

The SYNERGY Experience: Project Presentation

Final Conference
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Presented by Jennifer Land



Why SYNERGY, Why Now?

SYNERGY is aiming to reduce the 'real-world distance' between the training opportunities which Education and Training Providers offer micro-enterprise owners and the requirements of business owners in terms of training, development and up-skilling.



Objectives of SYNERGY

- ❖ Support the development of a culture of learning within the micro-enterprise sector
- ❖ Create a sense of community animating micro-enterprise owners and education service providers towards a common set of educational goals and objectives
- ❖ Design and implement a series of mini-learning format resources to increase the range and accessibility of educational services and supports
- ❖ Support learning amongst the business community through the use of social networking structure www.synergyexchange.eu



Project Partners



Project Co-ordinator



The project team are working directly with micro-enterprise owners and training professionals locally to shape, influence and direct the development work of the project.

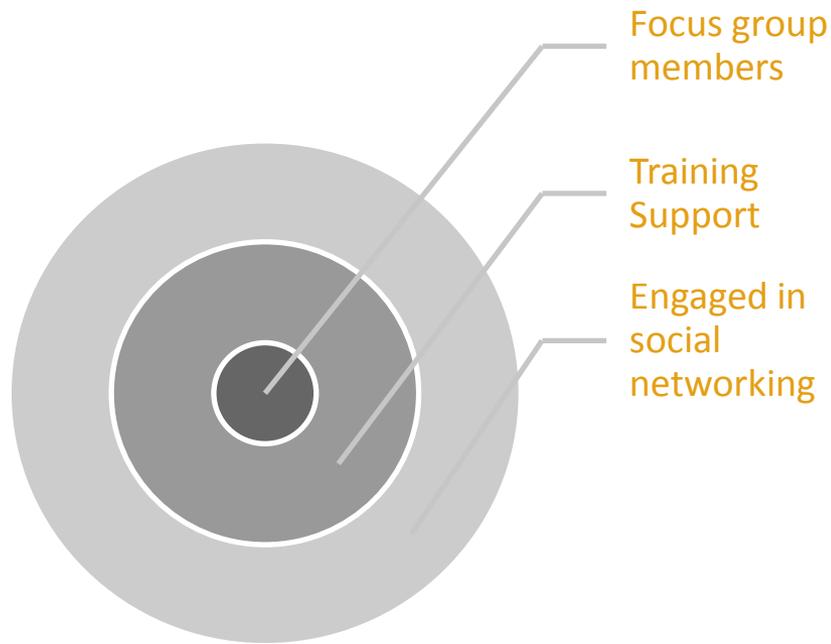
Partners are experienced in terms of business development, entrepreneurship, e-learning, pedagogy and VET provision and comprise universities, NGOs, VET providers, business support agencies, research institutes and technical experts.



Key Target Groups

Micro and Small Business Owners

Trainers, Tutors and VET



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The SYNERGY Approach

To improve VET for MEOs the consortium partners adopted the following approach:

- ❖ Producing a suite of research-informed ‘mini-learning’ resources using audio-visual based training to address identified gaps in existing VET;
- ❖ Cultivating attitudes towards engaging with VET through establishing local sub-groups of both target groups;
- ❖ Facilitating networking between target groups through micro-social networks contained on the SYNERGY Exchange platform;
- ❖ Supporting VET providers to move from traditional educational environments to these more flexible and open learning environments with CPD;
- ❖ Fostering a learning culture among Europe’s MEOs by training them to be competent peer educators through the Induction to Pedagogy Programme.

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The SYNERGY Approach

Working with Local Sub-groups

- ❖ Two local sub-groups were established by project partners in Ireland, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Romania.
- ❖ Why? To achieve buy-in from MEOs and VET providers in implementing countries.
- ❖ The function of these groups included:
 - ❖ To support research activities;
 - ❖ To test and validate curriculum and in-service resources;
 - ❖ To test and validate the functionality of the social media environments;
 - ❖ To identify areas where mini-learning-format resources could be developed;
 - ❖ To participate in evaluation surveys;
 - ❖ To champion the project



What we have achieved

ONLINE Social Learning Networks & Peer Education Training for MEOs

Train the Trainer CPD Trainers & interaction with EU counterparts

Mini-learning Creation of to 8-10 min bite-sized learning and training resources

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Induction to Pedagogy for MEOs

What is the Induction to Pedagogy Programme?

- ❖ Created by project partners, with the aim of helping MEOs using the SYNERGY Exchange platform, to engage in peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- ❖ Comprises six modules and is delivered over 5 hours through a series of video lectures and PowerPoint - written, developed and recorded by project partners.
- ❖ Modules provide MEOs with a sound understanding of the basics in relation to e-didactics, quality criteria of peer-learning, evaluation of online learning resources and online learning environments, producing quality learning resources for peers and other knowledge that has helped them to become competent and confident online peer-educators.
- ❖ All partner organisations collaborated to develop these modules *ab-initio*, relying on research findings, results of literature reviews and the identification of best practices.
- ❖ All modules are now available to access online in 6 partner languages through the SYNERGY Exchange platform.



Train-the-Trainer Curriculum

Training for VET tutors in e-learning & micro-learning theory and technology

- ❖ The training programme designed to up-skill VET trainers in the design of mini-learning resources for online environments and on topics which were of relevance to their local business communities.
- ❖ Modular curriculum comprising 4 units:
 - Unit One: E-learning and Adult Learning**
 - Unit Two: Training needs identification and analysis**
 - Unit Three: Systematic training and instructional system design and Development.**
 - Unit Four: Evaluation and Assessment Techniques**
- ❖ Units were designed to provide flexibility in planning, conducting and evaluating training and can be delivered independently of each other.
- ❖ Curriculum is supported by a Tutor Handbook and Learner Workbook which can be viewed or downloaded on www.projectsynergy.eu



Delivering the Train-the-Trainer

Transnational and National Training Implementation

- ❖ Aim: to engage with VET tutors and trainers and support them through a CPD programme to deepen, strengthen and broaden their entrepreneurial teaching to meet the real needs of MEOs.
- ❖ Delivered in two phases:
 1. 4 VET professionals from Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy and Romania countries attended a 5-day bespoke Train-the-Trainer programme in Ireland, in February 2016 which was accredited at QQI Level 6.
 2. Programme delivered in Ireland was transferred to ten VET participants in each of these countries, and Ireland through a cascading model.
- ❖ Trainers from the fields of adult education, e-learning and media production were on hand to help the trainers to research, write and produce their own Mini-learning Resources with the results available on the SYNERGY Exchange.



Mini-learning Format Resources

What are they and why are we focusing on these?

- ❖ Mini-learning training resources are designed for professionals and MEOs who want to add knowledge and skills in brief time-bound sessions.
- ❖ SYNERGY MLFRs vary in length from six to eight minutes and support learners to gain important, timely topics in small portions.
- ❖ MLFRS are practical and relevant in nature so they are responsive to the current challenges and issues facing MEOs and VET professionals.
- ❖ MLFRs respond to the growing need to match in-demand relevant learning with an availability of time on behalf of the learner.
- ❖ MLFRS are not intended to replace more formal vocational training instead they feature mastery topics intended to address special areas of knowledge and skill identified in each country through the research and audit phase.
- ❖ All mini-learning courses are available as a library of audio-visual resources on www.synergyexchange.eu. - This means you can access on demand the mini-learning courses from a wide variety of devices.



Mini-learning format resources

This Mini-learning Format Resource was produced by Ms. *Foteini Vavitsa*, a Social Media Manager Trainer with the *Dingo Marketing Agency* in Greece



Access at: <https://vimeo.com/193387729>



Quotes from Case Studies

We selected a series of case studies based on the experiences and motivations of MEOs and VET professionals involved in the SYNERGY project to illustrate the impact and development potential of this innovative new approach to VET provision for business in participating partner countries.

“Leveraging new disruptive technologies such as social media, allowed and encouraged business owners, mentors, trainers, and enterprise support agencies to interact and foster an innovative learning environment that is agile and adaptable.

Synergy is an important project that will both bring people with similar needs together as well as encourage productive interaction in learning.”

-Quote from an MEO, Cyprus

“Having research evidence on why mini learning resources make sense, as well as completing the VET training in Ireland, has helped amend my approach to training material production as well as the length of my seminars”.

-Quote from a VET tutor, Greece

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Quotes from Case Studies

“The participation in the SYNERGY project was very interesting for me, and I made a lot of experiences. In the first half of the project, the participation was more passive and we received manifold information. In contrast, we were involved actively in the second half, and a close collaboration took place. Here, the idea and the aims of the projects finally became clear to me. I would like to participate in such a project again, but with a more frequent, practical exchange and involvement right from the projects beginning.”

Quote from a VET tutor, Germany

“I was very interested in participating to SYNERGY Focus Group because I, as the owner of a micro enterprise, understand the importance of training for myself and for my employees, but often, for a lot of reasons, I procrastinate [in providing] training. Being involved in a project whose aim is to better understand the value of training is for me very useful.”

Quote from an MEO, Italy

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Thank You for your Interest and Attention

Any Questions?



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