



STAY+



Erasmus+

## NEWSLETTER

# STAY+ RESEARCH SUMMARY

### Key Aspects of Wellbeing impacted by Covid-19 and associated restrictions

For the first output of the STAY+ project, the **partner consortium conducted research in their countries** (UK, Czech Republic, Italy, and Turkey), to understand the **key impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic** and the associated restrictions. The focus in research was **on young people and VET centers** (Vocational Education and Training). The research has been conducted and compiled to support the development of a Best Practice publication, Research Reports by Country, and to support the **creation of the STAY+ Platform**.

Across the partner countries (UK, Italy, Czechia, Turkey), learners experienced very similar impacts on their wellbeing as a result of the pandemic. The most mentioned impact was on social wellbeing – or a sense of belonging that students had lost as a result of the restrictions imposed in each country. Where previously, students had a face-to-face classes and opportunities for social interaction, many had to isolate and quarantine as part of restrictions, limiting the social interactions they had to those

that they lived with. Lack of opportunities for communication meant that students were shyer and more anxious about returning to in-person teaching and larger groups.

Research also showed a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing due to this isolation. Students were reported to have less motivation and low productivity, as well as poor or weakened resilience skills. Young people with more challenging socio-economic circumstances have felt an exacerbated impact on their mental wellbeing as opportunities to connect virtually, using digital devices and platforms, were unavailable to them – largely through lack of access to internet connection, digital devices, and low digital skills.

Physical wellbeing has also been impacted, as outdoor movement has been limited due to stay-at-home orders. Young people have experienced a lack of opportunities and facilities for exercise, as well as lack of accessible information on health and exercise. This resulted in an increase in sedentary lifestyle and the acquisition of unhealthy habits for the body, which then also had an impact on mental and emotional health and social well-being. It is known that sport and physical activity promote learning and socialization. During the period of the lockdown, many suffered from altered sleep-wake rhythms and this negatively affected

physical and mental fatigue, the degree of attention and the ability to learn.

### **Examples of VET Centre engagement and wellbeing strategies**

The strategies collated by the consortium range from the use of specific resources accessible to organisations, to the adoption of governmental programmes to support wellbeing. Here are a few examples of effective strategies for wellbeing and engagement:

- Centers running sessions to improve wellbeing for participants/learners. For example, Well-being toolkit (physical booklet resource), stay well sessions (socially distanced event), well-being and health awareness sessions (face-to-face).
- On voluntary basis, some teachers/trainers set up non-formal ways to be close to their students and don't let them feel abandoned, such as: offering the opportunity to contact them beyond the school time using personal phone numbers/chat to have clarification on assignments or to express their uneasiness
- In order to promote the engagement and active participation of learners, individual teachers/trainers report having experimented the implementation of teaching/learning methodologies to stimulate learners such as: Flipped Learning, Inquiry-based learning, Cooperative learning
- **METHODOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS** provided by state institutions (such as Czech School

Inspection Organisation, National Pedagogical Institute of CZ): providing methodological recommendation to schools which emphasizes students' wellbeing and preventive action, which aims to create an environment in the school that meets the basic needs of children and students and systematically develops social and emotional competencies, the acquisition of which is necessary to create healthy interpersonal relationships.

### **Key Impacts of Covid-19 and associated restrictions on VET Centres' teaching and training**

Staff in vocational training centers and organisations have also experienced impacts to their teaching and training as a result of the pandemic. The practical nature of vocational training has meant that this teaching has been specifically challenged by the transition to remote and online learning. Teachers and trainers have reported experiencing obstacles to practical teaching such as lack of access to specific machinery or equipment, physical supervision of activities, and a lack of digital skills of the teacher's creating difficulty. The lack of ability to demonstrate practical skills was mentioned – even through visual aids and videos, many teachers reported that online learning was not appropriate for their subject matters.

A lack of motivation and productivity has also been reported. Independent learning has been difficult to facilitate during online lessons, as some students do not have reliable access to the internet, or a positive working environment in

their homes. As a result, trainers have reported low attainment and disengagement.

### Examples of Digital Tools and their use in VET remote learning

The following are some examples of the digital tools used in remote learning, as collected through the consortium research.

- **\Microsoft Teams** – grouping features and ability to share resources and screens while on call. Whiteboard features mimic, but do not match the capacity of in-person teaching.
- **Using the Learning management systems – Moodle, Google Classroom, Google Suite for Education** – sharing documents, common tasks, teacher’s feedback. Moodle to provide resources, quiz features, attendance checkers, and communication channels for feedback and one-to-ones.
- **Learning platforms focusing on interactive practicing of the subjects** (maths, languages, geography, history), including interactive elements such as quizzes, crosswords puzzles, “catching the correct answer in time limit, “escape” games solving the answers on VET subjects etc.
- **Use of different tools (such as YouTube, Padlet, E-books)** and devices (tablet, multimedia interactive whiteboard)
- **Visual aids and videos on YouTube.** Additional resources are sent via email to learners to support flexible learning as

learners can use/ view in their own time and to supplement independent learning.

- **Creation of personalized authentic materials** by individual teachers, using a mix of media
- **VET classes** – schools equipped the VET classrooms with digital technologies and streamed VET lessons (e.g. electrotechnics and engineering subjects, virtual cooking studios etc.)

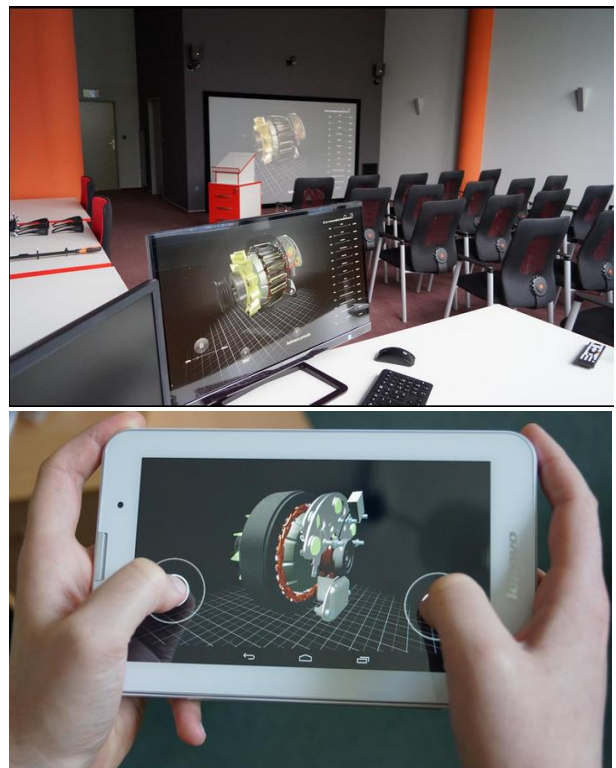


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