

Success stories from around Europe

The LIFE Train the Trainer Pack has been tried and tested over the past six months to find out how it can help teachers to embed life skills into vocational learning. Here are the stories from our partner countries....

Pilot success story from Cyprus

This was a very exciting and challenging experience where I was given the chance to research and train teachers on key competences on Life Skills.

Working with two diverse target groups who had very different views and needs, I was able to train a group of teachers from Pascal Secondary Education School, where their students are very academic, and a vocational training centre who were very eager for training.

I found the academic teachers very demanding in the sense that they felt their students did not really need these skills, but a different opinion was formed after working through the trainer pack. All teachers worked very hard and with motivation to pilot activities with their students and the students found the activities a fun way to learn.



The vocational trainers were more receptive and eager for the training. These trainers wanted more hands on activities that they could use in their practical classes. Through discussions with the target group we all contributed many ideas on how to amend activities and use them to cater for the needs of the learners.



Both target groups became very conscious of the need to embed life skills into their teaching methodology and a clear conclusion was made at the end of the workshops that life skills are an essential part of the students' learning process during education and a very important factor to help in their employability in the future.

together when usually they would not have the time to meet and socialise at work. It was a good opportunity to have a coffee, talk about work and get involved in fun activities.

All the participants had a chance to get involved and do activities

Elli Kyprianou

A success story about the LIFE pilot in Marijampole VET Centre



In Marijampole VET centre, we piloted the use of foreign languages as one of the life skills. To make the task more interesting we had a workshop in the school's food processing laboratory. The topic was related to the LIFE SKILLS project and the forthcoming mobility within the framework of LIFE skills in Vocational Education and Training, because professional teachers in Lithuania have a basic understanding of the English language.



They knew they needed to communicate with their foreign colleagues and participate in pilot courses in our partner institutions, so in order to motivate them and to make the lesson more interesting, we chose the topic of food: names of products, various dishes, how to order the food etc.

Lithuanian teachers had to prepare a meal of three courses, they played language games and had to learn the words, concerning food and cooking.

The lesson proved to be a success, and afterwards, one of the cooks, who had German as her foreign language, subscribed

for additional private English language lessons. She said she will use English terms with her students in order not only to give them additional knowledge but to practise her vocabulary as well.

The conclusion is that no matter what age you are (and she is about 50) - good motivation can make you learn new things, thus helping to develop your personality, adding new flavour to your life and your teaching experiences.

Rasa Zygnantaite, Egle Kalinauskiene, Lilija Zableckiene and Dana Liukineviciene

Life piloting course Italy

The LIFE pilot in Italy took place between February and May 2010 involving nine trainers from various sectors. Our LIFE trainers live in different cities of Tuscany and are aged from 27 to 50. The proposal for the pilot was to introduce LIFE examples and principles of life skills in their usual training activities and to do this they were asked initially to reflect together on these matters.



The first impact has been to recognise that embedding life skills in their everyday teaching is something that the trainers already do. The opportunity to discuss this with others has helped to build their confidence.

Furthermore, the trainers involved recognised that their students needed these life skills even though the students were not always aware of this. The group became conscious about the potential of the LIFE package and have started trying to think of how to introduce LIFE practical examples into normal training courses.

During a period of a couple of months, they designed and experimented with various solutions. This has had two key results. Firstly, they have developed the skills to apply these techniques to real contexts. Secondly, the organisations they work for have demonstrated a real interest in using these techniques. The pilot has resulted in the introduction of LIFE resources in the fields of health, software training and teacher training.

The creative phase concluded with each participant writing a report. Following this, the trainers requested a further meeting to exchange their experiences, and in fact want a further follow up meeting as well to develop their initiatives further.

All the participants found the LIFE materials very useful and promised to continue using it in their teaching.

Giovanni Crisona

New ideas from the UK

The LIFE pilot in the UK has been a fun and enjoyable experience for all concerned. One of the things that contributed to the enjoyment was our determination to introduce a broader European dimension by sharing cakes and biscuits from across Europe as part of the workshops!

Across all the workshops, we had participants from a wide range of vocational areas. Some of them were already knowledgeable about embedding life skills whereas for others it was a new idea, but they all felt enthusiastic and wanted to try out the activities with their learners. For example, one new teacher enjoyed the Jigsaw activity so much that she adapted it to use with her own learners (who have learning difficulties) to help them develop life skills in relation to healthy eating. Another teacher submitted a new activity for customer care – he works with construction students who do not necessarily see the point of “customer care” but the way he threw himself into the activity by wearing a wig to simulate a disgruntled customer gained their interest and made the activity very memorable for them.

On the staff development day, we decided to try out the classroom introduction activity – we were not sure how this would work as most of them knew each other. However, it proved to be very successful as they all found out things about each other that they had not previously known – the biggest problem lay in stopping them talking in order that we could move on to the next activity!

Caroline Harvey and Rosaleen Courtney



LIFE is better with good food and good company



One of the most successful meetings was when we integrated lunch in a Life pilot workshop. We had a lot of problems organising one of the meetings and the only "free moment" was during lunch time. So I went to buy 2 Spanish omelettes, coca-colas and beers.

The workshop took a little bit longer but we had fun. When we were finishing the "tortillas"/Spanish omelettes, Xabier, our cook in Life arrived with more food. We had instead of 90 minutes workshop 120 minutes but they were very good and very tasty.

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Maria Jose Irastorza and Carlos Blanco

Send us your feedback and ideas

As a result of the pilot feedback from teachers, we are adding new and amended activities to the LIFE Train the Trainer pack on the LIFE website www.life-keyskills.info. We want the pack to continue to evolve. E-mail your ideas for new activities or changes to the activities in the pack to rosaleen.courtney@nortcoll.ac.uk

Teachers on the move

A VETPRO initiative linked to the project has involved visits to partner countries by teachers from Lithuania, Cyprus and Spain to see how life skills are embedded into vocational teaching and share experiences from different countries.

Commenting on their visit to the UK, teachers from the Basque Country, Spain described the experience as "very positive" and said they had been impressed by UK teachers' "dedication and kindness to their students". They said: "We wish to highlight the respect we've seen between student and lecturer."

Two Cypriot teachers remarked favourably on the extra support they had observed being provided for students in IT and English.



A group of five visitors from Lithuania noted the "soft, friendly communication" they had observed between students and staff at Norton Radstock College. They liked the flexibility of the programmes, and the relaxed relationship between students and teachers. They said they had been "impressed by the patience of teachers".

Making an impact

We are investigating the long term potential for the LIFE Train the Trainer Pack to be included in national teacher training programmes. We are interested in talking to agencies and award bodies in partner countries. Full details of our findings will be published on the LIFE website.

Contact us

If you are interested in hearing more about the project, feel free to contact us via the website or contact any of the partners on the next page. We look forward to hearing from you.

The LIFE project team

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