Benefits and Dangers
of Social Media

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IMPACT REPORT

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Content

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION, EXPECTATIONS AND GENERAL FINDINGS OF IMPACT

Introduction

The Impact Report presents the partners' findings of impact from using the project outputs during the testing and trialling phase of the project in 2022.

The impact evaluation activities of the consortium studied the:

- impact on Curriculum
- impact on Students
- impact on Teachers

based on the testing of a scheme of work structured in 5 thematic modules containing:

- resources used with young people in class as part of different subjects
- resources used with young people in extra-curricular activities
- online educational activities for young people to raise awareness of social media related issues
- activities including starters, main tasks and reflection

Data were collected on attitudes using this methodology including confidence building, motivation, enjoyment and engagement. Evaluations were done through oral questionnaires, observation, and interviews. Observation included levels of engagement. Feedback from the teachers who have worked with the specific target groups were also collected, primarily through interviews to assess impact on those individuals in relation to well-being and progress.

Initially expected impact of the project

The impact on the participating organisations was expected to be:

Through partnership working, organisations would develop their experience of multinational working and benefit from mutual learning, including, for some, project management at a European level, developing their own curricula, and, for some, addressing challenges facing their own schools in supporting children who are vulnerable to damaging online behaviour.

The project was also expected to lead to improved quality of teaching and learning for those involved and the schools will then be able to share this methodology internally to improve performance across the board. The schools involved would become leaders in developing innovative strategies for addressing the topic of social media and would be in a position to share this expertise with others through developing a model for professional development, which they can use with future cohorts of teachers and trainees. Through their involvement in social media, the schools would be able to promote networking more widely. It would facilitate the updating and revision of schools' digital policies and online safety.

For the target groups:

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The impact on the participating teachers and support staff was expected to include gaining direct experience of multinational working and being able to exchange their experience and improved intercultural competence through the training sessions and social media. The project would support them in acquiring new pedagogical skills or improving their understanding of the issues surrounding social media and how to best address them. It would help them contribute to both the inclusion of vulnerable students and also school digital policy.

Through the forums in the online platform and social media, they would be able to communicate directly with their peers in other countries and share both resources and approaches to their teaching.

The impact on the students would be improved knowledge of the way that social media works and how best to use it, improved thinking skills in identifying potential dangers and false information and a raised awareness of both the benefits and dangers of social media. From a beneficial point of view, it would promote interest in the world around the students through access to news and information and also demonstrate the potential for improved communication, including language learning. In dealing with the negative issues, it would have the potential to deal more effectively with issues such as cyberbullying and sexting, but also reduce the potential for online grooming and recruitment to extreme organisations. For a small number vulnerable students, who have already suffered negative experiences, it would offer them support.

General findings of impact

The impact on the organisations involved has been very positive. They have benefitted from learning from one another and are very keen to continue to work on future European projects. By adopting different methodologies, they have shared alternative ways of working. They have a successful model that can now be applied in other schools in their networks, and a methodology that they are incorporating into their own practice.

The impact on the target groups has been very significant. Firstly, the numbers targeted were exceeded – the target for teachers and support staff was 38 in the initial application and the target for pupils was 400. In fact, the numbers involved were 39 teachers and 1416 pupils.

There is clear evidence in the impact evaluations of both changes in teachers' understanding and practice, with comments such as the 'program being an effective tool, providing easy access to a wealth of information and ready-to-use materials', and 'no problems incorporating this module in the school curriculum'. In terms of methodology, teachers responded according to their personal style. Some teachers who were less familiar with social media benefited together with their students on learning about the range of social media, others reported that learning about the dangers and misinformation was beneficial. They felt that the final module involving internet safety was the most important as many felt that they did not have enough information about the topic.

Feedback from the pupils included that they found the modules to be engaging and interesting, and enjoyed the openness with which the teachers approached the topic. In some countries they appreciated the interactive and non-lecture-based nature of the tasks and the fact that the

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modules provided them with a deeper understanding of their own personal use of social media. Some students reported that they never previously considered how they use social media and that it was beneficial to have an opportunity to reflect on it.

An impact that had not been anticipated at the time of the application, was the varied approaches taken by the partners, including extending the ages ranges of the target groups, and the ways in which the resources were adapted and enhanced for specific groups. Feedback included the comments that the approach was adaptable.

The other key element of impact was the impact on wider competences. The approaches taken in the delivery enabled pupils to improve a wide range of competences including their critical thinking, independent learning, research skills and teamwork. In the case of the Italian partner who involved their pupils in creating videos in English, it also improved their creative and language competences.

PART 2: DETAILED IMPACT DATA FROM PARTNER COUNTRIES

United Kingdom

The project helped raise awareness of the benefits and dangers of social media for the staff and students at the 3 schools in the Arete Trust. By completing a survey about their use of social media and their attitudes towards social media they helped shape the design of the modules and also gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on this important area of their lives.

The findings from the student survey described above were shared with the teachers and helped to bridge the gap between educator and pupil perceptions. The survey results showed an opportunity to capitalise on the benefits of social media and support young people on how to get the best out of this ever present medium.

Teachers also partook in a survey to rate their confidence in teaching students about the benefits and dangers of social media. This provided opportunity for a moment of reflection on a much over-looked aspect of education.

A group of year 10 students from Richmond school took part in number of workshops with the Lead Researcher to evaluate the current provision of social media education and provide rich qualitative data to compliment the quantitative data gathered via the survey. This gave the students an opportunity to make their voices heard and experience a collaborative teamwork structure different from their normal school day and gain a valuable insight into the world of research.

All carers of the students across the 3 schools were contacted via the school newsletters and social media sites to make them aware of the project and again help raise the profile of thinking about how we educate our young people on the benefits and dangers of social media. It helped the schools show parents that they take their commitment to PHSE seriously and are always looking for ways to improve their provision.

5 teachers took part in the trial of the materials, receiving training before delivering the lessons via space in the PHSE curriculum. Over 100 students participated in the trial lessons, gaining the opportunity to learn about a specific element of social media. The teachers had the opportunity to feedback via surveys, which gave them the opportunity to shape the modules based on the experience of teaching the sample lessons.

Following the partner meeting in Reus, the UK decided to trial a more student-led approach. This shows the impact of collaboration and working across countries to share best practice. If it hadn't been for the experience and opportunity to see first-hand what other countries had found to be successful, the UK wouldn't have gone down this path.

The student-led approach resulted in a group of Year 10 students working to produce a 'lesson' to deliver to feeder primary school year 6 class. This has a hugely positive impact on the Year 10 students involved, who were able to gain leadership skills, as well as think deeply about how to educate 'peers' on such an important matter. The Year 6 students benefitted from hearing such important message prior to their high school experience beginning. It benefitted the schools by helping to strengthen the transition partnership work already in place.

At regional level, the dissemination of the project and its materials reached over 72 trainee and apprentice teachers and their mentors, across 65 different schools in the North West and West Yorkshire. The trainees were from primary and secondary, mainstream and special school settings. The training event contributed to building the participants skills and knowledge in PHSE (Personal, Health, Social and Economics) education and undoubtedly positively impacts their journey towards Qualified Teacher Status. The participants received a 60 minute session which took them through their own perceptions of the dangers and benefits of social media for young people, and what role they believe they should take in educating young people on this matter. The session then moved on to talk through the research project and showcase the modules available before examining the different delivery models and trainees reflecting on how they could incorporate the core messages from the session in their own teaching practice. In addition, 15 trainee teachers from the West Midlands accessed a virtual version of the session outlined above. The delivery was modified to account for the change in platform. The session resources were also shared with all 87 of the trainees' mentors.

At European level, the UK project team found that working collaboratively with educators from other countries was an excellent form of professional development and led to fruitful and thought-provoking conversations about the role of education, specifically in the context of non-subject specific matters, such as social media. Professional relationships have been forged and will lead to collaboration on future projects.

Italy

In Italy, the participating teachers employed a proactive approach, placing the student in the foreground by letting students play a central role during the lesson. These lessons have all been carried out within the area of Citizenship

Being an upper secondary school, the age of students involved ranges from 14 to 18. Generally speaking, the involved students present quite a high level of competence in English language ranging from B1-C1

The topic of social media fits well in the didactic plan covering the area of citizenship. Providing knowledge and soliciting awareness on the use of social media not only responded to the efficacy of a didactic project within the area of citizenship but it has aroused immediate interest and engagement in the students.

The activities carried out were well blended with both citizenship and the curricular subject of each teacher (namely P.E., Italian and English)

Each teacher has a minimum of 3 hours to dedicate to the area of citizenship in each school subject. In any case, all decisions on extracurricular activities are to be taken following the agreement of all staff teachers at a class meeting.

The difficult aspect was the organisational one mainly due to the Covid emergency hence the constant quarantine of individual students as well as of entire classrooms for some days.

In conclusion, the findings, based on the feedback forms filled in by students, gave us as results that these lessons involving the topic of social media had an overall positive impact on students. As teachers we all noticed that students had not only a possibility to express their opinions and to constructively create a debate while exchanging their ideas, but most of all they enjoyed themselves while using their skills and competences (particularly in the subjects involved: English Italian and PE area). As teachers, we can sum up their experience, hence our lessons, under the title of "Edutainment".

In our experience we don't see any problems in incorporating this module in the school curriculum of all levels of education: both primary and secondary. Social media being a very broad field of exploration and a versatile topic for teaching activities, it would be more effective to carry out a multidisciplinary school project involving various school subjects and possibly more than one class of students to work in contemporaneity. This option can obviously be better achieved in a small school, with not too numerous classes and in longer-term planning. The lessons plans and the topic of social media turned out to be particularly suitable to be incorporated in the area of Citizenship Education in the school curriculum.

Lithuania

This project aimed to empower educators with the tools necessary to guide their students in navigating the complex landscape of social media. We identified five key areas of focus, including: the various forms of social media available, the potential advantages of utilizing these platforms, the potential risks and dangers associated with social media use, utilizing social media as a tool for information gathering and dissemination, and the importance of internet safety.

To achieve our objectives, we embarked on a comprehensive five-step process. The first step entailed gaining a deeper understanding of social media use in Lithuania, through the use of a questionnaire which sought to elicit a variety of perspectives from students, as well as insights from teachers. We

received responses from 193 students and 41 teachers, representing a diverse cross-section of schools within Lithuania.

In the second step, we utilized the data obtained in step one to construct preliminary teaching materials for educators, drawing upon the results from questionnaires and expertise of professionals who specialize in working with youth. The third step involved training a select group of teachers on the use of these materials. In the fourth step, these teachers then tested the materials with their own students.

Based on feedback received from the teachers and students, we fine-tuned the materials in the fifth step. Finally, we held a dissemination event, attended by over 30 education specialists, to present the materials and provide an opportunity for participants to put them into practice and use it in the future.

The questionnaire results indicated that, in Lithuania, social media is primarily utilized for leisure, socializing, and as a means of coping with personal difficulties. Majority of the students used social media for over 4 hours per day (84 out of 193). The feedback received from students emphasized the importance of addressing the potential dangers of social media, as well as the need for better strategies for utilizing social media effectively. Over 25% encountered online bullying or social ignorance, and 47% encountered different negative experiences online such as being hacked, seeing negative material, receiving hurtful or improper pictures or being sexually harassed. Majority of the students felt more competitive with others online. Overall, the students viewed social media as a valuable tool, but one that must be used with caution. Teacher responses suggested a lack of programs and resources to assist them in discussing social media with their students.37 out of 41 said they never had any training about how to communicate with students regarding social media. Many teachers indicated that it is a challenging topic to broach, and that material such as the one we developed would be beneficial in this regard.

We then proceeded to develop the material for teachers. Lithuanian team was responsible for the topic of dangers of social media, it was created based on the questionnaire results and various insights from consultations with education specialists. The created material focused on several main ideas, which were openness (Children have to feel that they can be open and understood about their use of social media), interactivity (It has to be not a lecture but an active seminar) and inclusion. Once the material on the topic was ready it was translated into English, and material from partners on the other topics was shared. Feedback was given by partners and to partners to improve the material and group consultations were conducted for finalisation of the product. Once final English version was produced it was translated into Lithuanian for Lithuanian teachers to be approachable.

Upon completing the development of the material, our testing and case analysis involving 13 teachers and help specialists of schools (first 10 of them took part in the two day training, then 3 colleagues of these attendees joined the piloting team) from 7 different schools from across Lithuania who participated in a longitudinal training in which they learned the material provided. It involved a 2-day training program, testing of the program in practice and two additional meetings to review the results. During the 2 day training and reviewing various materials presented in our modules, interacting with teachers revealed a significant lack of similar programs. The teachers shared that they were aware of many issues that arise on social media, but they lacked the tools to effectively address them. The training and presented tools appeared to provide the teachers with a greater sense of confidence and comfort in discussing social media with their students. Once the two-day training finished teachers had 2 months to test the material with students and asked to fill out feedback questionnaires to help us improve the modules. We held 3 online meetings to get

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feedback from our piloting teachers and help specialists of schools every two months during the piloting year. And we've agreed with our piloting team, that each of them or working in pairs if they're from the same school, will pilot at least 5 lessons – one from each module – during the piloting year. The class size in Lithuania is about 20-30 students. Upon meetings, participants of the training responded that they shared material with their colleagues but were not very eager to use questionnaires, however they were eager to use the material in work with students. After the teachers began implementing the modules with their students, we received feedback from over 185 students and 19 questionnaires from teachers were filled. However, the number of students who participated in testing of the modules is hard to determine since teachers during our meetings mentioned that had often forgot or did not ask students to fill questionnaires or didn't fill them themselves. Talking with participated teachers and them sharing the amount of classrooms that participated in at least one lesson likely exceeds 800 students.

Reviewing feedback from students on the modules the students found the modules to be engaging and interesting, citing several key factors that contributed to their enjoyment and benefits:

- the openness with which the teachers approached the topic. Student respondents mentioned that teachers often tend to lecture and this material invited teachers to listen to students which was a good experience allowing students not only to better understand they're own use of social media, its dangers and benefits but also creating a better relationships with teachers allowing students to talk with teachers about such topics better.
- the interactive and non-lecture-based nature of the tasks was important for students who wanted to act instead of listen.
- the creativity and fun of the activities, was a big part for the benefits. It helped not only to feel more engaged but also see that talking about this topic is not just listening to teacher lectures but participating in a debate which improves consciousness.
- the fact that the modules provided them with a deeper understanding of their own personal use of social media. Some students reported that they never previously considered how they use social media and that it was beneficial to have an opportunity to reflect it.

In terms of improvement, some mentioned that some slides were difficult to read which resulted in slight changes in our presentations.

The teachers who tested the program provided feedback that it was a useful tool, but suggested several areas for improvement. One such improvement was to improve the translations, which was subsequently addressed. Another feedback was that the program was somewhat difficult to follow and required a significant amount of time for teachers to create finished lessons and incorporate additional materials. In response, we created a few sample lessons that were completed from start to finish and required no further development. This change received positive feedback from participants since they reported a need for a ready to use material in practice. In Lithuania teachers often unexpectedly have to substitute for a colleague of a different field and this requires an immediate preparation. Several teachers mentioned that they used our material and talked with students about social media when they had to substitute teachers of a different field. They were satisfied that such opportunity arose and reported student satisfaction as well. Regarding module topics, different teachers responded differently and it depended on their personal style. Some teachers who were less familiar with social media benefited together with students on learning about styles, others reported that learning about dangers and misinformation was beneficial. It is difficult to differentiate between the modules, some teachers reported using them in random order or based on perceived need of the students, some reported testing them consistently. Finally, it appears that the final module involving internet safety was most important to teachers who felt that they did not have important information regarding the topic, it was very important for them to learn

about legality of online safety and contacts in cases of various situations. After learning who to contact and various cases which can arise online teachers felt more confident in dealing with situations in their schools.

Aside from these suggestions, the feedback was mostly positive. Teachers stated that the program is an effective tool when addressing the topic of social media with students, providing easy access to a wealth of information and ready-to-use materials. The teachers who participated in the training shared the information with their peers, and over 15 teachers were involved in testing the material.

Finally, after the second meeting with the participating teachers and reviewing their and student feedback a finalised version of the teaching material with improved translations, slides and in advance prepared lessons and cleared instructions was created. We then proceeded to share it with various specialists across Lithuania. The program was concluded with a dissemination event, attended by over 35 specialists from across various schools in Lithuania, in which we presented the program and the created teaching materials. The specialists responded positively, expressing a need for such a program and expressing eagerness to use them.

In summary, we can conclude that the creation and implementation of the material designed to assist teachers in discussing social media with their students was successful. The materials were based on the results from a sample of Lithuanian students, and the feedback from teachers was mostly positive, stating that the tool is easy to use. The students' feedback implied positive feelings and learning opportunities. Over 13 teachers participated in the testing of the material and reached over 800 students, 185 of whom filled questionnaires. The dissemination event presented the teaching material to over 35 specialists who responded positively and expressed eagerness to use it. To summarize, we can state that a high-quality teaching tool to help teachers talk to students about the dangers and benefits of social media was created, tested on over 800 students, and brought positive results. The tool is now available online and is being shared among teachers in Lithuania.,

Spain

The Spanish partner school works with CLIL projects (in English), so initially to test the outputs we did not have the need to translate the material to be able to use it. We adapted and piloted the modules in the original language (English). It wasn't until after we had tested parts of the modules that we translated the activities we had developed into both Catalan and Spanish for local teachers to use.

In order to test the resources developed in this project, suitable activities selected from the 5 modules were incorporated into two new bilingual projects that were being designed in the school to comply with the new curriculum, which calls for project-based learning.

One project is called "Trapped in globalisation" and involves social science and English language teachers. Its aim is to reflect on the main causes and consequences of globalisation from different perspectives: historical, cultural, economic, technological and environmental. The social media module took 10 hours out of the 32-hour project.

Another project involves English language and Biology teachers. It is called "Be Healthy Be Yourself" and aims at raising awareness among teens of the attitudes that can be adopted to improve their diets and to increase physical activity levels and thereby adopt a healthy lifestyle. The project also

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seeks to inform youngsters of lifestyle-related health problems. The social media module also took 4 hours out of the 32-hour project. The projects, which are compulsory, are aimed at Year 9 students and last for about 7 weeks. The class consists of around 30 students. Two teachers are present in class. We have to Year 9 classes and the project was implemented in both classes.

Another activity was included in the citizenship subject–called "Valors". The methodology used was peer learning. Year 10 students (two classes of 30 students) had to prepare a presentation for Year 7 (two classes of 30 students) about the benefits and dangers of social media.

The CLIL projects, which are part of the formal curriculum, are meant to be taught every year to ninth graders, starting 2022. The two teachers involved in the present KA2, trained and helped pilot the activities in the first year, but from 2023 on other teachers are developing the project in class. The feedback we have got to this day is positive. The teachers found the proposals useful and meaningful and were adapting the materials to suit their needs. Meanwhile, citizenship is being taught by the same teacher this year, and he has included the activity in his class.

Greece

As Eduact is an Educational Organization and not a school, we employed different piloting strategies to those of other partners. Our first piloting pool was that of our workshops. More specifically, we facilitate STEM and Skills workshops to underrepresented, small villages in Halkidiki for children of all ages. In these workshops we set aside time to implement the pilots of the modules produced through this Erasmus+ partnership. Eduact's project team carefully translated and localized the material produced by all partners so that it would be introduced seamlessly to the students. Bearing in mind that those students get minimal international stimuli, introducing material that hadn't been localized would make their participation and engagement really difficult as the material would appear strange and 'foreign' to them.

The next step was training the trainers who would deliver the workshops. These were Eduact's Educators, with experience in instruction, curriculum development and dealing with innovative educational material, working with it out of the box. They also have 4 year's experience working in these underrepresented areas of Halkidiki, as Eduact's workshops there have been going on for a while. The training went smoothly, with the project managers dealing with it from our side presenting the purpose and scope of the proposal as well as the material in detail to the educators. They were given freedom to keep notes as they saw fit as well as fill in questionnaires as they went, noting how they localized the material even more, what were the student's perceptions and what aspects of the modules could be further modified for them to be even more user friendly and overall impactful. Consultation with Eduact's project managers continued even during the pilots, either in person or online, to solve questions, receive more in-depth feedback and resolve implementation issues arising.

Aa the pilots in Halkidiki were rolling, two schools, one public and one private, were invited to participate in the pilots. For them, we followed the exact process detailed above but offered closer guidance with class observations and complementary consultation to ensure smooth operations.

The piloting team in Halkidiki consisted of : 4 educators, 170 children aged 13 to 17. They implemented 11 hours of workshops, with students even working a lot independently at home with the material provided as further study by the partnership.

The piloting team in the schools consisted of a total of: 3 educators, 98 children aged 13 to 15 years old. They implemented 40 hours of teaching the modules, with students sometimes working independently at home with the material provided as further study by the partnership.

The school teachers implemented the material in English class (English, non-localized version), in I.T. class (Greek, Localized version) and in Civic Education class (Greek, Localized version).

PART 3: CASE STUDIES FROM PARTNER COUNTRIES

Case studies were gathered in various contexts of project implementation and partners were free to adopt an approach that was most suitable for them. Due to their different sizes and formats, partners' case studies can be found as attached Annexes to this report.

United Kingdom

Case study from Northallerton School in North Yorkshire

Italy

Four cases studies from Liceo Augusto Righi in Rome

Lithuania

Experience of the Lithuanian partner working with schools in Vilnius

Spain

Case studies of implementation within project-based learning at IE Pi del Burgar in Reus

Greece

Experience of the Greek partner working with schools in city of Thessaloniki and villages of Halkidiki peninsula