V.I.R.Tu.A.L

VOCATIONAL INNOVATION RENEWING TOURISM ADVANCED LEARNING

The V.I.R.Tu.A.L Project starts from Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience of December 2020, that:

- Fears a dramatic decline in the number of apprenticeship training places and underlines that this lack of training opportunities for young people could also lead to an intensification of the shortage of skilled labor, in some areas, in the medium term
- Supports, in addition to the creation of a common EU platform for VET, the development of virtual reality simulation systems and other digital tools for VET education with the aid of research projects and test phases
- Underlines that the disruption to the provision of VET caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable educational and social impact on VET students, in particular from disadvantaged backgrounds, and poses difficult challenges for students who work best under direct guidance and in the presence of a teacher
- Highlights that the decline in the number of apprenticeships should not only be seen as a problem but it must also provide a unique opportunity to modernize VET systems through technological innovations in fields such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, Industry 4.0 and the Internet of Things, as well as an increased use of online and distance learning, hybrid apprenticeships and alternative assessment.

We at V.I.R.Tu.A.L think that the adoption of new technologies, such as virtual reality, augmented reality and simulators, can facilitate the delivery of practical learning and can be integrated into online learning platforms and in face-to-face settings to develop key competences for learners of all ages. Such technologies can therefore help increase the under-developed distance learning opportunities in VET.

V.I.R.Tu.A.L aims to develop teaching methodologies that make use of technological tools and/or ICT and to develop teachers' capacity to incorporate digital technologies into teaching, equipping students/learners with skills to use/access tools, software and platforms.

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Meetings of the consortium

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On March 7th and 8th, 2023, in Perugia, TUCEP hosted the first meeting of the partners of V.I.R.Tu.A.L Project.

The purpose of the meeting was to promote the successful implementation of the project and coordinate the execution of the first phase of work. This phase involves investigating the current and projected demand in the labor market for workers in the tourism and hospitality services sector. Special attention is given to identifying the types of professional skills sought by employers, both presently and in the future. Subsequently, these skills are matched with the offerings of the V.I.R.Tu.A.L. project. Thus, especially considering the impact of the Covid crisis on the tourism sector and the difficulty of accessing WBL experiences for young people involved in VET.

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Aims, objectives and expected results

Project aims to improve the level of competences, skills and potential employability of VET learners through new and innovative educational programs in tourism sector (hospitality and restaurant), in particular by applying innovative technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and simulators in the Western Balkan VET institutions involved (Education 4.0).

1. V.I.R.Tu.A.L project main objectives

→ Elaborating on instructional methodologies that leverage technological tools and/or ICT and enhancing teachers' ability to integrate digital technologies into their teaching

→ Equip students with competencies to use/access tools, software and platforms

→ Increase interaction between teachers and students

→ Increase the level of understanding and reduce the grasping time and the effort that students need to learn information by using 3D concepts instead of 2D ones

→ Establishing bridges of collaboration between training and tourism industry as means to ensure the proper usage of Education 4.0 at Western Balkan VETs

2. Results of the V.I.R.Tu.A.L Project

→ A dual training Map, to represent situation about tourism paths in Western Balkan VET institutions

→ A flexible digital toolkit, able to represent contents through augmented and virtual reality technologies

→ Guidelines of the digital teaching methodology (Education 4.0) to be used by trainers/teachers to implement this innovative education approach

→ A Memorandum of Understanding signed between partners and by other entities external to the project to formalize the collaboration and communication between VET centers in the field of tourism and restaurant.

www.virtual-erasmusproject.eu

Partnership

The consortium selected to implement V.I.R.Tu.A.L project is composed of complementary, experienced organizations relevant to the project and its topics.

The partnership represents the following perspectives and experiences that are relevant and necessary for the development of the project:

(a) VET providers, also with a specific expertise in analysis of the professions system

(b) Organizations engaged in promoting entrepreneurship mind-set and spirit

(c) Technology organizations

The project is implemented in a group of 6 partners from Albania, Italy, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Partnership