

# SIPP Newsletter

May/June 2020

Issue 17



## Key Project Updates:

1. SIPP Multiplier Event
2. Transnational Meeting 6
3. Transnational Meeting 7
4. GRETB – Covid-19 Update
5. LPUK – Covid-19 Update
6. Sataedu – Covid-19 Update
7. XABEC – Covid-19 Update
8. Zlinsky kraj – Covid-19 Update
9. The SIPP Intervention Manual Evaluation
10. SIPP Website & Videos



Co-funded by the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

## SIPP Multiplier Event – Cancelled due to COVID-19

The SIP Project's Multiplier Event, which had been organised to take place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at the National University of Ireland Galway, has sadly had to be cancelled. With non-essential international travel advised against and bans on all events and group gatherings, it will no longer be possible to physically hold this event within the projects timeframes.

The SIP Project Team were looking forward to welcoming 90 local and 20 international delegates to this event in Galway, but in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, held a virtual project meeting during which they agreed to cancel this event.

The event was to provide an overview of the SIP Project and its results and outcomes. It was to include workshops on the tool from Trial to Implementation, use of the Manual and Superb Intervention Videos, and a workshop on the Intervention resource directory.

The objective of the conference was to disseminate the outputs made during the lifespan of the project and to raise awareness of School Improvement by tackling early school leaving particularly through course choice.

If you are interested in further information about the project, please contact us [here](#).

## Transnational Meeting 6 – April 2020, Spain

The SIP Project team were unable to meet in Valencia in early April for the SIP Project's 6<sup>th</sup> and penultimate Transnational meeting. It was a fast moving situation, with borders closing and travel being suspended.

The meeting still went ahead none the less. The delegates who were planning to meet up in Valencia took to online conferencing. This ensured that each of the projects Intellectual Outputs and project Evaluation could be discussed and further one to one discussions went ahead.

All partners were in some kind of lockdown, with schools and colleges closed and staff working from home. This has meant heavier workloads for many, as remote systems have been needed to set up work for students and meetings with staff, as well as providing online teaching etc. This has understandably impacted on the intellectual outputs of the project.

## Transnational Meeting 7 – May 2020, Ireland

The meeting was initially scheduled to take place after the Multiplier event. As travel restrictions were still in place a virtual meeting once again took place on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020. This ensured project decisions could be made and that that each of the projects Intellectual Outputs and project Evaluation could be discussed in separate sessions throughout the day.

## **GRETB, Ireland – Covid-19 Update**

- All Schools closed their doors on March 12th and we had to develop ways of distance learning overnight. The week of closure we made sure all students had access to their Office 365 log in and school email
- Since closing we have been holding online classes, assemblies, meetings through Microsoft teams. Teachers are using lots of online supports to deliver classes – loom, kahoot, one note etc.
- We have told students and teachers to follow the daily school timetable.
- There has been much debate nationally around the state exams that normally take place in June – The Junior Certificate has been called off and replaced with school certification, the leaving certificate has been postponed with a start date being named for July 29th – there is still a lot of discussion and problems being highlighted around this so we are waiting for more clarification
- In regards to online distance learning there are issues preventing this happening across the board – sickness, poor internet, IT issues (only one device in the house to share), no childcare etc – so we have to make allowances for this.
- Our students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, TY and 5<sup>th</sup> year will all get holidays on May 29<sup>th</sup> and will hopefully return in September. The 6<sup>th</sup> years will also get holidays but will spend June & July preparing for the state exams if what is in place at the moment is carried out.

## **LPUK, UK – Covid-19 Update**

- The Prime Minister of the UK, called for schools across The United Kingdom; England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to close from Friday afternoon on 20th March.
- On the 18th March it was announced that exams would not take place in May and June, but grades would still be awarded for GCSEs and A-Levels, using coursework, teacher assessment of estimated grades and prior attainment.
- Schools remain predominately closed, except for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.
- From the 1st June primary schools began a phased opening to foundation stage children, Year 1 children, Year 6 children, children of key workers and vulnerable children.
- From the 15th June secondary schools are to schedule some teacher contact time for Year 10 and Year 12 students.
- All schools and colleges are managing their own response to providing ongoing education to their pupils during this time.

## **Sataedu, Finland – Covid-19 Update**

Distance learning under these exceptional circumstances has produced good results at Sataedu. The students are developing their skills and graduating at a steady rate. When necessary, Sataedu has made special arrangements to ensure that a student is able to graduate. For example, those competence demonstrations that could not take place at the work place have been arranged at school. While taking the safety into consideration, of course.

Most of the teachers and instructors at Sataedu use a vast array of pedagogical methods and technical applications in distance learning to guide and teach their students. Many of the teachers and instructors are so inspired by the possibilities of distance learning that they want to utilize and develop these methods in the future as well. To improve their skills on distance learning, Sataedu has offered more training on distance learning methods and on distance learning technology.

Those students who have special needs have been provided with face-to-face learning possibilities. The students have been able to contact the study

counsellors and training instructors and book meetings with them. The students have been able to contact the staff through different types of applications as well.

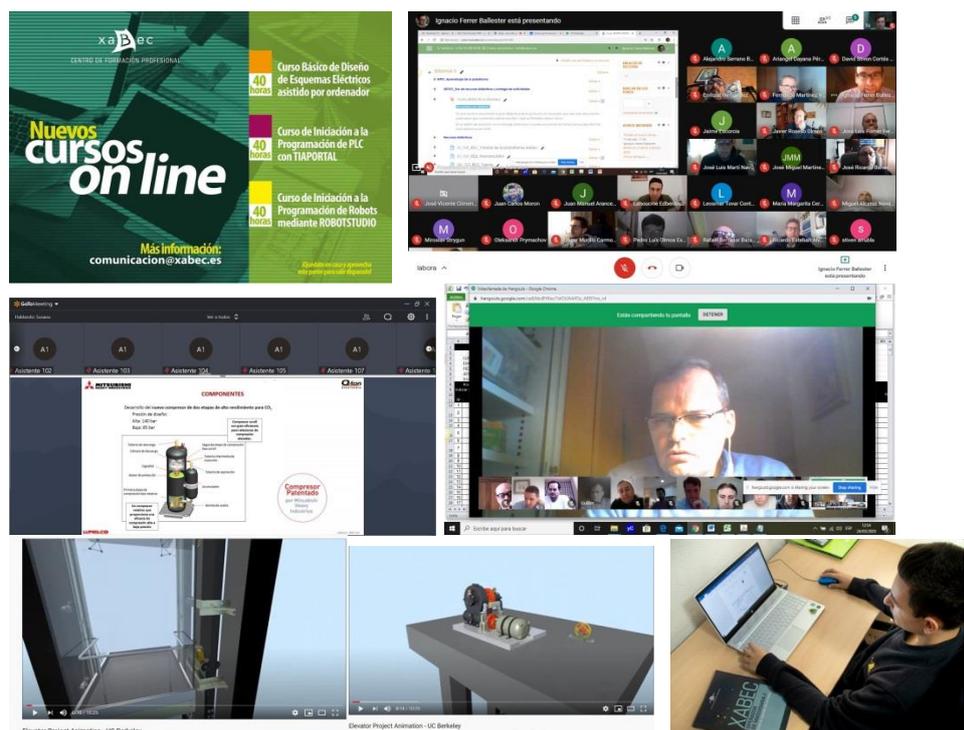
Sataedu sent a survey to the teachers and instructors about distance learning, and the results of that survey will be utilized in the future. The most prominent things in the survey answers were the good team spirit, the help from colleagues and IT support, and the sharing of ideas. At some point, the students will also get a survey about distance learning.

It has become evident that the students wish to come back to school to their friends and school lunches. In order to ensure the well-being of the students, on April 6th Sataedu began paying compensation for the missed school lunches to those students who are entitled to free school lunches.

According to Principal Anne Laine, the teaching and guidance will not continue the same way as it did before. Instead new more flexible teaching and instruction methods and new digital options will be used more and more in the future.

## XABEC, Spain – Covid-19 Update

- Covid-19 at XABEC has forced us to close the school for the rest of the academic year.
- Covid-19 has affected training degrees, but also the rest of the training we provide, which is training for unemployed people and training for adult workers in companies.
- Since March 23<sup>rd</sup>, we have changed the way we work, and all teaching is being taught via online tools, with the huge work that has meant for the groups with the most disadvantages.
- The tutoring activities and monitoring of student connections are even more important now than they were, because the proper accompaniment of the student is the key for the successful completion of their studies
- In some cases, training for companies has been adapted as well, and the training is being received through different virtual tools such as Google Meet, Moodle, Zoom and countless simulators.
- Although it is not a very favourable situation, the students have adapted in a very meritorious way and we hope that the vast majority can finish the training without problems.



# Zlinsky kraj, The Czech Republic – Covid-19 Update

## **Education in the Czech Rep. in times of the Coronavirus outbreak**

On 11 March 2020, the Government ordered closing of all schools - primary schools, secondary schools, conservatories and higher vocational schools regardless of founders - i.e. public, private and church. The Regulation also applied to all events organized by the school for pupils and students, as well as practical training at these schools, including vocational training. Schools were encouraged to provide distance learning where possible.

### **Primary Education - risk of gaps widening**

The quality of education of mainly younger children depends on the will, time and ability of parents who care for them at home. Parents either learn with the kids and encourage them to practice beyond their homework, for example in online courses, or they will leave it to them alone. So the gap between the children of more and less ambitious parents will widen.

While some schools take the current situation as a challenge and have adapted to emergency measures from the outset, others stick to traditional practices. Some schools use various digital tools, and project education and generally focus on development of competencies, not specific knowledge. The others choose, for example, filling in workbooks or circulating tasks via e-mail.

Many families do not have a computer or internet connection at all. In 2019, three percent of children under the age of 15 lived in a household without the Internet. These children are dependent on how their parents will ensure their learning, or whether the school will work with them in an "offline" mode.

Children up to 12 can (but not necessarily have to) return to schools on 25 May. The Government have instructed schools on a very strict health protection measures. The schools however expect parents to be discouraged with these complicated measures and to leave children rather at home till the end of the academic year. Children in the last year of the primary education (aged 15-16) came back to schools on Monday 11 May, for the purpose of preparation for entrance exams in secondary schools.

### **Secondary Education - with a help from companies**

Secondary and higher vocational schools where work based learning is an obligatory part of studies, face issues when students can't get to school workshops, laboratories, school facilities or employers' workplaces.

Therefore, some companies enabled students to access their internal training system and use the company's training courses for their studies. Students can watch instructional videos or practical activities that are normally used for the training of new employees.

The company employee who is usually responsible for the staff training, is in a constant contact with students (e.g. by e-mail) and send them documents for the study, including tests. Of course, all materials and tests are consulted with teachers in advance. The employer's representatives also update students on technical news and interesting facts, new study materials and videos.

Work based learning will be enabled from 25 May but only to a limited extend. Again, the health protection measures are very strict. Students in the last year of study came back to schools on Monday 11 May to prepare for their final exams.

## **The SIPP Intervention Manual Evaluation**

The evaluation of the Manual has been undertaken in 3 ways. The external evaluator firstly assessed if the partners completed what they had set out to do in the Intellectual Objective describing the Manual. Secondly the product was assessed against a Best Practice Resource that was produced as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 partnership programme which was graded outstanding and involved a partnership from a similar range of backgrounds. Finally views on the Manual were obtained from teachers in a

Higher Education Institution in the Midlands of England who work with students on foundation degree courses, students who have not achieved as well as they might for a range of reasons such as embarking on the wrong courses or underachieving.

The evaluation found that-

“The Intervention Manual is a useful tool in the context of student’s fulfilling their goals and improving their life chances. Importantly it achieves what it sets out to as described in The SIPP Project Intellectual Objective and can make a difference for students. The approach partners have used to develop the Manual has made it portable across national boundaries. It is concise and straightforward to use. It compares well against other well appraised resources and itself has been based on best practice from other KA2 strategic partnerships. A focus group of teachers found it very pertinent and helpful.”

The manual can be found [here](#).

<https://schoolimprovementpartnershipproject.com/intellectual-output-05-grade-predictor-tool-user-guide/>

## SIPP Website & Videos

More information on the SIP Project is available on the project’s dedicated webpages: <https://schoolimprovementpartnershipproject.com/>.

You can also find a link [here](#) to the project’s Superb Intervention Videos.



If you would like more information about the School Improvement Partnership Project, email us at [office@learningplusuk.org](mailto:office@learningplusuk.org) or call +44 118 324 6696.

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