addition please give your feedback on the following questions.	
1. Did you noticed that some of the participants were misled with the general objective of our workshop?	
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
2. Describe how the group was reacting to the activities in general? Describe generally your communication with participants. How did you communicate with them? Did you have any troubles?	
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
3. Was there any participants who gave up on participation? If yes, in which stage of workshop and why?	
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	



4. How the content of the workshops was finally presented?
Did you follow the initial proposal? Was there any changes?
(In case of adaptation of activities - please describe how you have adapted it, In case of other activities than proposed - please describe them in detail.)

5. What were the major challenges you faced with? Describe.

6. How did you see the motivation of the participants?
Were there low/medium/highly motivated?

7. What were the most significant learning outcomes for the learning after the implementation of the workshop, from your point of view?

8. Please comment shortly the results of the focus group done with the participants before and after. In which measure their expectations have been fulfilled?

9. Do you think they will really be able to use some of competences developed during the workshop in their future?





