SAFE ARRIVAL PROJECT

Arriving Safely in the Future

Methods and Interventions to Reduce Drop-outs

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This publication is a product of Leonardo da Vinci Partnership called Safe Arrival (Reducing Dropout of Young People in Vocational Education and Training).

2015

Content

Introduction

The Safe Arrival Project was a project amongst a consortium of 5 institutions from 5 European countries which worked together in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Sandwell MBC in the United Kingdom, Galway Technical Institute in Ireland, Partners Hungary Foundation in Hungary, Xabec in Spain and Zlínský kraj in the Czech Republic, who all want young people to safely arrive in employment or further training. It is based on research from the following references:

- Arnold, C. and Baker, T. (2013) “Becoming NEET: Risks, Rewards and Realities” Stoke: Trentham Books
- Arnold, C and Baker, T (2012) “Transitions from School to Work: applying psychology to NEET” Educational and Child Psychology Vol 29 No3. Leicester: BPS

The aim of the project was to reduce dropout and NEET (persons who are not in education, employment, or training) amongst high risk learners on initial vocational education and training (iVET) by equipping professionals to identify them early.

The partners´ research completed at the beginning of the project suggested that the average rate of drop out across the EU was 13.5%. For youth unemployment partners reported rates in the Czech Rep was 23.1% and the Spanish partner has youth unemployment rates of 46.1%. Our Hungarian partner has identified dropout and NEET as a major issue amongst the Roma population whilst In Ireland over 70% of early leavers were unemployed.

The impacts of NEET are well known: limited qualifications, more likely to be teenage parents, a high risk of poor mental/general health, increased drug use, more likely to commit crime and shorter life expectancy. These all point to the risks of entering the NEET category when leaving education and a need for interventions.

The SAP tool enables us, through effective intervention, to maintain young people´s motivation to complete their education and training. We aim to equip professionals to identify high risk groups and work with them more effectively. As a consequence,

Meet the Partners

The Safe Arrival Project has been implemented by a consortium rich in its diversity and expertise. It was based on a collaboration emerging from a Leonardo Lifelong Learning Partnership called Careers of the Future which comprised of Zlínský kraj in the Czech Republic, Sandwell MBC in the United Kingdom and Galway Technical Institute in Ireland. These organisations identified dropout from iVET as a major issue in their work. As a succession to their partnership activity looked to widen and extend their collaboration and transfer their strongest and most innovative activity across Europe; a NEET identification tool developed in Sandwell. The partners wished to extend the tool beyond their partnership to address further priorities within the European Union and believed that the tool would have a significant contribution to make to support Roma's and also to address further the issue of unemployment. To this end and with a desire to form a multiplayer partnership we sought partners working with Roma's, hence the involvement of Partners Hungary Foundation and a Spanish partner where unemployment is so high. XABEC in Spain were identified. All partners have had strong European experience and all have worked with at least one other partner in the Consortium. SMBC led the consortium as they have developed the tool.

Sandwell MBC

Sandwell MBC is a Metropolitan Borough Council in the UK. It has significant responsibilities for leading Education Services. In its directorates its Connexions Service delivers Information Advice and Guidance Services to providers of VET and their students. The service includes all VET providers such as Sandwell College, training providers in the borough, employers and voluntary groups. Activity also includes work with vulnerable groups. Connexions have a multi-disciplinary approach involving professionals such as Educational Psychologists. Sandwell Connexions will undertake this TOI project by sharing its practice with European partners in relation to screening those in VET for dropout and NEET risk. The borough is home to 289,000 residents including 20% from black and minority groups. Unemployment figures for young people (10.5%) are above the national average.

Galway Technical Institute

Galway Technical Institute is located in Galway on the West Coast of Ireland and prides itself on the level of education delivered to almost 3000 students per year across three different schools:

1. Further Education
2. Adult Education
3. Music Education

GTI's mission is to "develop the knowledge, skills and competencies of our learners by designing programmes that are innovative and of high quality, and to deliver the programmes in an environment that reflects the complexity and challenge of a changing world." Certification is provided by the following bodies: FETAC, ITEC, IITI, CIBTAC, Microsoft, Apple and the Football Association of Ireland.

Partners Hungary Foundation

PHF wants to contribute to the development of a multi-cultural, tolerant society that lives in harmony with its environment and nature, and which is able to integrate the values of different cultures both on an individual and societal level. They aim to create a society in which there are structures available for the establishment of equal opportunities.

Strategic Sectors of Intervention include:

1. Democracy building and conflict resolution
2. Roma integration through the development of local communities
3. Supporting Gender equality
4. Building bridges between sectors – supporting CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)
5. Development, design and implementation of different training programs

Centro de Formación Profesional XABEC

XABEC is a Vocational Training Center which offers the three Spanish VET systems: Initial Vocational Training for young students, Adult Education for unemployed and people in risk of social exclusion and Courses for companies for employees. The College is focused entirely in the training area of the Industrial Maintenance and building installations. There are nine workshops, each one specialized in a different area of knowledge: electricity, electronics, automation-robotics, hydraulic-pneumatic, installations of cold and heat, welding and boiler making, plumbing and gas, electro mechanics and renewable energy.

The academic staff in XABEC is comprised of 40 people full time and part-time teachers. Every year more than 800 students attend classes. XABEC is certified by ISO 9001: 2008. XABEC have agreements of collaboration with 200 companies and some international companies: DAIKIN, LINCOLN ELECTRIC, ABB, VOOSLOH, DR. FRANS SCHNEIDER, etc., which makes training available to teachers and trainers as well as offering technical advice.

Xabec is a promoter member of the international network InnMain (Educational Association for Innovation in Industrial Maintenance, 17 participant institutions in 13 different countries).

XABEC chairs the "Professional Development Forum", a body which joins more than 200 companies that are linked to the school for different reasons: hosting apprenticeships, giving training courses to the employees, preparing future workers, etc. Since 2014 Xabec is an "Employment Agency" authorized by the Valencian Region, offering a service of labour intermediation between unemployed people and companies demanding workers. In 2012 Xabec was chosen to be a pilot school to implement the Dual Training System of Vocational Education in Valencia Region.

XABEC has the two more important charters of European mobility up to the year 2020: Charter extended Erasmus+ (E VALENCI73) and Charter of mobility of vocational training (2015-1-ES01-KA109-016471)

Zlínský kraj

Zlínský kraj (Zlín Region) was established on the 1st of January 2000. The main bodies of Zlínský kraj include the regional board of representatives, council, governor and regional authority. The political representation of the region consists of the local board governed by the governor and council. They set the directions the region is to follow throughout the entire election period. The decisions taken by the board and the council are implemented by the regional authority. The Regional Authority of the Zlín Region executes tasks assigned by the council or board. The Regional Authority which is divided into departments is managed by the director, who reports directly to the governor. Department of Education, Youth and Sports is responsible for implementing education, youth and sports policy. In the field of education this may include: establishing secondary vocational schools, performance management, training of teachers, counselling support, prevention of vocational school drops-out etc.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Implementation Pilot 1

Step 1: The project coordinator organised an information session with Sandwell College staff to explain about the project, and its aims and objectives. Department leads for the courses with the largest amount of dropout were invited to attend. The session involved an ideas shower where all attendees had the opportunity to share ideas on potential risk factors that negatively affect full-time learners within Sandwell College. The result of this highlighted 9 main factors which would then tested.

Steps 2 & 3: The department leads decided on the most relevant questions to ask in relation to these factors producing a questionnaire which would be used with a test cohort.

Step 4 & 5: The test cohort included 40 learners who had dropped out of VET at Sandwell College against 40 who had completed their courses. All data from this survey was collated in an excel spread sheet ready for analysis.

Step 6: The data was sent to Dr Christopher Arnold to be further analysed to ascertain which of the risk factors were significant in predicting those at high risk of dropping out of education in Sandwell College.

Implementation Pilot 2

SMBC attended the Budapest Conference where the results of the initial 40/40 survey from each country were presented. This gave each country a local SAP tool for their institution. Back in the UK, a new revised Sandwell SAP tool was created ready for use taking into account learning points from other partners.

The factors for dropout tested in Sandwell College were:
- Being a young carer
- Support from family to attend college
- Career motivation
- Attendance issues
- Punctuality issues
- Drug use
- Being in Social Service Care
- Parental Financial situation

The relevant factors for dropout in Sandwell College were:
- Did you know what you want to do as a career? (Factor 3 – Career motivation)
- Were you late more than once a week at school? (Factor 5 – Punctuality issues)
- Have you ever been in social services care? (Factor 8 – Being in social services care)

The statistical model presented by Dr Christopher Arnold generated a formula that can be used to use to determine if our students are at risk of dropping out of college before completing their course.

Risk Factor Score = (Factor 3)*27.5 + (Factor 5)*20 + (Factor 8)*17.5
Max Score = 65

The survey of 3 questions was asked to all 16-18 students within the top 5 courses with the highest dropout rate within the college – these were:
- Photography Level 3
- Plastering Level 1
- Childcare Level 2
- Hairdressing Level 2
- Beauty Level 2

By the end of December 2014 we collected all the data and consequently discovered the following numbers were at risk in each course:
- Photography – 3 high risk students
- Plastering – 2 high risk students
- Childcare – 3 high risk students
- Hairdressing – 3 high risk students
- Beauty – 2 high risk students

In January we also screened a fast track Business level 3 course that was designed for people that had already dropped out of other courses within the college. This highlighted 3 high risk students. However, before intervention could be put in place – all 3 students dropped out. This showed us that the project should focus on courses at the beginning of September to reduce the initial dropout as trying to address a course which is designed for dropouts is more difficult to make an impact with.

Interventions

In conjunction with Sandwell College the following interventions were put in place for the high risk students:
- Each student was highlighted to the college tutors so that they could pick up on any attendance/punctuality issues early
- Each student had a Connexions Personal Adviser allocated to them for additional support
- The Connexions Personal Adviser met with students individually to tailor a support package that they needed. The emphasis was on the support the young people wanted rather than what we think they wanted
- The Connexions Personal Adviser liaised with tutors to track progress of students
- Students were contacted regularly by their preferred contact method. i.e. by text, phone or in person
- Each student was sent a personal invite to Connexions events. i.e. apprenticeship events
- Students were given support with progression beyond their course where required
- Students were given support to make a successful transition if they wanted to drop out of their course to prevent them from becoming NEET

From the evaluation data on those that completed the course we can report the following:
- Identified high risk students who dropped out : 4 people
- Identified high risk students who completed the course: 9 people
- Low risk students who dropped out: 15 people
- Low risk students who completed the course: 122 people

Other things to note are that out of the 4 people that dropped out of their course 3 of them progressed straight into a positive destination. This was because of the intervention strategy in place for those students. The students expressed their intention to leave at an early stage and the Connexions Personal Adviser working with them was able to work with them on an individual basis

to help support their transition. The students remained engaged until a new destination was procured. If the project was not in place then these students may have become NEET and struggled to successfully progress.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is extremely important to guarantee that the skills and competences gained by all partners is utilised in the future. It is anticipated that the screening model will be used by other schools and colleges in Europe and beyond.

- The screening model and project toolkit will be presented to all staff at Sandwell College
- The screening questions will be integrated into the induction process at Sandwell College. All learners will be screened and Sandwell Connexions will help to analyse the data to highlight those at high risk of dropping out.
- We will continue to have a lead officer supporting the training of staff in use of the SAP tool to act as a consultant on maintaining the SAP tool.
- Sandwell Connexions to provide support for the college in terms of interventions – exact strategy is currently being discussed.
- Consultancy support available through the SAP website to new contacts looking to develop their own SAP tool.

Galway Technical Institute

Implementation Pilot 1

Step 1: The project management team organised an information session for all staff involved in the project. The follow up to this was an ideas shower where all stakeholders had the opportunity to share ideas on potential risk factors that negatively affect full-time learners at GTI. The result of this was a survey consisting of twenty five risk factors.

Steps 2 & 3: The stakeholders then decided on the most relevant questions to ask of GTI learners. It was decided to ask fifteen questions.

Step 4 & 5: In the project application form to the UK National Agency, GTI had planned to only survey students from the media and electronics departments. However, it was later decided to include more courses to make the data more representative. We surveyed 40 learners who had dropped out and 40 who had continued. All data from this survey was sent to Dr Christopher Arnold to be analysed in the U.K.

Step 6: The data was sent to SMBC to be further analysed to ascertain the reality in terms of the risk factors that are significant enough to lead to full time learners dropping out of education at GTI.

Implementation Pilot 2

In May 2014 the GTI project team attended the Budapest project meeting where SMBC presented the results of the initial 40/40 survey.

The factors for dropout tested in GTI were:

- Have you experienced financial difficulties this year?
- Did you choose the correct programme?
- Did you find the course difficult?
- Were you employed during the course?
- Were you living in rented accommodation?
- Did you know anyone else when you enrolled?
- Had you a clear career goal in mind when enrolling on your programme?
- Are you in receipt of state benefits?
- Do transportation issues including costs, impact on your attendance?
- Are you a member of the travelling community or any other ethnic minority group?
- Are you a non-EU National?
- Have you suffered significant health difficulties this year?
- Has personal trauma impacted on your participation this year?
- Do you have a learning difficulty or disability?
- Do you have any family commitments, including caring which impede you participation?

The relevant factors for dropout in GTI were as follows:
- Did you choose the correct programme? (Factor 2)
- Do transportation issues including cost, impact on your attendance? (Factor 9)
- Had you a clear career goal in mind when enrolling on your programme? (Factor 7)

The statistical model presented by Christopher Arnold and Tracey Baker generated a formula that can be used to use to determine if our students are at risk of dropping out of college before completing their course.

Risk Factor Score = (F2*32) + (F9*27) + (F7*20)
Max Score = 79

On return to Ireland the project team designed a survey to ask significant risk factors of the students that would enter GTI for the 2014/2015 academic year.

With the aim of generating a more representative set of results it was decided to survey all GTI students (N=1124). We managed to survey a total of 735 learners from all eight departments.

By the end of October we collected all the data and consequently discovered the following:
- From 735 students – 6 of them were showed as high level risk of becoming dropout indicating all three risk factors.
- 51 students were identified as having a medium risk of dropping out.
- 255 were identified as having one risk factor and classed as low risk.

Interventions

We were pleasantly surprised that only 57 students were at medium to high risk of dropping out. Also, the results of the risk factor research by SMBC illustrated that GTI has a significant amount of interventions in place to reduce drop. The senior management and middle management structure at GTI play a significant role in reducing the drop-out rate for learners.

The following interventions are in place at GTI:
- Career Guidance Counsellor
- Project Support Officer
- Pastoral Care Counsellor
- Student Disability Officer
- Attendance Officer
- Principal / Deputy Principal / Director of Adult Education – advisers to all learners as required.

The excel spreadsheet containing the student names and courses was analysed and all support personnel above were informed of the research results. The 57 learners who indicated at least two risk factors were contacted and appointment were made to meet with relevant personnel from the above list. One to one meetings were scheduled with the 57 learners to ascertain how we could help them.

We are currently researching our end of year progression / completion data to ascertain how many of the 735 learners survey dropped out before the end of May or else completed their programme with a major award (full certification with 8 minor awards) or a component award (subject completion).

We can report the following:
- The 6 learners who presented as high risk have all completed.
- 5 of the 51 learners who presented with two risk factors have dropped out.
- 67 of the 255 who presented with one risk factor have dropped out.

Therefore we have collected the following data from the 2014/2015 academic year:
- Identified high and medium risk students who already drop-out: 5 people
- Identified high and medium risk students who continue: 52 people
- Low risk students who drop out: 125 people
- Low risk students who continue: 553 people

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is extremely important to guarantee that the skills and competences garnered by all partners is utilised in the future. It is anticipated that the screening model will be used by other schools and colleges in Europe and beyond.

- The screening model and project toolkit will be explained to all staff at Galway Technical Institute and the Galway & Roscommon Education & Training Board.
- The screening process will take at the end of September each year after the school returns have been submitted to the Department of Education & Skills. All learners will be screened and the appropriate interventions will be put in place.
- Key support personnel at GTI will be trained on how the screening tool works.
- GTI will disseminate all project information to all present and past project partners.
- John McLoughlin and Geraldine Gibbons will present project information/ results at both the national ETBI Conference in October 2015 and at the national FET Conference in October 2015.

Partners Hungary Foundation

Implementation Pilot 1

Step 1: The project team identified 5 schools that were willing to work on reducing drop out in their institutions. Four schools are under one directorate, run by Ministry of Agriculture (Közép- Magyarországi Agrár Szakképző Központ (KASZK) Agricultural Vocational Training Centre of Central Hungary, and the fifth one was a Roma school, run by a foundation (Szegényeket és Rászorultakat Segítő Alapítványi Iskola (SzERSA) – a Vocational School run by Supporting the Poor and People in Need Foundation).

There was also a sixth school at the beginning of the project, they participated in the survey to identify risk factors, but they did not step into the implementation phase, as dropout rate is very low in that school and they left the project.

Step 2: The project management team organised a workshop with participation of different stakeholders in the identified schools and beyond that were interested in drop out. These included teachers, school directors, interested school staff, psychologists, teacher in charge of youth prevention, and representatives of other projects dealing with reducing drop out in Hungary. As a result of the workshop stakeholders had put together a list of potential risk factors that negatively affect learners at vocational training, especially in their schools. The result of this was a survey consisting of 13 risk factors.

Steps 3: The project team then decided on the most relevant questions to ask of 1st grade students in the 5 participating schools. It was decided to ask 68 questions. We surveyed 40 learners who had dropped out and 40 who had continued. All data from this survey was sent to Dr Christopher Arnold to be analysed in the U.K. to identify those risk factors that are significant enough to lead to dropping out of education.

Implementation Pilot 2

Step 4: In May 2014, during the project meeting in Budapest, SMBC presented the results of the initial 40/40 survey.

The factors for dropout tested in Hungary were:
- Exclusionary community and lack of community support
- Failure and negative experiences in the students' life
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of diverse methodology in teaching
- Learning disorders and disabilities
- Financial difficulties in the family
- Being a parent
- Long travel time to get to school
- Lack of vision
- Lack of the 4 basic skills (writing, reading, counting, communication)

- Forced choice of profession
- Social disadvantages
- Private student status
- Bad school results

The relevant factors for dropout in Hungary were as follows:
- Do you have a cohesive class community? (Negative) – Factor 3
- Is there modern equipment in your school? – Factor 17
- Do you learn at home? (Negative) – Factor 30
- Do you plan to work in your current profession? (Negative) – Factor 55
- Did your parents / brother and sister learn with you when you went to elementary school? (Negative) – Factor 58

Based on that a formula was calculated:

Risk factor score = (Factor 3)*35 + (Factor 17)*25 + (Factor 30)*30 + (Factor 55)*31 + (Factor 58)*23
Maximum score = 144

Step 5 & 6: After the Budapest meeting the project team designed a survey to ask significant risk factor questionnaire to the students of the Bridge classes in the 2014/2015 academic year. These students are most at risk because they had already been drop outs from other schools previously. By the end of October we collected all the data – 71 students were screened

Interventions

We organized a workshop and presented the results to a select group of teachers and other professionals who are interested in the reduction of drop out in the 4 schools. We did the same with students. The goal of the workshop was to identify the already existing measurements that prevent drop out and also to introduce new ones to increase efficiency in prevention.

The following interventions are in place at the participating 4 schools:

HR resources:
- Principal / Deputy Principal are dedicated to reduce drop out
- Youth Protection Officer
- Art therapist, development teacher – was employed as a result of the project; she worked individually with all the students with special attention to students in risk.

Methodological intervention:
- In Bridge classes the maximum number of students is 12.
- Teachers teach in pairs
- They use different teaching methods; cooperative learning, differentiating tasks, physical exercises, relaxation, etc. to keep up motivation
- The length of the lessons are 30 minutes which is a reduction from 45 minutes

Skill development during the project:
- How to use animation in teaching – training for teachers and students
- Forum theatre as a tool to increase cohesion in the class to engage students to remain in school – linking the school with a project implemented by Artemisszio Foundation

Ongoing self-reflection on practice:

- Introducing and adopting WANDA – a case analyzing methodology developed by VBJK; Center for Innovation in the Early Years (Belgium)
  The method aims to analyse teaching practice in a group setting, where burning problems are analysed from all the stakeholders' point of view and teachers are given advice by peers after the precise analysis of the problem. 7 WANDA workshops were held in 2 of the participating schools, and 4 cases were about students identified in risk. The self-reflection practice in a learning group taught teachers to dare to talk about their problems and also helped to develop their tools in teaching and dealing with difficult students and situations.

From our 71 students screened, unfortunately due to a governmental school closure data was unavailable for 18 students leaving our interventions to target 53 learners, from these the following was reported at the end of the year:

- Identified high risk students who dropped out: 1 person
- Identified high risk students who completed the course: 24 people
- Low risk students who dropped out: 1 person
- Low risk students who completed the course: 27 people

Sustainability

The following measures and activities are and will be implemented for sustaining the results of the project

- The screening model and project toolkit was explained to all head teachers of the 4 schools at the last closing training of the school year - a case study was made in the project and was analysed by the group
- A follow up meeting will be organized with participation of the leading director and the directors of the four schools to decide how to extend the model amongst the 4 schools.
- WANDA facilitators are being trained to be able to continue the case-analysing workshops without external support.
- A course will be developed on the model and toolkit and will be accredited in the "In Service Teacher Training System"
- Exchange of experience will be continued with projects on reducing drop out in Hungary.
- Partners Hungary will disseminate all project information to all present and past project partners.

Centro de Formación Professional XABEC

Implementation Pilot 1

Step 1: The project team had different meetings with those who were involved in the project (teachers, students, parents) and their ideas helped us to complete the risk factors questionnaire.

Steps 2 & 3: Using all the inputs of the different groups (students, teachers, parents, mentors and dropouts) we decided which ones to include in the questionnaire.

Step 4 & 5: We identified 80 people (40 dropouts and 40 current students of our school) and asked them the final risk factor questionnaire. We recorded all the answers in the spread sheet provided by the project promoter

Step 6: We sent all the data to SMBC to be analysed.

The factors for dropout tested in XABEC were:

- Drugs consumption
- Having friends who smoke drugs
- Bullying
- Ability to make friends
- Working or studying another things during day
- Studying a non-wanted course
- Having children
- Living on your own
- Ability to come punctual to school
- Find work
- Family matters: separated parents
- Family matters: parents ill or retired
- Lack of money to pay courses
- Lack of brainpower
- Problems with teachers or another students
- Alcohol
- Return home too late
- Stay long time with your boyfriend/girlfriend
- Too long nap
- Technology addiction

Implementation Pilot 2

During the Budapest meeting, the statistical analysis of the data was shown and the relevant factors for dropout in Xabec were:

- Drug consumption (factor 1)
- Problems with teachers or other students (factor 15)

· Alcohol (factor 16)
· Stay long time with your boyfriend/ girlfriend (factor 18 – resilience factor)
· Too long a nap (factor 19)

From these considerations, the statistical model generated a formula that will be what we use in determining our students with higher risk of leaving studies before finishing them. Here we show the results:

Total score = (F1*28) + (F15*25) + (F16*25) - (F18*23) + (F19*20)
Maximum score = 78

On the second day of lessons, the 5 questions were asked to students using the computer room, so in one day all the information was compiled and ready to use. The data was split into three groups and students were divided between high (those who marked more than 45), medium (those who marked between 45 and 20) and low risk (those who mark less than 20).

By the end of November we collected all the data and consequently found that of 95 students from the first year:
· 13 of them were classed as having a high level of risk of dropping out.
· 24 students were classed as having a medium level of risk of dropping out.
· The rest of the students (58) were classed as having a low level of risk of dropping out

Interventions

We developed interventions with students with a high level of risk and implemented the following:
· Reinforcement with classmates: During class, the aim is for students to develop. In order to help with this we paired those who are at high risk of dropping out with an older student that can help support them on a peer level.
· Continued contact with parents: Teachers with students in their class that have a high risk level conduct a parent's interview and then continue to keep in touch throughout the whole year.

In addition, some interventions have been put in place with both people from medium and low risk of dropping out:
· Choose the proper tutor: careful consideration was given to match up suitable tutors with individual students – this may be tutors who have more experience or who have a positive relationship with the student.
· Volunteer programme: A volunteer programme was established to help students gain a chance to put into practice their knowledge from class and see how it is useful. It also helped them in the decision to continue with a specific area.
· Punctuality and uniform: This year we started a new idea to encourage people to arrive on time. It is a simple task of closing the school door after the school start time. We also introduced a uniform which has been showed as a perfect tool to standardise people in order to avoid social differences.
· Evaluation through projects: This is a principle to focus on completing project tasks. The more projects you do, the more points you gain. This means that at whatever pace you work you can reach your points score if you work step by step. This promotes encouragement and also a sense of achievement.

Looking at the results of the survey developed now that the first year has been completed, we have showed that from 95 students in the first year:
· 13 of them were showed at a high level of risk of dropping out and 8 of them left the centre before the end of the year.
· 24 students were showed at a medium level of risk of dropping out and 5 of them left the centre before the end of the year.
· The rest of the students (58) were deemed to be of low level of risk of dropping out and 4 of them left the centre before the end of the year.

At the end of the year when combining the high and medium risk students, we have also collected four interesting figures from our data:
· Identified high and medium risk students who already drop-out: 13 people
· Identified high and medium risk students who continue: 24 people
· Low risk students who drop out: 4 people
· Low risk students who continue: 54 people

In conclusion, the model missed only 4 people and 24 people have been identified as people on high or medium risk level which the intervention has helped them complete the year.

Sustainability

The following measures will take place to ensure the sustainability of the project:
· The toolkit once created, will be explained to all the teachers of the school and the steps needed to get the results.
· Every year the survey created will be provided for students to complete in order to early identify those who are in danger of dropping out.
· A team of teachers will be aware of the development of the project and its consequences, looking for changes or modifications if they are needed.
· We will disseminate the booklet to our partners in Europe and with others schools we have relationships with in Valencia, in order to look for other educational centres who could be interested in the methodology and his results.

Zlínský kraj

Zlínský kraj

Implementation Pilot 1

Step 1: Activities to launch the SAP project in the Zlín Region were held from December 2013 to February 2014. The local project team consisting of Martina Němcová, Eva Zemčíková and Gabriela Vojtěšková presented the SAP to the school counsellors in four districts of the Zlín Region. Ten counsellors showed interested in the project.

Step 2&3: In February and March 2014 the involved schools conducted research in order to identify local risk factors which lead to drop-outs. The school counsellors contacted 181 students who already left the school and asked them about the reasons they had dropped out.

The factors for dropout tested in the Zlín Region were:
- Low qualification of parents
- Unemployment in family
- One-parents family
- Divorce of parents during the students studies
- Socially disadvantaged family
- Students with special needs
- Bad school results
- Long-term health problems
- Behavioural problems
- Inaccessibility of school
- Wrong choice of school
- Bad school climate

After processing all the data the risk factors in the Zlín Region were identified as:
- Bad school atmosphere
- Bad school result
- Behaviour problems

Step 4: After Budapest conference in May 2014 we learnt about risk factors in the Zlín Region and possible interventions. We started preparations for the implementation which was identification of students at risk of drop-out.

Implementation Pilot 2

The school counsellors got a questionnaire for students. The questionnaire was produced by The Czech Pedagogical and Psychological Institute in Praha. It was freely available to psychologists and counsellors who need to measure the school atmosphere. The school results were found in school records which all schools keep obligatorily. The behaviour problems were decided through consultation with the school Methodist for prevention of behaviour problems or with the Class teacher.

Six schools were involved and the school counsellors were trained in identification of students in danger of drop-out. Methodology of the research was created with regard to legislation related to personal data protection. Some of them were busy, some didn´t want to deal with school atmosphere which is a very sensitive topic. In early December we got the data from the schools.

The counsellors got their results in late December. There were 306 students screened and 46 from them identified as a high risk students.

Total score = (Factor 7)* 28 + (Factor 9) * 21 + (Factor 12) *16
Max total = 67

In March 2015 we distributed a complex methodology to the local counsellors. The publication gave instructions on how to use the SAP tool and covered the topic of interventions.

Interventions

The work plan in comparison with the other partners was delayed and so it is too early to draw final conclusions on what interventions were successful. The feedback from the counsellors suggests that they tried to create a bond with the high risk student. After this first step the counsellor usually conducted an interview with the student. The interview was less formal and its aim was to show interest in the student´s troubles. The students were assured that the counsellor respected them and what they said. Students showed appreciation for this kind of intervention. Most of them were in a heavy family situation.

The drop-out rate in the Czech Republic is about 5%. At the first sight the rate can be considered low. That is why the topic of early school leavers was not so burning and the decision makers did not pay too much attention to that. Thanks to the SAP we managed to raise awareness of drop-outs and their negative consequences. The school counsellors started to think about their students who had already left. They contacted them, asked them about the reasons which led to their leaving. This was the first time the school asked the students about their reason to leave. We have identified the risk factors in the Zlín Region which gives the schools a tool of prevention and early intervention.

Minority groups such as Roma and students with disabilities are protected by the Czech law. They are often students with special needs which is a concept defined by the Czech Educational Act. This means that needs of those students are taken into account and teachers pay a special attention to them. Our research suggested that students with special needs are amongst the less endangered students and they finish the school successfully in most of the cases. This might be attributed to the special attention they get from teachers.

Results from the end of year data showed:
- Identified high and medium risk students who drop-out: 10 people
- Identified high and medium risk students who continue: 106 people
- Low risk students who drop out: 0 people
- Low risk students who continue: 190 people

Sustainability

In the future we intend to implement the SAP tool into the common system of counselling in the Zlín Region. The work plan needs to be re-worked slightly because of the local risk factors.

New work plan:
- identification of students at risk will be realized at the end of the first school year
- interventions will be applied immediately
- methodology for evaluation of interventions will be created with specialists

Massive promotion of the SAP tool has been planned: meetings with management of the school, seminars for school counsellors, articles in professional magazines, SAP flyers, publications, e-learning course on the project web site etc.

Implementation of the SAP tool in the Zlín Region would be impossible without a strong support from the director of the Regional Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centre in Zlín. Mr Miroslav Orel enabled meetings with school counsellors and gave a helping hand in each phase of the SAP tool implementation.

Validity

As a validity checking mechanism for each partners SAP tool we undertook a 2 by 2 matrix assessment of results. The 2 x 2 matrix gives you an indication of the reliability of the model and ultimately if it is predicting the correct students.

This is completed by identifying four target groups:
1. Identified high risk students who still drop-out.
2. Identified high risk students who continue.
3. Low risk students who drop out.
4. Low risk students who continue.

The information is then displayed in the following table:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High Risk	A	D
Low Risk	B	C

Within the chosen cohort, interventions were undertaken with those students where risk factors were present (cells A and D). If the interventions were successful, ideally we would expect the High risk students that continue to drop out (cell A) to be 0 or close to 0 and all of the high risk students identified to have completed their course (cell D).

We would also expect if the model is valid that the students with no risk factors (cell B) to be 0 or close to 0 as well as these would represent those pupils who were not identified as being at risk of becoming NEET and for whom, no additional preventative interventions were offered. Looking at these cases the model misses, it is accepted that if the accuracy is more than 50% then the model is valid.

Each partner's results are shown below:

Sandwell MBC:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High Risk	4	9
Low Risk	15	122

The ratio of dropout to continuers in the high risk group is 4:9. The ratio of dropout to continuers in the low risk group is 1:7. The overall dropout rate is 13%.

Galway Technical Institute:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High/Medium Risk	5	52
Low Risk	125	553

The ratio of dropout to continuers in the high/medium risk group is 1:10. The ratio of dropout to continuers in the low risk group is 2:9. The interventions with the identified group are very effective and the overall drop-out rate is 17.7%.

Partners Hungary Foundation:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High/Medium Risk	1	24
Low Risk	1	27

The ratio of dropout to continuers in the high/medium risk group is 1:24. The ratio of dropout to continuers in the low risk group is 1:27. The very low numbers of drop outs suggest an extremely effective retention programme. The overall dropout rate is 3.7%

Xabec:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High/Medium Risk	12	24
Low Risk	4	54

The ratio of drop-outs to continuers in the high/medium risk group is 1:2. The ratio of dropout to continuers in the low risk group is 1:13. The model seems effective as the low risk group had only 4 drop outs. The overall dropout rate is 18%.

Zlínský kraj:

	Drop-outs	Continue
High/Medium Risk	10	106
Low Risk	0	190

The ratio of dropout to the continuers in the high/ medium risk is 1:11. This suggests that the interventions are very effective. The low score of low risk drop outs also suggest that the model is effective. The overall drop-out rate is 3%.

Conclusion

From this we can conclude that all our models do successfully predict those who are at risk of dropping out of VET. However refinements can be made to the models to improve its impact – this would require retest of any additional factors partners may want to test. Any significant factors could then be added into the original model.

A study of those students that the model does not predict has also been addressed. Each partner looked at individual cases to identify any trends or factors that may have been missing. The common themes to come out of this include:

- Lack of cooperation with parents – where parents did not cooperate with SAP trained staff to engage their child, the child dropped out of the course despite not having been identified as high risk. This was also a factor present in the cases that were identified with high risk. This is an area for development that PHF will focus on as a result of the findings.
- Poor attendance – this could be for a variety of reasons, but as attendance is affected this reduces the ability of students to cover all the work needed to complete the course. This can also be a side effect of the course not being what the expected or it being too difficult/too easy for them.
- Course not meeting their expectations – some students when they start their course find out that it is not what they had expected and so don't enjoy it and often links in with poor attendance. Current follow up work in Sandwell to this is to give careers advisers training on what the college courses involve to pass onto their students in school before they choose their course options.
- Other opportunities present themselves - if a student is offered employment or an apprenticeship whilst on their course then often students will drop out of their course to undertake this alternative opportunity.

Evaluation

The SAP Project has had on-going independent evaluation in place to assess whether it has fulfilled the project aims and objectives and to analyse its impact. The evaluation has followed an action research methodology with research conducted with lead organisations, participating VET institutions and young people.

The evaluation aimed to inform how the project has endeavoured to address and contribute to:

European Priority 6, Strategies to Reduce the Number of Dropouts in iVET (initial VET) and the EU 2020 target of reducing school dropout rates below 10% and having 75% of 20-64 year olds employed. These are the key drivers of the project.

The project has been carried out in a climate of a continued focus on the tackling of Early Leaving of Education and Training (ELET) in Europe and the publication of a joint Eurydice/Cedefop Report in November 2014.The report reinforced that leaving education and training early is a complex issue and the causes vary from student to student. It states that combating ELET can only be effective as a coordinated strategy across authority levels and policy areas. The importance of developing a comprehensive strategy was recognised in June 2011 in the EU by the Education Council in its Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving. The Council highlighted the need for targeted and effective evidence-based policies based on national circumstances.

In order to be effective, the Council Recommendation suggested that comprehensive strategies to combat early leaving should include three types of policies:

- Prevention policies which aim to tackle the root problems that may eventually result in early leaving.
- Intervention policies which aim to combat any emerging difficulties experienced by students, by improving the quality of education and training and providing targeted support.
- Compensation policies which create new opportunities for those who have left education and training prematurely to gain qualifications.

Education and career guidance, which encompasses all three areas, prevention, intervention and compensation, is a measure that receives special attention as it is identified by a large majority of European countries as being crucial for addressing early leaving.

The SAP Project embraced both Prevention and Intervention policies and placed a significant emphasis on Education and careers guidance. It realistically did not have the time or funds to address Compensation policies although in practice interventions led to young people being found alternatives to courses they were dropping out of.

The following are the findings of the independent evaluation in relation to The Safe Arrival Project:

The SAP Tool

The tool is transferable across national boundaries and can be implemented in a localised way whether in urban or rural areas. The tool can be successfully developed and implemented in a range of VET institutions. It can be effective in both targeting particular courses or with whole year or institution cohorts of students.

The tool requires significant multidisciplinary planning to develop a powerful and effective resource in institutions. It identifies those most at risk of early dropout but is also very effective in identifying those with medium and lower risks. This provides information for institutions to plan interventions.

In itself it will not impact on dropout. The tool is however a significant aid in the targeting of resources and interventions to address dropout. It is a useful addition to the Education Council call for comprehensive strategies to address early school leaving

Whilst only tested in VET institutions the tool has the potential to be used in general education contexts.

Impact

Implementation of the tool provides a springboard for developing strategies for addressing risk factors.

There is no one intervention which proves more successful than others. A customised approach is required from institution to institution. Careers counselling, one to one pastoral type support are the most common type of interventions put in place by partners. The earlier the interventions are introduced in the academic year with students the better the chance of interventions having an impact.

The process is not a quick fix and those institutions participating should be prepared to pursue the methodology for more than one academic year. Early results are encouraging with the high risk group that interventions have aided a good proportion of students to remain in education or enter positive destinations. There are no indications that the tool and interventions are any less effective dependant on race or gender or special educational need.

Want to learn more?

Why develop a local tool?

The percentage of young people in the NEET category varies widely according to region. The factors leading young people into this category might be radically different in different areas. Even within individual regions, there can be local differences. This was illustrated in a study exploring risk factors for school non-attendance in neighbouring secondary schools from the following reference:

- Arnold, Emery, Hughes & Travell (1995) „Predicting and preventing poor attendance in an urban comprehensive school: a computer-assisted approach“ Pastoral Care in Education Vol 13 No.4 (1995) p24–28.

Whilst it was possible to distil over 90% of the predictable variance into just three variables, the variables were different in the two schools only miles apart. A differing factor was gender where girls attended less than boys. When the phenomenon was examined in more detail, the ethnic mix revealed families in which girls were under more pressure to stay home to look after needy grandparents. This was not a factor in the other school. Accordingly applying national models in local settings might not capture the fine detail of local circumstances.

The benefits of screening are clear and include:
- Early identification of children at risk.
- Facilitating early intervention.
- Providing a baseline for evaluating interventions.

Developing the tool

There are some necessary and sufficient conditions to be addressed for screening to be justified:
1. There are measurable factors.
2. The factors are sufficiently discrete to discriminate effectively.
3. These factors are robust across time.
4. It is economically viable and socially acceptable to collect data.
5. There exist interventions which, if executed early, promote better outcomes.
6. There is a political will, reflecting public opinion that such exercises are legitimate.

The authors adopted a pragmatic nine stage approach to the development of a local screening tool:
1. List all the possible contextual risk factors.
2. Look at economics of collecting data.
3. Decide feasibility of data collection.
4. Decide on sampling method (possibly use a pilot).
5. Collect data.
6. Analyse data – build model.
7. Test model in volunteer school (Y8 or Y9)
8. Build interventions.
9. Evaluate.

Developing a screening tool at a local level is well within the capacity of local services, if supported by professionals with some basic statistical skills. The process can identify vulnerable students and be used to justify early interventions. In times of reducing budgets, some services which were universal may need to be targeted. Although not part of the original specification, a local screening tool can provide an evidence base on which to justify the selection of students who will receive the enhanced service. It is likely to offer good returns in times of budget reductions.

E-learning

For a toolkit for a development of SAP locally, case studies from across the EU partners, links to useful sites, glossary of terms, on-line research, social network, blogs and video please go to the Safe Arrival Project web page: www.safearrivalproject.com

Summary

The SAP project has targeted 5 courses in Xabec, 5 courses in Sandwell College, 6 schools in Zlin, 735 students at GTI and 4 Bridge classes in Hungary. Each country has been successful in producing their own model for use in their local area. The partnership has been very effective with commitments being made to future projects that either build on the work achieved during the SAP project or a new topic that affects all partners.

The final evaluation and impact is currently being finalised and more details on this can be found on the SAP website – www.safearrivalproject.com

There have been many learning points across all partners:

- The methodology of the SAP tool has been fully developed in each partner's organisation with SAP trained staff.
- The SAP tool and its results will be shared amongst stakeholders and disseminated to other interested institutions
- Interventions types have been shared with one to one work and careers guidance as elements that have shown to be useful
- Sustainability has been agreed by all partners including the maintenance of the SAP website and materials to help other partners to create their own localised SAP tool

As improvements can always be made, an option has been offered to partners to refine their models. This would require analysis of additional factors that may have been generated through ideas from other partners or that has not been previously covered. It may in turn increase the impact of the SAP tool and will require thought beyond the lifespan of the project.

During the SAP project, we have screened over 1300 students and provided interventions to approximately 250 students. Student feedback has been very encouraging stating they had reached some clear goals about their future and were intent on completing their studies. Whilst others felt that there was a lot of support available through counsellors and allocated SAP workers and students at Xabec especially liked the peer mentor scheme which offered a double layer of support as well as training for older students to develop their skills.

During the SAP project all partners have diligently focused on making the project a success. It has created a strong partnership where European cooperation has been fully adopted. This cooperation intends to maintain its effective partnership to continue to make an impact on the effects of dropouts from iVET. This is a very serious topic and one which we are all committed to in order to help improve the life chances of young people.

Arriving Safely In The Future – Methods and Interventions to Reduce Drop-outs

This publication is a product of Leonardo da Vinci Partnership called Safe Arrival (Reducing Dropout of Young People in Vocational Education and Training).

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