



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

DELIVERY in Erasmus+ project Solution By Inclusion

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4: Summative evaluation of the qualitative data on students' and educators' assessment of the toolbox (W.P.7.4): Summative evaluation

Delivered by project partner: CaBE, Aalborg University



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



Solution By Inclusion



**DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURE AND LEARNING**

**AALBORG
UNIVERSITY**

Hanne Kathrine Krogstrup, Leonora Hedegaard,
Nanna Møller Mortensen

01-08-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT ON STUDENT AND TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE TOOLBOX	2
2. METHOD	3
2.1. DATA COLLECTION	3
2.2. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS	3
2.3. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS	4
3. ANALYSIS	6
3.1. INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS	6
<i>IAL FVG</i>	6
<i>Tradium</i>	6
<i>GEM16+</i>	7
3.2. INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS	8
<i>IAL FVG</i>	8
<i>Tradium</i>	9
4. LIMITATIONS	10
5. CONCLUSION	10

1. SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT ON STUDENT AND TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE TOOLBOX

This report constitutes project partner CaBE's (at Aalborg University) delivery on the summative evaluation report that is part of **Intellectual Output 4 (IO4)** in the Erasmus+ project "Solution By Inclusion: Development of Digital, Innovative, Prevention & Intervention Solutions to Strengthen Social Inclusion, Well-Being, and Combat Early School Leaving in Vocational & Training (VET) and Second Chance Learning (SCL) Schools". The summative evaluation report aims at concluding whether the objectives set for the project have been achieved. Some of these project objectives consists of reducing dropout, provide innovative tools to strengthen competencies and skills to work with social inclusion, and strengthen educators competencies and skills to deal with students' mental well being and social inclusion.

This report constitutes the fourth work package (**W.P.7.4**) of **IO4** and consists of qualitative data to examine students' and educators' assessment of the toolbox. This delivery aims to identify teachers' and students' perspectives of the tools developed to increase the student's mental well-being and social inclusion, and how they assess the tools' functionality in this regard.

This report adds a qualitative layer to the summative evaluation, which also consists of a summative evaluation of W.P.7.2. that measures the progression in students' mental well-being and social inclusion by using quantitative data from the questionnaire created by CaBE, and a summative evaluation of W.P.7.3. measuring the dropout data collected by the partnering schools. The qualitative data for this report were collected by the partnering schools to strengthen their organisational capacity building.

The following report consists of a description of the method used and the data collection process, followed by an analysis of the qualitative data from the partnering VETs/SCL schools. Then, limitations related to the qualitative summative evaluation are reflected upon. Finally, the report is summarized in the conclusion, presenting an overview of the main findings.

2. METHOD

2.1. DATA COLLECTION

In the period between 1 September and 16 December 2022, focus group interviews were conducted by members of the steering group at the three partnering VETs/SCL schools: GEM16+, Tradium, and IAL FVG. The schools planned and conducted two sets of interviews with teachers and students respectively. To enable comparative analysis, CaBE made two interview guides to be used when conducting the focus group interviews. An interview guide was developed for the interview with teachers, and one was developed for the interviews with students. The schools sent a two-page summary from each interview to CaBE, who analysed the data to assess the tools used by the partnering schools during the project.

The partnering schools planned and conducted the interviews to strengthen their organisational capacity building. This approach was also chosen to eliminate challenges caused by both language barriers and technical issues that had been evident when conducting interviews online. Thus, the schools could conduct the interviews physically and in their native language by translating the provided interview guide. This approach made it easier for both teachers and students to express themselves properly during the interviews. When the interviews had been conducted, the schools were asked to create a two-page English summary from each interview and delivered it to CaBE for analysis. Originally, the student's parents were also supposed to give their assessment of the toolbox but during the project period, parents proved difficult to involve and it was decided earlier in the project period to not include them.

2.2. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

For the interview with teachers, the aim was for the teachers to evaluate the project and the tools. The schools were to arrange an internal dialogue with at least two teachers and follow the interview guide made by CaBE for the purpose. The questions related to how the teachers have gained insight regarding their students, what tools they have used, and how these have been useful in contributing to mental well-being, social inclusion, and reducing dropout (see Table 1 below).

<p>About the project</p> <p>How would you evaluate being part of the Solution by Inclusion project?</p> <p>What parts of the project do you think have worked well?</p> <p>Have you gained new insights regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social Inclusion?3. Drop-out? <p>Have your school/organization gained new insights in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social inclusion?3. Drop-out?
<p>About the tools and methods</p> <p>What tools or methods have you been testing? Describe them in a few words.</p> <p>Describe how you think the tool(s) are useful in contributing to students':</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social inclusion?3. Reducing drop-out? <p>Have you noticed anything regarding the tools that you wish or need to address to improve for the implementation?</p>
<p>In general</p> <p>Do you have any comments or perspectives you would like to share for the project's final evaluation?</p>

Table 1: Interview guide for interviews for teachers.

2.3. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

For the focus group interview with students, the aim was to gain insight into their experience of the efforts made by the school and teachers regarding their mental well-being and social inclusion. The schools thus conducted dialogue-based interviews with two groups of 7-20 students. For the students, the questions related to how they perceived their school being concerned with their mental well-being and social inclusion, and how these aspects are worked with by both teachers and the school. The students were also asked if they were aware that their teachers had been using specific tools and methods to increase their mental well-being and social inclusion (see Table 2 below).

<p>How the students' experience the current effort related to their mental well-being and social inclusion</p> <p>In your opinion is your school concerned with your</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social inclusion? <p>How does the school/teachers work with your:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social inclusion? <p>Describe their work in a few words.</p> <p>How do you evaluate/assess your school's existing work or effort related to working with your mental well-being or social inclusion? (Described in the previous question).</p>
<p>About the students' experience of the new tools and methods</p> <p>Are you aware that your teachers have been using specific tools and methods (insert name, if available) to increase your:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental well-being?2. Social inclusion? <p>Can you describe the tools in a few words and how your teacher has used them?</p> <p>If yes, have you experienced the tools as helpful to you/have you gained new knowledge?</p> <p>Have you noticed anything regarding the tools that you wish or need to address or improve the implementation?</p>

Table 2; Interview guide for students

3. ANALYSIS

In the following subsections, the data from the summaries previously mentioned are presented and interpreted.

First, the data from the interviews with teachers are analysed to highlight their perspectives on being part of the Solution By Inclusion project, Second, the data from the focus group with students, regarding their perception of their schools' work with their mental well-being and social inclusion are analysed.

3.1. INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

At the three partnering VETs/SCL schools, dialogue-based focus group interviews were conducted with at least two teachers, who have been involved in the Solution By Inclusion project and have worked with the developed tools, to improve their students' mental well-being and social inclusion. The questions used for the interview with teachers were divided into three parts: the project, tools, and methods used, and in general about the project or other comments (see Table 1). In the following, the data from the individual partners will be presented.

IAL FVG

In the data provided by IAL FVG, it is evident that the teachers overall found the project very useful for consolidating positive relationships with the students and between the students. IAL FVG tested six of the Solution By Inclusion tools and found them well-designed and coherent with their objective. The teachers highlighted, that they found the tools a bit repetitive and that the information could be more condensed and easier to use when implementing the tools in sessions with students.

Overall, IAL FVG found that issues regarding their students' mental well-being could be managed and analysed by using the selected tools. They found the tools more difficult to use regarding student dropout. IAL FVG thus requires more time to use the tools for this aspect of the project.

TRADIUM

The data from Tradium were positive regarding their participation in the project and found that it has given them a new vocabulary and understanding regarding their students' mental well-being and social inclusion. They worked with three tools that have helped their students work more systematically with their mental well-being and helped the students realize they are part of a larger group and school society.

Tradium found the Peer Advisory Board had provided them with insights that are important in understanding their students and the importance of social inclusion

and mental well-being in general, and the importance of teachers also working with motivation and social skills, to create safe learning environments. The teachers have thus developed an understanding of the challenges their students face in everyday life and the importance of working with social skills and values in the classroom.

The teachers were also asked, how they and their school as an organisation have gained insight into mental well-being, social inclusion, and dropout. On mental well-being, the teachers reported that they have discovered the importance of the teacher-student relationship as something important for the students. They also find it challenging to focus on students' mental well-being when there are 28 students in a class. They also note that the students are more heterogenic than previously, which they must accept and work with as a premise for their teaching. On an organisational level, Tradium mentions they already have many indicators, that their students are challenged with their mental well-being, as more students receive support to manage challenges regarding social- or learning issues.

On social inclusion, Tradium note that their students' academic skills are decreasing, which leads to a lack of experienced success, as students are sometimes told they are not learning at an adequate pace. The Solution By Inclusion project has highlighted how the students are different from previous generations, are more vulnerable, and can have a variety of diagnoses. The project has made Tradium aware that they need to work on improving the students' social inclusion by creating a space where the students are met with help and understanding, and where student societies can be established to help individual students grow. The work on social inclusion has also given insights on the organisational level, as Tradium now allows socially marginalized students to change class and the realization that their strategy for student absence has been too slow.

Regarding dropouts, Tradium acknowledges the need to keep their students on the right track and make sure they thrive mentally and socially. Within Tradium as an organisation, the project has given insights into the distinct reasons for students dropping out, and it has led to work on identifying students at risk of dropping out. Thus, guidance counsellors now work more with student motivation and mastering, and management works more directly with warnings and sanctions.

GEM16+

The data from GEM16+ are also overall positive about being part of the Solution By Inclusion project. GEM16+ accentuate the common things and similarities in issues and experiences across the schools, despite being in different countries. This gave them a feeling of not being alone, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic that caused lockdowns and similar challenges for the partnering schools.

At GEM16+ they already have a subject for students that are focusing on their mental well-being, social inclusion, and dropout, PSCD (Personal, Social and Career Education), but being part of the project, has reinforced their current approach. They described that they have gained strategies related to the management of stress and anger, how to cultivate a non-aggressive attitude when dealing with negative emotions as well as identifying and improving mental well-being. On the organisational level, they reflect on these issues and provide training for the staff to manage students that might deal with mental health issues and students that could potentially drop out.

During the project, GEM16+ worked with two of the provided tools, which they have combined with their existing work in both the PSCD course and other courses, and outdoor activities. GEM16+ describes the tools as being useful regarding the importance of their students' mental well-being, social inclusion, and dropout.

GEM16+ mentions the lack of being able to meet physically, as something they would have changed about the project if possible. They believe it would have strengthened the communication and relationship across the partners, and they found the constant online meetings tiring. They would also have liked the testing of tools to have happened earlier, so they could test them further.

Overall, the teachers interviewed at the three partnering schools are positive about being part of the Solution By Inclusion project. They all found the tools developed for the project useful regarding working with their students' mental well-being, social inclusion, and, to some extent, dropout. The project has also provided the schools with new insights about their students and how they can improve their efforts in the future. It has also helped the schools gain new insights on an organisational level, which they can use to further strengthen their work with the aforementioned aspects of their students' life.

3.2. INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

As part of the data collection, the three partnering VETs/SCL schools were also asked to conduct focus group interviews with 7-20 students who had been part of testing the tools provided in the Solution By Inclusion project. The schools were sent an interview guide (see Table 2). Data from student interviews was received from IAL FVG and Tradium, but GEM16+ could not conduct the interviews, as the students who had been part of the project, no longer attended the school. In the following, the data from IAL FVG and Tradium are presented.

IAL FVG

For the student interviews, IAL FVG involved two classes and a total of 16 students. The students were asked about the school's current concern with their mental well-

being and social inclusion. In both aspects, the students are satisfied with the attention given by the school. They describe that some teachers are aware of the students' mental well-being and social inclusion, and these teachers help the students and make activities that include everyone. Thus, the students evaluate the school's current effort on these issues as positive.

Regarding IAL FVG's involvement in the Solution By Inclusion project, the students were asked if they were aware that they have tried specific tools and methods. Some of the students were aware, as the teachers introduced the tools and their purpose. Most students found the tools very useful, as they learned how to manage some uncomfortable emotions better. They would have liked to work more with tools that focus on friendship.

TRADIUM

At Tradium, students who had participated in the Solution By Inclusion project were interviewed. On questions about how the school is concerned with the students' mental well-being, the answers were very mixed. Some students say that there is a very clear setup, so they know where to get help if they need it, that the schools have very professional and helpful guidance counsellors, and that the teachers can give a sense of security. Other students mention that they don't experience focus on their mental well-being in class and that there is a lot of pressure due to the amount of work and assignments given by the teachers.

The answers to the question about social inclusion are likewise very mixed in the responses. The students in the focus group explained that some of them are in a good class, where everyone is competent, the work ethic is high and the teachers compliment the work being done, while other students expressed being in classes where nothing happens, and no one has anything in common. A student notes, that when school is over, he just wants to go home. Other students thus mention the importance of the school arranging activities to improve social inclusion.

On the question about how the school and teachers work with the students' mental well-being and social inclusion, they mention having a tutor appointed when they start at the school. The tutor is another student that helps the new students learn about the school. At the start of the school year, the teachers plan activities to help them get to know each other. Regarding social inclusion, the students do not believe anything is being done, and what is being done – planning parties and bars – might not be for everyone. Overall, the students believe there is room for improvement on the existing work, Tradium is doing to improve the mental well-being and social inclusion of the students.

Lastly, the students were asked if they were aware that they had been testing tools and methods to improve their social inclusion and mental well-being. They have noticed their teachers talk about mental well-being and doing some different things

in class but were not aware that it was part of a larger project. The only tool they could describe working with was one time they had been asked to describe a positive experience, but they did not understand the point of the exercise.

The students' experience at IAL FVG and Tradium respectively, can thus be seen as vastly different. At IAL FVG, the students feel their teachers are working with their mental well-being and social inclusion, whereas the students at Tradium are unsure about the importance given to these aspects of their well-being by their school. Likewise, the students at IAL FVG remember trying different tools, and finding them useful, whereas the students at Tradium were unaware of being part of a project, where tools aimed at improving their mental well-being and social inclusion were assessed.

4. LIMITATIONS

In this section, limitations regarding the qualitative data and this report will be discussed. This is to create transparency regarding the collecting and analysing of the provided data.

As previously mentioned, the data used for this report were collected by members of the Peer Advisory Boards at the three partnering VETs/SCL schools. This approach was chosen, as previous experience had proved it difficult to conduct focus group interviews online, and in English. Being online requires stable connections and hardware working as intended which is difficult to guarantee. There also proved to be a language barrier, as not all students and teachers at the partnering schools were equally comfortable speaking a non-native language. Thus, the schools were allowed to conduct their own interviews physically and in their native language, and they were asked to send a summary of the different interviews afterward. CaBE received a different amount of data from the three schools, and there may be a difference in how the schools reflect on their own practice and their involvement in the project. Thus the data from Tradium IAL FVG and GEM16+ have been different in how they created their resumes from the focus groups.

5. CONCLUSION

For the teachers and schools as organisations, the concluding remarks of the evaluation are that the Solution By Inclusion has provided valuable insight into their work with students' mental well-being and social inclusion. The project has helped the schools reinforce their existing effort in their work with students' mental well-being and social inclusion and highlighted areas that require more work and effort. This is part of achieving the project objective of increasing the mental well-being,

that will lead to social inclusion of students at the VET/SCLs as well as strengthening educators' competencies and skills to work with the students' mental well-being and social inclusion.

When looking at dropout the schools believe they need more time to work with this aspect to be able to see a difference. Both Tradium and GEM16+ point out the importance of working with the students' mental well-being and social inclusion can help decrease dropout. The tools are evaluated as being useful in this regard when they have had some time to incorporate the tools further in their work. Thus, the tools have the potential to help achieve the project objective of reducing the number of dropouts in the future.

From the students' perspectives, the evaluation is that some of them were aware of the efforts being made by their schools and teachers, while others did not believe enough effort was being put into working with their mental well-being and social inclusion. The same is evident in the students' knowledge of being part of a larger project and testing tools and methods. Some students were aware, and others were not. Although some students had not known about the larger project, they had noticed their teachers talking more about mental well-being and social inclusion, meaning that awareness has been brought to the importance of these aspects in class.

The qualitative evaluation of the Solution By Inclusion project is, that the tools and methods used, have had a positive impact on the awareness of students' mental well-being and social inclusion. The partnering VET/SCL schools have reflected on their own practice and been able to improve on their current work with mental well-being and social inclusion and strengthen both their effort and competencies in these areas. The summative evaluation thus also points toward achieving the objectives that were set for the project, where dropout is reduced, and increased awareness is given to students' mental well-being and social inclusion, by giving tools and methods to be used by both students and teachers.