MELODY

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IO6 – MELODY Charter

(A strategic and operative tool for a more inclusive school system)

Final Report

Partner: **Antares**

Country: **Italy**

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Summary

1. Introduction

"MELoDY - MEthods for Learning Disorders in Youth" project was created to share and promote the most innovative methods at European level and the best school practices in the treatment of learning disorders for school-age students, facing a risk of dropping out school. In fact, there are laws in all European countries protecting the right to study, but students with Learning Disabilities need more time, compensatory or dispensatory tools and also higher competences, as well as attention, from the teaching staff.

When approaching General (i.e. non-specific) Learning Disorders, then, a further difficulty is represented by the fact that sometimes the national laws do not provide forms of assistance or tools for students or teachers, in the absence of a medical diagnosis (e.g. Italy). Yet, the number of students having some learning difficulties without a specific medical reason represents a significantly higher percentage than students classified as SLD (in Italy: Specific Learning Disorders).

This project has therefore tried to propose a series of tools that can be used by all teaching staff as a teaching practice, without necessarily having to rely on a medical diagnosis, also in the name of a democratic, more inclusive and less medicalized approach to learning disorders.

MELoDY project started with a comparative analysis on the condition of General Learning Disorders within the school curriculum and ends with this Charter, which aims to deliver to the schools of the Partner Countries not only a Toolkit of tested Methods and a series of E-learning training modules tested by teachers on a specific platform, but also a series of practices, guidelines and recommendations.

The project team hopes that these tools can support the daily work of teachers, struggling with students showing a learning difficulty, either diagnosed or not, due to intrinsic (dyslexia, cognitive / neurologic disorders, etc.) or extrinsic motivations (difficult family / social background, foreign origin, addiction problems, etc.).

The project's partnership is composed of:

- Antares Srl (Leading Partner), IC Spoltore **(IT)**
- CRIA **(SP)**
- Desincoop, Agrupamento Escolas Francisco de Holanda **(PT)**
- GEMS Northern Ireland **(UK)**

- SPIR Oslo (**NO**).

2. Project evolution and lesson learned

2.1 MELoDY Project's most interesting aspects

The partners have highlighted many points of interest in the project, from the approach used to the practical skills learned, to the use of the MOOC platform, which proved very useful due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The partners say:

Antares (IT): We found the debate on the project's approach particularly important, namely the definition of what constitutes a learning disorder, beyond national definitions. We realized that limiting ourselves to the so-called Specific Learning Disorders would not only have made transnational work impossible - due to the different legislations - but would have enormously limited the potential of research. We have verified that in all the countries involved in the project there is a large number of students who are not entitled to support in teaching or to compensatory / dispensatory tools, but who still show learning difficulties often due to external problems.

These more general difficulties in learning, which are very widespread, must be addressed in some way, in the name of a spirit of inclusion that is typical of the school.

IC Spoltore (IT): The following elements were notably stimulating:

1) The confrontation between different approach methods, both in the identification of learning difficulties in students and in the application of a teaching focused on facilitating the learning process.
2) Sharing strategies and tools to facilitate the project itself.
3) The implementation of already acquired strategies.
4) The improved awareness of the necessity of strategies aimed at educational success and the limitation of the educational dispersion.

The Testing gave us the chance of actually using skills on subjects that usually remain on a theoretical level.

CRIA (ES): Cria's main lines of work include the design, management and evaluation of programmes aimed at employment and labour market insertion, among other areas of intervention, as well as the creation and development of new training materials and tools. The Melody project, therefore, fits perfectly with this axis of the organization and has helped to increase the experience and knowledge base of the organisation.

Desincoop/AEFH (PT): The local partnership between Desincoop and AEFH (Agrupamento Escolas Francisco de Holanda) was very profitable and very important to establish a truly collaborative work and one added value since learnings and knowledge were complementary. The importance of calling to the education field other visions and knowledge was a challenge but was in line with our strategy, claiming that change starts in the field, through partnerships focused on the object of their intervention.
The new legislation regarding inclusive education was a challenge: all the participants engaged in this project are more open to working differently, motivated by skills and emotional development.

GEMS NI (UK): We identified an opportunity to work with new colleagues in different countries as well as working with existing colleagues who we had a previous working relationship.
Secondly, we identified that this project presented opportunities for GEMS NI and their staff to link in and develop knowledge and skills around areas of expertise that we didn't currently have (Early school leaving and Special Educational Needs). Both areas are issues that we come across in our work, but it is usually more difficult for us to identify support for those who suffer these consequences from their education activity.
Thirdly, the opportunity to explore and develop resources that could be used in an online platform with the possibility of supporting our clients in a new and innovative way, as well as the possibility to link this to a local school and test the materials. GEMS were genuinely excited about making these links.

SPIR Oslo (NO): The project is very relevant to us as special educators. The target group for our organization is people who is unemployed, not in education or training. A large proportion of these are also young people (NEET). Many of the persons we help have dropped out of school, and we see that the consequences from this often become great – they struggle with poor finances, many develop mental difficulties, some have drug problems, and many have a small social network. We see that the more years go by, the harder it becomes for them to get back to school or to get a job. To us, it was very interesting to try to find methods that could help these students before they drop out, since early school leaving is an individual problem as well as a socio-economic problem (Kearney, 2008).

2.2 The Intellectual Outputs: a SWOT Analysis

What should have been a SWOT analysis of a "regular" project, was actually completely upset by the intervention, halfway through the project, of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below, we report the main strengths / weaknesses identified by the partners in the Intellectual Outputs.

2.2.1 – IO1 "Comparative Report and Best Practice"

Strength:

- The documental research had a strong background (some of the Portuguese staff members have researched for several years at the university and later as Desincoop staff).
- The 4 selected Inspiring Practices can be very useful for teachers.

Weakness:

- The more challenging moment was the comparative phase, as the partners didn't always use a similar research framework and sometimes, they worked on different rhythms.
- The communication was not very easy at that stage, because a common ground still had to be established.

2.2.2 – IO2 "Toolkit for Teachers"

Strength:

- Choosing to focus on general learning disorders was a winning choice, and we are glad to have proposed it (SPIR Oslo). It is difficult to choose only one diagnosis, because the different countries in the project may have different perceptions and definitions for different learning difficulties. A more general approach would also make it easier to test the different methods, as you do not have to pick out the students who have the one diagnosis (e.g. dyslexia). In addition, learning difficulties are often complex, and comorbid difficulties are common, which means that several learning difficulties occur simultaneously.

Weakness:

- The management of the Intellectual Output was not easy. The Tools proposed by the partners were often not consistent in terms of length, use of the given template, position of the attachments, etc., requiring extra finishing work.
- The partnership has struggled to find a common ground on the Methods and to make those Methods into a Toolkit, so there was a delay in the final delivery.

2.2.3 – IO3 "E-Learning Modules"

Strength:

- The diversity of the approaches brought in by the different partners has been highly enriching.
- Also, the teamwork built by the whole partnership was inspiring.

Weakness:

- It was very challenging to coordinate an Intellectual Output combining so many different existing perspectives on the issues related to learning difficulties.
- Another challenge has been the need to steer all the modules toward an educational, non-pathological point of view.

2.2.4 – IO4 "Report on Toolkit Testing"

Strength:

- It gave the teachers an opportunity to learn and make use of different methods, adaptable to the various scholastic levels, educational and linguistic contexts.

Weakness:

- The testing of the toolkit on the final beneficiaries (students) was less efficient than expected because of the repeated lockdowns due to COVID-19 and the subsequent difficulty to carry on learning activities in teams.

2.2.5 – IO5 "Report on Modules Testing"

Strength:

- We actually managed to accomplish positive outcomes and have developed our learning and planning skills for the future, even with all the delay due to COVID-19.

Weakness:

The coronavirus pandemic had a deep impact on our day-to-day work and on our links with education providers, making it very hard to getting access to teachers for the testing.

2.3 Lesson learned in the Intellectual Outputs

2.3.1- IO1 "Comparative Report and Best Practice"

The specificity of a Comparative Report requires staff with some experience in research or working in the field of education, in order for them to "speak the same language" and better contextualize the starting point of the project.

2.3.2- IO2 "Toolkit for Teachers"

The work with IO2 has been a learning process, where we initially had difficulty imagining the finished product, until now where everything is finished, and testing has begun. The feedback from the testing shows that IO2 have a potential to be a usable tool for teachers and trainers working with the target group. However, it is necessary to spend more resources on proper testing with students in order to consider the relevance and usability of the methods. We hope this will be possible soon.

2.3.3- IO3 "E-Learning Modules"

What at the beginning seemed to be the most complicated part to manage (i.e. the existing differences between countries, in terms of educational models and the different experiences

that each partner has contributed), has ended up being the most instructive part. Those differences have made it possible to develop a new and very interesting transnational perspective with a new, more open and broader approach to tackle various problems related to learning disabilities.

This new approach has helped to make content more flexible and adaptable, so that it can be used in more contexts and age groups.

2.3.4 – IO4 "Report on Toolkit Testing"

The evaluation activity is fundamental to validate a method's goal. It is a starting point to overcome criticalities, implement good practices and organise the most appropriate strategies applied to their specific contexts.

A comparative view of the results for each country has also allowed us to see similarities and differences between the already established operating models and the new ones introduced.

2.3.5 – IO5 "Report on Modules Testing"

We have worked well as a team to achieve the objectives and without the pandemic situation we would have had more positive involvement together and further build on the work completed by us and partners, including a wider dissemination impact for the outcomes.

2.4 Lesson learned in the project

Antares/ IC Spoltore (IT): The participation to all the project's phases has allowed the school team to share and experiment common strategies based on the real needs of each educational context and age group at school.

The Testing gave us the chance of actually using skills on subjects that usually remain on a theoretical level: the teachers could test new models and reach good results in terms of innovation and effectiveness.

Working in synergy with different schools and training agencies has allowed the partnership to share knowledge, experience and -most of all- to learn planning according to an education model consistent with the mandatory school cycle.

CRIA (ES): This project has helped us to understand better how e-learning platforms work, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

We have also learned the importance of clearly identifying the responsibilities of each of the parties involved, especially working in a virtual team, and the need to set detailed rules in the partnership about the required specifics for the final outputs (i.e.: min. and max word length, format definition, main characteristics, etc.).

Also, we have learned how important it is to know how organisations will react in case of unforeseen events (like a pandemic).

Desincoop/AEFH (PT): The different paths of our educational fields are very linked with some international milestones but what is evident through all IOs was the different development more influenced for environmental reasons closely linked with political options.

Despite all the progress and knowledge, a truly inclusive education goes through other measures that are related to the organization of the education system, true autonomy of schools to adapt teaching to the real needs of students in their territories, a rejuvenation of teachers, creation of conditions for collaborative work and intergenerational transmission of experience and Knowledge and greater openness for parental engagement in the educational process other than the merely bureaucratic one provided for in the different laws.

GEMS NI (UK): We have learned that our remote working capabilities are a lot stronger than we previously thought, our planning skills and networking skills are very strong, and we see this experience as positive. We missed out on the mobilities and national visits, however, we have still been able to build and manage relationships across the EU through this programme.

SPIR Oslo (NO): Working on the project has been a new and exciting way for us to work that we have greatly appreciated. The project has given us many new acquaintances for which we are very grateful.

It has been a pleasure to work with the other partners,   and we have learned a lot from it.

At the same time, communication has been challenging at times, and agreements that have been made at meetings have not always been followed up. The pandemic has naturally made

it extra challenging this past year. However, we are proud and happy that we have nevertheless collaborated well digitally and now will succeed in finishing the project.

3. Guidelines to the Intellectual Outputs

From the indications set out in the previous chapters, Guidelines have been created, useful for a better use of the Intellectual Outputs implemented during the project.

Considering the relevance of this tool for the subsequent replicability of the project, the Guidelines were published separately, with the title:

IO6 - Guidelines for an effective use of the Intellectual Outputs of the MELoDY project.

The Guidelines can be downloaded from the website: https://www.melody-methods.eu/results/ (IO6).

3.1 – IO 1 "Comparative Report and Best Practice"

3.1.1 Main objectives:
- General contextualization and legislative framework regarding the inclusion of students with learning difficulties.
- Best practices.

3.1.2 Description
- A Comparative Report, to be used as an example to produce the following Intellectual Outputs.

3.1.3 Main results
- A set of Inspiring Practices, focused on young people attending the early years of learning, at which point is critical to detect any learning problems, as the earlier a problem is identified, the earlier the intervention will be, allowing these young people to evolve and have educational success.
- Double focus on both the students with learning disorders and those who are involved with them (Teachers and Families).

3.1.4 Guidelines for a future use
- This Intellectual Output was made of two parts: a legislative framework, and the benchmarking of good practices that can be enriched with new practices following

the same methodology. It can be used as both a theoretical basis and a recognition of their efficacy in the field.

- An inclusive school can be achieved only if developed together with politic decisions.

- The development of reading skills should be prioritized, as it affects the other competences.

3.2 – IO2 "Toolkit for Teachers"

3.2.1 Main objectives
- Development of a Toolkit consisting of methods for teachers on how to approach students with learning disorder and how to keep them in the school system until they gain a qualification.

3.2.2 Description
- Toolkit of 5 Methods, plus an introduction.

- Each partner country has contributed with 1 Method:

1. Introduction
2. The RtI approach
3. Reading Activities
4. Reading Assessment & Intervention
5. World Knowledge Instruction
6. Mentoring.

3.2.3 Main results
- A dedicated training platform was set up.

- All the 5 Methods are research based and have a theoretical framework.

- The teachers who tested the Toolkit gave a very positive feedback.

3.2.4 Guidelines for a future use

- Adjusting the illustrations, the proposed activities can fit students from different age groups.

- The Toolkit can be used on its own MOOC platform, but it would be useful to integrate it or link it to National platforms already in use by the teachers, to make its use easier.

3.3 – IO3 "E-Learning Modules"

3.3.1 Main objectives
- To create a base of models on how to adapt the educational and learning processes to the needs of the students.
- To become a point of reference for teachers.

3.3.2 Description
- A set of 4 E-Learning Modules, plus an Introduction:
1. Introduction,
2. Classroom Management,
3. Mentoring,
4. Ready to Read,
5. Parents Engagement.

3.3.3 Main results
- A dedicated training platform.
- A set of training modules in E-learning format, designed for teachers and teaching staff on the basis of the good practice benchmarking analysis report.

3.3.4 Guidelines for a future use
- The set of training modules and their platform can complement training programmes both in schools and in reinforcement activities for pupils with learning difficulties. They could be used in special education centres and in extracurricular reinforcement activities, as well as socio-educational activities in non-formal settings, such as directed leisure and free time activities.
- The process of using these materials is open and their use does not require any special procedure, merely expressing the interest of their application and their possible adaption to the specific environment of the learning process and to the learning difficulty detected. It is important to bear in mind that their use must be carried out in mutual agreement with all the teaching staff or persons responsible for the training itinerary or actions of the centre or educational or educational guidance system.

3.4 – IO4 "Report on Toolkit Testing"

3.4.1 Main objectives

- Evaluating the importance of alternative tools and strategies.

- Evaluating the actual usability of the toolkit.

- Evaluating the overall appreciation of the work carried out.

- Evaluating the replicability of the toolkit in the educational system of each country.

3.4.2 Description

- Testing of the Toolkit

- Evaluation of the Toolkit.

3.4.3 Main results

- 63 teachers, trainers and operators have tested the Toolkit on the MOOC platform, many more have tested it without using the platform.

- The same 63 teachers have evaluated the Toolkit taking an online survey.

- The average evaluation of all the aspects of the Toolkit is well over 8 out 10.

3.4.4 Guidelines for a future use

Disclosing and strengthening good practices to promote inclusion and facilitate educational success in people with learning disabilities is one of the main objectives of our Institute. Based on the testing experience of IO2 (toolkit) and IO3 (modules), the following recommendations/guidelines can be identified:

- As many teachers as possible should be involved, from all school orders and subjects, including Supporting teachers.

- The Toolkit should be introduced in schools as a Good Practice.

- The testing should be done systematically in the classes in two distinct periods: 1) at the beginning of the school year, as a time of observation for the compilation of the Customized Teaching Plan, 2) after the evaluations of the first quarter as consolidation and recovery.

- The evaluation survey should be always used at the end of the said activities as a moment to verify the effectiveness of the proposed strategies with the questions more focused on the individual methodologies.

3.5 – IO5 "Report on Modules Testing"

3.5.1 Main objectives

- To test the E-Learning Modules and produce a report of how successful the testing was, the outcomes from the testing and the recommendations or changes possibly required for the materials.

3.5.2 Description
- Testing of the E-Learning Modules.
- Evaluation of the E-Learning Modules.

3.5.3 Main results
- 64 teachers, trainers and operators have tested the Modules on the MOOC platform, many more have tested them without using the platform.
- The same 64 teachers have evaluated the Toolkit taking an online survey.
- 86% of the testing teachers declared themselves highly satisfied of the Modules.

3.5.4 Guidelines for a future use
- A better understanding is needed around the format of data collected from the online platforms.
- The evaluation questionnaire should be revised for future use, developing it around key indicator outcomes from the testing.
- The Modules can be very helpful for teachers, but it is necessary to involve them from an early stage. An Initial focus groups with teachers to explore testing plans could be added to allow all plans to meet objectives and also include feedback from them on what might be a more beneficial use of time and efforts.

3.6 – IO6 "MELoDY Charter"

3.6.1 Main objectives
- The Charter aims to be a reference document, able to illustrate the project's methods, products and results, in order to present it to local authorities, schools and associations as a validated tool to work with students having Learning Disorders.

3.6.2 Description
- Charter of the project activities and achievements.

3.6.3 Main results
- National Reports based on the partners' impressions on the project.
- Interviews to experts from National Reference Groups, Critical Friends, Teachers.
- Guidelines.

3.6.4 Guidelines for a future use
- MELoDY Charter can be used as a general presentation of the project and its results.

- It can be used for mainstreaming actions between stakeholder, school system and policy maker at local regional, national and EU level.

4. The experts' panel

We have asked the partners to interview some key-referents, possibly creating a panel of experts to hold a discussion on the project.
The experts were asked some standard questions, to which each group answered with reference to their area of know-how and their country.

4.1 Testing the Intellectual Outputs: the panels.

The experts have tested parts of IO2 and IO3, or -sometimes- all of those Outputs.
All partners agreed that the situation related to the spread of Covid-19 did not allow a complete implementation of the planned activities because the study/ work rhythms were compromised by the periodic closures and suspensions of activities in favour of those online. Teachers from different disciplines of all school orders, support teachers, operators and trainers for NEETS were interviewed.

The following are the experts interviewed in all the countries:
Italy: Barbara Paolone, Moana Pagliuco, Jara Colantoni, Marisa Cilumbrello, Francesca Miccoli.
Portugal: Olívia Pereira, Paula Marinho, Carla Teixeira, Cristina Tomé, Eduarda Esperança, Emília Oiveira, Lúcia Figueiredo, Manuela Paredes. Marisa Alcântara.
Spain: José Ramón Roldán, Mireia Chamorro.
United Kingdom: Michelle McNally, Michael Twomey.
Norway: Kristoffer Borgen-Byng, Amund Bjertnæs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Portuguese team have interviewed many of the teachers involved in the project, producing 9 experts, who have all given a precious testimony on most of the Methods and Modules tested, but in view of a consistency between the partners' contributions, we have decided to include here only a more general overview.
We invite the readers to download the National Reports for full details.

4.2 More interesting and useful sections

ITALY: This testing has allowed to consolidate traditional methodologies already known and applied in different realities with the proposals of the other partner countries, identifying the presence of a common line. Sharing the same objectives has led partners to propose similar activities and strategies that can be used in different educational contexts.

The platform has allowed an intuitive and streamlined use of the material, even if there were some technical problems in the access and for some in the compilation of questionnaires.

In general, we can say that for the most adult age   the mentoring and the activities of word-knowledge and text comprehension proved to be the most effective ones and allowed to act on the motivation and language skills of written production and oral.

In the lower age group, preference was given to reading and word-knowledge activities which enabled a more effective approach to text comprehension.

Fundamental for the IC Spoltore was the support of a training expert for a metacognitive reflection on some motivational aspects related to the approach towards students with learning disabilities.

PORTUGAL: Different Methods and Modules were applied to different age group and tested in different subjects. Using the right combination of method/module with the right age groups, the results were highly satisfactory, leading to a strong motivation of both teachers and students.

Considering the short time available for the testing (mainly due to COVID-19), the best results were achieved by tools that could be used in a short-term activity. Other tools, like the RtI Method, are perceived as extremely useful but not usable if not in a year-long testing.

SPAIN: The online training platform is clear and easy to understand, easy to access, it works well and can be navigated in an intuitive and straightforward way.

The objectives of each module are consistently stated at the beginning and the bibliographical references are cited at the end of each module, which was very positive. Most of the modules have been easy to read and enjoyable, and the concepts used are easy to understand.

UNITED KINGDOM: In general, and largely because of their professional backgrounds, the participants indicated that mentoring modules were most applicable to them. However, they indicated the parent's engagement and classroom management materials were useful to help them understand certain aspects of this work. The participant who tested via PDF indicated there seemed to be a lot of reading to be conducted in certain modules and recommended a summarizing of these if possible. The participant who tested online indicated it was user friendly (after getting registered) but they encountered some problems accessing it using certain browsers. They managed to complete the testing using a different setting. Both indicated a willingness to use different materials in their work, but both also indicated restrictions could exist that might prevent them from doing so in future.

NORWAY: One expert found the "Word Knowledge Instruction" to be most interesting, useful and to the point. The reason why is that the theoretical background is precise and clear. It gives a good understanding how this toolkit is made.
The "Mentoring" toolkit also fulfils the same criteria. It is easy to read, clear and has a good structure.
The "Reading activities" is a good idea for activities that shall promote reading.

4.3 How to use the IOs in the School System

ITALY: All the materials proposed were considered very valid and worthy of further study. Methodologies can generally be applied to school systems provided that the materials are readapted, and that the application of the toolkit can take place slowly and on a larger number of students, to verify the actual usability and effectiveness of the results.

The methodologies proposed are replicable but not in an equal way in all countries (mentoring and the involvement of families are not easy to achieve in Italian schools due to the lack of human and material resources).

PORTUGAL: A full study has been made on how to introduce tools and modules in the school system: most methods and tools can be introduced, possibly at the beginning of the school year, with follow-ups throughout the year.
It is important to note that, in Portugal, students with learning difficulties are integrated into classes with other colleagues, being applied for a more or less simplified program, according to the degree of difficulty presented. In the case of the subjects of Portuguese and English, students with difficulties still have the possibility of having specific support, in which teachers are free to develop/explore the topics they consider relevant to the development of the student, both in the language and while citizen.

SPAIN: The theories and concepts developed in the tools and modules of the Melody project are basic and easy to understand. These concepts should be made accessible to all teachers, it would be interesting if all teachers, students and education/employment counsellors could have access to the platform in order to use it as support material during their studies. The platform could also serve as a virtual space where teachers and teaching staff from different countries could share their case studies with those, they encounter on a daily basis anonymously to share and discuss ways of action.

UNITED KINGDOM: One expert, a teacher, indicated they can see a useful way of developing links in the school system but perhaps some modules may not be easily progressed, mentoring was highlighted as one that they would like to use but couldn't see how it might work and would be better set outside a teachers remit (this seems to be shared across partners feedback).
The other materials were similar but not identical to some methods currently in use but there needed to be more specific focus on the support needs of SEN children to enable further use of specific modules.

The 2nd expert indicated that when they engage young people issues such as SEN and Learning needs are already too far gone and the attitudes around support are a bigger issue for them.

NORWAY: The Toolkit and Modules could be introduced to the organizations responsible for the upper secondary education (count municipality). It could be introduced to teacher organizations (Utdannningsforbundet), or introduced to organizations responsible for interventions and science (Utdanningsforskning).

A good way to introduce the Toolkit and Modules in the School system can be to involve more people in our participants network (e.g. parents), that we can rely on and collaborate with to better help them reach their goals.

4.4 How to improve the project.

ITALY: One aspect that could be improved is the possibility to readjust some tools, which are theoretically valid but are hardly applicable in a classroom context.

Regarding the experience of the IC Spoltore, one aspect that can certainly be improved is the possibility of sharing the strategies proposed more at the Institute level and use them more systematically throughout the school year as good practices to motivate learning and avoid the risk of early school leaving.

PORTUGAL: It would be interesting to have more time to test some tools. Also, the necessity to work online represented a problem, especially because it had not been planned since the beginning (COVID-19 arrived in the middle of the project), and it made it very hard to test tools and methods with students who were not in the classroom, but working from home, sometimes with very little equipment.

SPAIN: Some of the contents could be reorganized and completed with more references to a theoretical framework.

Audiovisual resources or examples of good practice in other countries could be incorporated in a more didactic and visual format, in order to capture the attention of teachers and educational staff.

The evaluation questionnaires, which were good for an early evaluation, should probably be reduced in size for further use.

The importance of incorporating the requirements of the Data Protection Act and its management in Spain -if certain personal data are to be requested in order to use the platform- has also been pointed out.

UNITED KINGDOM: Generally feedback was good but indications about how materials can actually be used and focus of certain modules may not meet with the curriculum they work around. To generalize conditions and offer materials of support may sound like the ideal way forward.

The teacher indicated that mentoring should be a useable process but kept separate from the other modules and that reading and support for this remains fundamental.

Accessing the platform for all should be prioritized before release or at least a technical support guide should be produced to ensure ease of access and user friendliness.

NORWAY: Some of the Tools and Modules are designed for students of a very young age. Considering that there are many older students who have learning difficulties, it would be important to change the layout of the exercises in order to make them acceptable for an older audience, who would be put off by exercises obviously designed for children.

5. MELoDY project in the school-system

Although MELoDY project has tried to find a common ground for a number of methods, tools and guidelines on the treatment of general learning disorders, inevitably the school systems of the different countries participating in the project are very different, making it impossible to create common guidelines for the inclusion of MELoDY products in the school system.

We preferred to leave these indications separate, giving a brief summary of the main regulations for each country and concluding with a series of recommendations, valid for the country of reference.

A longer and more complete description of the approaches in the various school systems can be found in the **National Reports**, which we recommend reading as a comparative tool.

5.1 The national school system and its approach to students with general learning disorders.

5.1.1 – ITALY.

According to Law 170/2010 The National School System provides for the elaboration of a personalized educational plan that can be requested by the family to the Certifying Body (ASL) or the class board.

The PDP (Personalized Teaching Plan) is a tool for both students with learning disabilities and those with special educational needs (i.e., socio-economic and linguistic disadvantage) Parents must share the elaboration of the document and compile the training pact in which the strategies proposed for homework are established and shared.

The PDP describes the skills possessed by the student and those to be implemented; provides for the adoption of exemptive and compensatory measures and the elaboration of learning objectives; offers criteria to verify and evaluate the achievement of the aforementioned objectives.

5.1.2 – PORTUGAL:

The new Decree-law 54/2018 of 06 July on inclusive education and Decree-law 55/2018 of 07 July on curriculum replace the previous law on Inclusive Education in mainstream schools

(Decree-law 3/2008) and came into force in the school year, 2018/19 seeking to promote an inclusive school. A school whose mission is to promote the educational success of all of its students ensuring educational equity in access and outcomes. Its guiding principles must be dominated by all its actors (managers, teachers, non-teaching staff), with the organization of resources and the means and quality of intervention with the students, fundamental for schools to be constituted as true spaces of inclusion for all. The participation of families is a fundamental condition for the educational success and full inclusion of these children and young people.

The flexible management of the curricula leads to a methodological change, in which the collaborative work determines the success of its implementation. This opens the way for the implementation of the new decree, which abandons the categorization of students, formerly called "with special educational needs", and emphasizes differentiated educational responses, determining the measures of curriculum management that contemplate the different learning, appropriate to each student, and that meets the acquisition of significant skills and promotes school success.

5.1.3 – SPAIN:

Spain is governed by a decentralised state model that distributes the exercise of educational competences among all administrative levels.

The State education administrations regulate the measures for the care of pupils with specific educational support needs at the different levels, dividing them into ordinary or extraordinary care measures.

Ordinary measures are considered to be those that affect the organisation of the school in terms of groupings and methodologies in order to cater for diversity without modifying the prescriptive elements of the curriculum. They do not require prior psycho-pedagogical assessment. These measures include the prevention and detection of learning difficulties.

Extraordinary measures are aimed at responding to specific educational support needs and complement ordinary measures. They address the individual measures taken in a centre in order to respond to the specific educational needs of students and require the organisation of specific personal and material resources. A prior psycho-pedagogical assessment carried out by specialised guidance services and continuous monitoring are necessary.

5.1.4 – UNITED KINGDOM:

There is another review and consultation on SEN (Special Education Needs) support in schools ongoing in Northern Ireland, due to massive over subscription for help and support from parents, against a backdrop of shortening resources. Impact of our materials could be very limited because we don't know yet how the future of SEN support in schools is going to develop further and what, if any changes will be made. Additional requests from teachers for time and energy may not be an ideal way to interact with schools at this time, however, a recognition of online resource development in light of COVID issues is possible.

5.1.5 – NORWAY:

The Education Act regulates what the right to education entails. In order to ensure that all pupils receive a satisfactory benefit from the teaching, they must have an education adapted to the individual.

The system consists of several phases - from a problem is discovered to a special education measure is assessed, adopted, planned, implemented and evaluated.

Phase 1: Pre-registration phase (concern). Parents or teachers suspect that the student does not receive satisfactory benefit from the education. The teachers report the need for special education to the principal, who will ask the parents' / pupil's consent that an expert assessment can be made.

Phase 2: Registration phase. The school contacts the educational and psychological counselling service (EPCS), sending a formal request of an expert assessment of the pupil's needs, that will be carried out by the EPCS (Registration).

Phase 3: The investigation and recommendation phase. The EPCS investigates (expert assessment) and gives a recommendation to the school if the pupil needs special education or not.

Phase 4: The adoption phase. After the expert assessment, the school will decide if the pupil is entitled to special education. The parents / pupil has a right to comment on the decision.

Phase 5: The implementation phase. After the principal has made a decision granting special education, the school must start both planning and implementation. Planning consists of creating and IEP (Individual Education Plan) for the pupil.

Phase 6: The evaluation phase . The school will evaluate the pupil's development and how the special education works. The pupil's development must be assessed continuously, and an annual report must be written each year.

5.2 The national school system and its approach to fighting ESL

5.2.1 – ITALY.

In addition to the actions described above, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) through the Regional School Offices, requires a systematic survey of the criticalities that could constitute a risk factor for early school leaving, especially in the last year of middle school and in the first two years of high school (end of mandatory schooling is set at 16 years).

The National Education System also provides for:

• the implementation of several specific projects;

• the allocation of funds for rehabilitation, consolidation and curricular enhancement activities;

• the design of practical laboratory activities in curricular and extracurricular time;

• the implementation of projects designed to fit the needs of those at risk.

5.2.2 – PORTUGAL:

In recent decades, Portugal has made great efforts to improve the population's level of qualifications, which has resulted in substantial progress in education providing universal access through:

- School Social Action, a measure of support for the reimbursement of school expenses for children and young people, whose households are in a disadvantaged socio-economic situation.
- Educational Territories for Priority Intervention – TEIP, a policy aimed to combating school dropout and early dropouts from the education system.
- Expansion of pre-school education, which is associated with long-term positive results, as a more successful schooling, a reduction of school drop-out and an increased accountability and success in working life.

- Integrated Education and Training Programs (IETP/PIEF), an educational program that unfolds into aspects of education, training, and also as a social policy since it enhances the (re)integration of teenagers and youngsters in the pursuit of equal opportunities.

The Portuguese educational system has registered a notable evolution in global performance in the last decade and a half, thanks to those measures.

5.2.3 – SPAIN:

According to the LOMCE (2013), in order for students with specific educational support needs to achieve the maximum development of their personal abilities, appropriate curricular and organizational measures will be established to ensure their adequate progress. These measures will be established by the educational administrations, which will be responsible for carrying out the appropriate procedures for the adaptations of the elements of the curriculum, always seeking the maximum development of basic competences, continuous assessment and promotion.

In this way, it will be the teaching teams at the primary education stage who will design and apply the organizational and curricular measures to cater for the diversity of pupils. The Pedagogical Coordination Committee will draw up the proposal of criteria and procedures to carry out the appropriate curricular adaptations for the students. In addition, they will also coordinate the reinforcement and support plans for students with learning difficulties. Tutors will proceed to the personal adaptation of the curriculum.

At the secondary education stage, measures to cater for diversity are geared to the specific needs of pupils and the achievement of the objectives of Compulsory Secondary Education. Schools will develop their pedagogical proposals with attention to diversity, including methods based on different learning paces. The educational administrations must regulate appropriate measures for the attention of students with specific learning difficulties. They must implement flexible groupings, support in ordinary groups, groups splits, personalized treatment programmes, the offer of specific subjects and programmes to improve learning and performances. In addition, the schooling of pupils with special educational needs may be extended for a further year.

5.2.4 – UNITED KINGDOM:

There are other significant issues that impact on ESL in Northern Ireland, not least economic and learning disadvantages. Support in schools is already over subscribed and additional external resource might be required, however, if they are to be implemented by teachers (already under extreme pressures) then they may not work to support students. Having more online resources they could refer to for help and support may prove a more beneficial use of developing tools.

5.2.5 – NORWAY:

Students at risk for ESL often have several difficulties beyond school absence, such as various learning difficulties with language, reading, writing and mathematics, which often occur with neurological conditions. For these students, school has gradually become a difficult arena to be present and included in.

There is a stated political goal in Norway that as many as possible should complete upper secondary education (professional competence or diploma), because our labour market increasingly places higher demands on employee's competence, and therefore this affects the individual's opportunities in getting a desired job.

Several measures have been employed in upper secondary school to fight ESL, like an absence limit rule of 10% during a school year (referred to unjustified leave) and a close follow-up from a counsellor in case of unjustified absence.

Long-term and targeted work on many fronts at the same time is proven to give results (Hernes, 2010, Stranden, 2019).

5.3 Recommendations on how to use the IO2 Toolkit in the national school systems

5.3.1 – ITALY:

Toolkit and Modules could be used in the national school system providing continuous training of teachers of all schools of each level, the possibility of transnational mobility to test their own models on the field and acquire new methodologies, moments of sharing and training within their own institute with workshops and role-playing activities.

5.3.2 – PORTUGAL:

One of the main objectives of the construction of IO 2 was to achieve school success through the greater motivation of students for learning, for which greater collaborative work between all elements of the school community is essential. Its testing allowed the development of collaborative practice between teachers in adapting the curriculum to the needs and characteristics of the students, with a view to achieving a truly inclusive education.

5.3.3 – SPAIN:

Within the Spanish education system, there are different types of teaching staff that have been created in recent years with the aim of supporting or accompanying pupils with special needs in the learning process in different ways. These more specialised teaching staff do not carry out the same tasks as the usual teachers or tutors, but they are in the classroom and work directly with the pupils, so they are a good profile of professional who could use the tools created by io2.

Some of the experts who have tested the materials have also suggested that these tools could be used during teacher training as another way of resourcing future teachers.

In addition, the resources or dynamics presented in the toolkit can also be useful for centres that are focused on guidance or job placement services.

5.3.4 – UNITED KINGDOM:

The use of the Toolkit could only be possible after further research, development and interaction with policy and curriculum development and ultimately approval for use. At present this wouldn't be possible, due to the ongoing review of support structures and needs analysis.

5.3.5 – NORWAY:

Before the IO2 toolkit can be used in the Norwegian school system, it would be necessary to do more testing with teachers and students in an actual school setting. The methods are in need of evaluation from testing, and they could benefit from some adjustments before integrating them in the school system.

After this, the toolkit should be made available as a free downloadable material for all teachers connected to the Norwegian school system. There are some online resources where the Melody website / platform could be linked, with access to download the toolkit. E.g., skolekassa.no, moava.org, and more.

The toolkit could also be integrated in phase 5, the implementation phase, as mentioned above in the approach to students with general learning disorders. The toolkit can be a part of the pupil's IEP (Individual Education Plan).

5.4 Recommendations on how to use the IO3 Modules in the national school systems

5.4.1 – ITALY.

Toolkit and Modules could be used in the national school system providing continuous training of teachers of all schools of each level, the possibility of transnational mobility to test their own models on the field and acquire new methodologies, moments of sharing and training within their own institute with workshops and role-playing activities.

5.4.2 – PORTUGAL.

The IO 3 development did not respect the requirements of Portuguese legislation for crediting (final evaluation and direct relation to a single didactic subject). So, although this module training was intended to contribute to providing teaching staff with more "tools" for joint and collaborative work, it cannot be used for the purposes of curriculum appraisal and progression in the education teaching career.

Its dissemination will always be possible through the School Education Gateway, eTwinning, the portal of the General Directorate of Education and to the NAU project transversal to different ministries.

5.4.3 – SPAIN:

The IO3 Modules, like the IO2 Toolkit, could be implemented not only with the teachers or tutors of the groups in ordinary schools, but also with the rest of the teaching staff of the schools or specific reinforcement staff for pupils with special needs in the learning process. A

concrete example would be the CRP (Pedagogical Resource Centres) that exist in the city of Barcelona. These centres aim to be a reference point for training, pedagogical dynamization and support for the work of teachers at all educational levels, including University.

5.4.4 – UNITED KINGDOM:

As well as for the Toolkit, it is difficult for us to ascertain how the E-learning modules might become used in the school systems without further research. It may be an easy ask to involve small schools one at a time; this way we may try and   develop the work further, carrying out a more comprehensive testing.

5.4.5 – NORWAY:

As with IO2, the learning modules in IO3, could also be linked to from the websites mentioned above. This could be a part of training courses offered to schools and teachers during the school year. Furthermore, as with IO2, it would be preferable to receive more feedback from teachers, with possible adjustments being made before it will be distributed to schools. The modules could also benefit from being accessible on a Norwegian learning platform, maybe on already existing platforms if available.

6. A Black Swan in the project: COVID-19.

MELoDY project was fully invested by the COVID-19 pandemic, so much so that the partnership was forced to request an extension of 6 months at the end of the project.

The pandemic blocked the project in its most delicate phase, that is while the partner schools - and those involved by the other project partners - were planning and starting the experimentation of the Toolkit and the training modules.

The result was a total stasis that lasted for several months: not only was it not possible to know when school activities would resume regularly, but a series of already planned actions were suddenly interrupted, with no certainty of being able to resume them.

In addition, the school system works everywhere with a logical succession of activities that follow the course of the school year, leading to the impossibility of carrying out - for example - in October activities that were scheduled for March.

Another disruptive element was the need to carry out the testing online: luckily the partnership had already decided to set up a MOOC platform, which greatly facilitated the testing with the teachers, primary target of the project, but did not help the testing with the secondary target - the students. The Toolkit and the Modules, in fact, have been designed to be used online to train teachers, so that the teachers themselves could use the same tools and modules in the classroom with the students.

In light of what has happened in the last year and considering the persistence of online school activities alternating with in-presence teaching, it would be desirable to think of new projects aimed at developing, in the future, new Toolkits and new training modules providing online exercises for students and not only for teachers. Students with learning difficulties, in fact, were certainly among the categories that were most negatively affected by distance learning, precisely because of the lack of materials available online and designed specifically for them.

From the point of view of the partnership work, the most negative aspects brought about by the pandemic were:

- The impossibility of meeting in person, giving up the transnational meetings that are so important in Erasmus Plus projects.

- A strong psychological stress on the team, whose members had to face fears, logistical difficulties and the temporary deprivation of some personal freedoms. In particular, the teachers had to face the enormous difficulties of managing a distance learning for which no one was prepared, managing the expectations of institutions, families and students, with very little support.
- An inevitable delay in activities.

On the other hand, some positive aspects can be taken into consideration:
- We have all learned to use the digital tools at our disposal more thoroughly, both for learning and for communication.
- Video calling has become a pleasant habit, which will not be lost, and which has kept us together.
- A strong sense of solidarity has developed between the partners.

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