



EVALUATION OF THE
*»IZOBRAŽEVANJE – KREPITEV ČLOVEŠKIH VIROV
/
EDUCATION, SCHOLARSHIPS, APPRENTICESHIP
AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP«*
PROGRAMME



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ABSTRACT

Performance. The selected projects successfully contributed towards achieving all five outcomes (Table S1). Planned outputs were achieved and target indicators were in many cases significantly surpassed, exceeding targets in terms of beneficiaries, participant numbers, training initiatives, and material development. Besides the planned outcomes and outputs achieved, the projects made impacts also beyond the direct beneficiaries, among them, for example (by outcome): educational spillover effects (teaching materials developed for secondary school students adopted also by other types of education), greater societal awareness of inclusion, sustainability, and mental health issues, fostering broader systemic changes, and others (mentioned in the report). The main success factors were strong partnerships and collaboration from the early proposal stage (better coordination and complementarity), flexibility and adaptability, knowledge transfer and learning exchanges, including study visits and cross-border collaborations, which enriched practices and introduced innovative solutions. Among challenges, the implementation period was often considered to short to have a significant long-term impact. Thematic and geographical coverage improved project content quality and tailored solutions better to specific needs while ensuring broader dissemination.

The project objectives, outputs, and outcomes were **strongly aligned** with the programme's expectations. Participants assessed that **project results often exceeded initial goals**, generating broader **societal and systemic effects** beyond the primary scope. As planned, the selected projects contributed to improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education, skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning, improved educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups, improved work-life balance and developed a first systematic solution in improving skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services. Some gaps were identified between what has been achieved and the remaining or emerging needs, which open opportunities for future work, in particular in continuing the work and expanding the target groups or beneficiaries for all outcomes. The programme provided added value without unnecessary duplication. While some administrative and thematic overlaps were identified, they often enhanced knowledge-sharing and broadened impact rather than causing redundancy. The projects contributed to **lasting solutions (sustainability)**, for example, in the form of continued use of digital tools and materials as well as institutionalisation (e.g., Barnahus). While several projects demonstrated potential for systemic impact, long-term sustainability remains a challenge and is usually subject to continuous search for project financing. The institutionalisation of the most important results at the national level would allow for maximising the programme's impact and ensuring lasting benefits beyond project lifecycles. Improved institutional cooperation (among decision-makers) would ease the institutionalisation of the most important results.

The overall **bilateral objective** of the financial mechanisms was well-integrated into programme design and implementation. Strengthening bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states was a central component, ensuring knowledge transfer, adoption of good practices, and long-term cooperation. While some projects could have been implemented without a bilateral partner, the quality, innovation, and credibility of the projects would likely have suffered. Donor project partners also played an important role in introducing innovative methodologies, such as alternative educational systems and governance models as well as foreign expertise and training opportunities. Geographical distance and remote collaboration sometimes reduced the effectiveness of cooperation.

The **communication plan** was successfully implemented, with most objectives being met. Effective use of digital and traditional media, both local and national media, increased visibility. These communication activities include also infographics, success stories, video content, web pages and others. Public engagement through events and workshops effectively showcased results to stakeholders and the public. The programme was well received by target groups, particularly due to free and locally accessible activities, workshops and training events were valued, especially by educators, students, and local authorities. Despite successful dissemination, there are some areas for improvement: improving national-level visibility and raising public awareness.

The programme also focused on several areas of **special concern**. The projects within the programme show significant successes, particularly in piloting innovative models, strengthening stakeholder cooperation, supporting youth employment, and improving work-life balance. Several pilot initiatives successfully introduced new methodologies, such as blended learning in vocational education and the Barnahus model for child-friendly justice, which has now become a systemic solution in Slovenia. Stakeholder collaboration was fostering strong partnerships between educational institutions, industries, and public authorities. Projects addressing youth transition into the labour market equipped young people with entrepreneurial skills and mentoring support, and enhanced their employability through targeted skill-building initiatives. Similarly, work-life balance projects, exceeded expectations by implementing local support systems, and workplace reforms to help employees balance their professional and personal life.

Based on discussions with various stakeholders and survey responses, **six key policy recommendations** were developed:

- (1) Introducing a binding timeline for programme development would ensure adequate time for project implementation.
- (2) In the process of evaluating applications, the Programme Operator should put more emphasis on the consortium composition, the project promoter's competencies in project management, knowledge of the relevant legislation, and the management of public procurement processes.
- (3) Including diversified modes of cooperation in the evaluation and not focusing solely on donor-country partner collaboration.
- (4) Strengthening Project Promoter competencies by organising additional project management workshops for new participants to build their capacity in designing relevant projects, collaborating effectively, and managing international projects.
- (5) Establish a more sustainable financial support from state budget. Achieving sustainability of results and long-term impacts would be significantly greater if a system could be established for continuing funding to ensure that the best outputs with impact on outcomes relevant from a national development perspective can be efficiently incorporated as systemic solutions or widely used practices, alternatively also further upgraded.
- (6) Improving promotion and dissemination activities by beginning communication efforts early in the project with clear responsibilities assigned, and developing long-term strategies to maintain public awareness of project results.

Table S1. Review of project results

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator	Target value	Value
Outcome 1	Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)	Number of intellectual outputs generated by institutional cooperation	30	144
		Share of cooperating education and training institutions applying new teaching and learning practices	85%	Yes
		Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	<u>3.5</u>	<u>4.7</u>
		Number of institutions which are using the new teaching models, methods and strategies	10	93
Output 1.1	New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed	Number of staff participating in developing and testing teaching models	200	812
		Number of staff trained (providing training for educators on the use of teaching models and methods),	15	136
Output 1.2	Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competencies in education	Number of peer learning activities carried out	16	166
		Number of participants in peer learning (educators, staff, other education stakeholders)	300	4850
		Number of professional staff trained	60	438
Outcome 2	Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning	Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	<u>3.5</u>	<u>4.6</u>
		Number of institutions which are using intellectual outputs created	15	15
		Share of educational staff who declare improved skills and competencies through involvement in blended learning	90%	Yes
		Number of institutions that have implemented a satisfactory strategic framework for offering blended learning	7	7
Output 2.1	Teaching and learning practices in blended learning improved	Number of students that participated in blended learning	260	266
		Number of joint intellectual outputs created	4	4
		Number of staff trained in blended learning methods	62	71
		Share of students who declare improved skills and competences through involvement in blended learning	90%	Yes
Output 2.2	Knowledge and best practices shared with donor states institutions	Number of joint events (peer learning visits)	3	3
		Number of staff from beneficiary state in exchanges	24	49
		Number of staff from donor states in exchanges	14	34
Outcome 3	Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	Share of involved service providers who declare improved skills	95%	Yes
		Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	350	8342
Output 3.1	Support services for the NEET established	Number of new or upgraded services developed and tested in local environment	2	3
		Number of staff trained to work with NEET	20	49
		Number of inclusive activities (events, workshops, trainings)	20	26
Output 3.2	Support to youth provided	Number of new or upgraded services	3	14
		Number of staff trained	15	402
		Number of networking, trainings or advisory activities for the young	15	137
Output 3.3	Support environment for precarious workers provided	Number of support services developed (advisory, information, training, etc.)	3	No projects selected
		Number of intellectual outputs produced (analyses, information materials, learning materials, etc.)	5	
		Number of support activities (information events, workshops, etc.)	10	
		Number of participants reached by awareness-raising events (round tables, public debates, conferences, etc.)	200	
Outcome 4	Improved work-life balance (WLB)	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	150	3052
		Number of institutions applying gender equality instruments (or WLB instruments)	3	34
		Share of participants with an improved understanding of WLB and gender policies	90%	Yes
Output 4.1	Local systems established supporting work-life balance	Number of measures improved or introduced at the local level (new or upgraded services, products, tools)	3	13
		Number of professional staff trained (coordinators, mentors, informal carers, animators, etc.)	20	351
Output 4.2	Organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality generated	Number of participants reached by awareness raising and capacity building activities in organisations (disaggregated by gender)	100	806
		Number of measures adopted in organisations (tools, guidelines ...)	4	4
Outcome 5	Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	80	102
		Share of professional staff who declared improved skills and competences	90%	Yes
		Number of institutions using the "Barnahus/Children's House" model	1	1
Output 5.1	New or improved cooperation models piloted for child victim services	Number of improved/new services supported	1	2
		Number of pilot projects implemented for child victim services	1	1
		Number of professional staff trained	120	671
		Number of training courses organised	14	16
		Evaluation report on the pilot implementation	Yes	Yes
		Plan for evaluation and expansion	Yes	Yes
Output 5.2	Awareness-raising activities carried out	Number of awareness-raising campaigns	3	3
		Number of people reached by awareness-raising campaigns	100,000	100,000
		Number of schools included in awareness-raising workshops	20	20

POVZETEK

Izvedba. Izbrani projekti so uspešno prispevali k doseganju vseh petih rezultatov (tabela P1). Načrtovani rezultati so bili doseženi, ciljni kazalniki pa so bili v številnih primerih znatno preseženi, saj so bili preseženi cilji glede upravičencev, števila udeležencev, pobud za usposabljanje in razvoja gradiva. Poleg načrtovanih rezultatov in doseženih izločkov so projekti imeli učinke tudi zunaj neposrednih upravičencev, med njimi na primer (po rezultatih): učinki prelivanja na področju izobraževanja (učna gradiva, razvita za srednješolce, so prevzele tudi druge izobraževalne institucije), večja družbena ozaveščenost o vključevanju, trajnosti in vprašanih duševnega zdravja, spodbujanje širših sistemskih sprememb in drugo (navedeno v poročilu). Glavni dejavniki uspeha so bili močna partnerstva in sodelovanje že od zgodnje faze predloga (boljše usklajevanje in dopolnjevanje), prožnost in prilagodljivost, prenos znanja in izmenjave znanja, vključno s študijskimi obiski in čezmejnimi sodelovanjem, ki so obogatili prakse in uvedli inovativne rešitve. Med izzivi je bilo obdobje izvajanja pogosto ocenjeno kot nezadostno za doseganje pomembnega dolgoročnega učinka. Tematska in geografska pokritost je izboljšala kakovost vsebine projektov in bolje prilagodila rešitve posebnim potrebam, hkrati pa zagotovila širše razširjanje.

Cilji, rezultati in izidi projekta so bili **močno usklajeni s pričakovanji programa**. Udeleženci so ocenili, da so rezultati projektov pogosto preseglji prvotne cilje ter ustvarili širše **družbene in sistemske učinke**, ki presegajo primarno področje uporabe. Kot je bilo načrtovano, so izbrani projekti prispevali k izboljšanju institucionalnega sodelovanja na vseh ravneh izobraževanja, spretnosti in kompetenc osebja in študentov, vključenih v kombinirano učenje, izboljšanju izobraževalnega in socialnega okolja za podporo prikrajšanim skupinam, izboljšanju ravnovesja med poklicnim in zasebnim življenjem ter razvili prvo sistemsko rešitev pri izboljšanju večšin za dobro upravljanje in sodelovanje pri zagotavljanju storitev za otroke, ki se znajdejo v pravosodnih procesih. Ugotovljene so bile nekatere vrzeli med doseženim in preostalimi ali nastajajočimi potrebami, kar odpira priložnosti za prihodnje delo, zlasti za nadaljevanje dela in razširitev ciljnih skupin ali upravičencev za vse rezultate. Program je zagotovil dodano vrednost brez nepotrebne podvajanja. Čeprav so bila ugotovljena nekatera administrativna in tematska prekrivanja, so ta pogosto izboljšala izmenjavo znanja in povečala učinek, namesto da bi povzročila odvečnost. Projekti so prispevali k **trajnim rešitvam (trajnost)**, na primer v obliki nadaljnje uporabe digitalnih orodij in gradiv ter institucionalizacije (na primer Barnahus). Čeprav je več projektov pokazalo potencial za sistemski učinek, dolgoročno trajnost ostaja izziv in je običajno odvisna od nenehnega iskanja projektnega financiranja. Institucionalizacija najpomembnejših rezultatov na nacionalni ravni bi omogočila čim večji učinek programa in zagotovila trajne koristi po koncu življenjskega cikla projekta. Izboljšano institucionalno sodelovanje (med nosilci odločanja) bi olajšalo institucionalizacijo najpomembnejših rezultatov.

Splošni dvostranski cilj finančnih mehanizmov je bil dobro vključen v zasnovo in izvajanje programa. Krepitev dvostranskih odnosov med državami donatoricami in državami upravičenkami je bila osrednja sestavina, ki je zagotavljala prenos znanja, sprejetje dobrih praks in dolgoročno sodelovanje. Čeprav bi se nekateri projekti lahko izvajali brez dvostranskega partnerja, bi to verjetno vplivalo na kakovost, inovativnost in verodostojnost projektov. Donatorski projektni partnerji so imeli pomembno vlogo tudi pri uvajanju inovativnih metodologij, kot so alternativni izobraževalni sistemi in modeli upravljanja, ter pri seznanjanju s tujim strokovnim znanjem in možnostmi usposabljanja. Geografska oddaljenost in sodelovanje na daljavo sta včasih zmanjšala učinkovitost sodelovanja.

Komunikacijski načrt je bil uspešno izveden, večina ciljev je bila dosežena. Učinkovita kombinacija uporabe digitalnih in tradicionalnih medijev, tako lokalnih kot nacionalnih, je povečala prepoznavnost. Te komunikacijske dejavnosti vključujejo tudi infografike, zgodbe o uspehu in video vsebine, spletne strani in drugo. Z vključevanjem javnosti prek dogodkov in delavnic so bili rezultati učinkovito predstavljeni zainteresiranim stranem in javnosti. Ciljne skupine so program dobro sprejele, zlasti zaradi brezplačnih in

lokalno dostopnih dejavnosti, delavnic in usposabljanj, ki so jih cenili zlasti pedagogi, študenti in lokalni organi. Kljub uspešnemu širjenju je treba izboljšati nekatera področja: izboljšati prepoznavnost na nacionalni ravni in širšo ozaveščenost javnosti.

Program se je osredotočil tudi na več področij **posebnega zanimanja**. Projekti v okviru programa poudarjajo pomembne uspehe, zlasti pri preskušanju inovativnih modelov, krepitvi sodelovanja zainteresiranih strani, podpori zaposlovanju mladih in izboljšanju ravnovesja med poklicnim in zasebnim življenjem. Več pilotnih pobud je uspešno uvedlo nove metodologije, kot sta kombinirano učenje v poklicnem izobraževanju in model Barnahus za otrokom prijazno pravosodje, ki je zdaj v Sloveniji postal del sistema. Sodelovanje zainteresiranih strani je spodbujalo močna partnerstva med izobraževalnimi ustanovami, industrijo in javnimi organi. Projekti, ki so obravnavali prehod mladih na trg dela, so mlade opremili s podjetniškimi spretnostmi in mentorsko podporo ter z usmerjenimi pobudami za pridobivanje spretnosti povečali zaposljivost. Podobno so projekti za usklajevanje poklicnega in zasebnega življenja presegli pričakovanja z izvajanjem lokalnih podpornih sistemov in reform na delovnem mestu, ki so zaposlenim pomagali uskladiti poklicno in zasebno življenje.

Na podlagi razprav z različnimi zainteresiranimi stranmi in odgovorov na anketo je bilo oblikovanih **šest ključnih priporočil**:

- 1) Uvedba zavezujočega časovnega okvira za razvoj programov bi zagotovila dovolj časa za izvajanje projektov.
- 2) Pri ocenjevanju prijav bo moral nosilec programa nameniti več poudarka sestavi konzorcija in kompetencam nosilca projekta na področju vodenja projektov, poznavanja zakonodaje in javnih naročil.
- 3) Vključitev raznolikih načinov sodelovanja v ocenjevanje in ne osredotočanje zgolj na sodelovanje partnerjev iz držav donatoric.
- 4) Krepitev kompetenc nosilcev projektov z organizacijo dodatnih delavnic za vodenje projektov za nove udeležence, da bi okrepili njihove zmogljivosti za oblikovanje ustreznih projektov, učinkovito sodelovanje in vodenje mednarodnih projektov.
- 5) Vzpostavitev trajnih mehanizmov financiranja iz državnega proračuna. Trajnost rezultatov in dolgoročnih učinkov bi bila bistveno večja, če bi vzpostavili sistem stalnega financiranja, ki bi omogočil, da se najboljši dosežki z vplivom na rezultate, pomembne z vidika nacionalnega razvoja, učinkovito vključijo kot systemske rešitve ali široko uporabljene prakse, ter po potrebi še nadgradijo.
- 6) Izboljšanje dejavnosti promocije in diseminacije s tem, da se komunikacijska prizadevanja začnejo že na začetku projekta z jasno dodeljenimi odgovornostmi, in z razvojem dolgoročnih strategij za ohranjanje ozaveščenosti javnosti o rezultatih projekta.

Tabela P1: Pregled rezultatov projekta

Outcome/ Output	Pričakovani rezultati	Indikator	Ciljna vrednost	Dosežena vrednost
Outcome 1	Izboljšano institucionalno sodelovanje na vseh ravneh formalnega in neformalnega izobraževanja	I.1.1-2 Outcome 1: Število intelektualnih učinkov, ustvarjenih v okviru institucionalnega sodelovanja	30	144
		I.1.1-2 Outcome 2: Delež sodelujočih institucij za izobraževanje in usposabljanje, ki uporabljajo nove prakse poučevanja in učenja	85%	Da
		I.1.1-2 Outcome 3: Stopnja zadovoljstva s kakovostjo institucionalnega sodelovanja	3.5	4.7
		I.1.1-2 Outcome 4: Število institucij, ki uporabljajo nove učne modele, metode in strategije	10	93
Output 1.1	Razvite nove prakse poučevanja in učenja za delo in življenje	I.1.1.1 Število članov osebja, ki sodelujejo pri razvijanju in preizkušanju modelov poučevanja	200	812
		I.1.1.2 Število multiplikatorjev, ki učiteljem zagotavljajo usposabljanje za uporabo modelov in metod poučevanja	15	136
Output 1.2	Izmenjava znanj in dobrih praks na področju pospeševanja spretnosti in kompetenc v izobraževanju	I.1.2.1 Število izvedenih aktivnosti vzajemnega učenja	16	166
		I.1.2.2 Število udeležencev v vzajemnem učenju	300	4850
		I.1.2.3 Število usposobljenih strokovnih delavcev	60	438
Outcome 2	Izboljšane spretnosti in kompetence članov osebja ter študentov in dijakov, vključenih v kombinirano izobraževanje	Outcome 1 Blend: Stopnja zadovoljstva s kakovostjo institucionalnega sodelovanja	3.5	4.6
		Outcome 2 Blend: Število institucij, ki uporabljajo ustvarjene intelektualne učinke	15	15
		Outcome 3 Blend: Delež izobraževalnega osebja, ki prek vključenosti v kombinirano izobraževanje izkazuje izboljšane spretnosti in kompetence	90%	Da
		Outcome 4 Blend: Število institucij, ki so izvedle zadovoljiv strateški okvir za izvajanje kombiniranega izobraževanja	7	7
Output 2.1	Izboljšane prakse poučevanja in učenja v okviru kombiniranega izobraževanja	Blend 1.1: Število študentov in dijakov, ki so vključeni v kombinirano izobraževanje	260	266
		Blend 1.2: Število ustvarjenih skupnih intelektualnih učinkov	4	4
		Blend 1.3: Število članov osebja, usposobljenega za metode kombiniranega izobraževanja	62	71
		Blend 1.4: Delež študentov in dijakov, ki prek vključenosti v kombinirano izobraževanje izkazuje izboljšane spretnosti in kompetence	90%	Da
Output 2.2	Izmenjava znanja in dobrih praks z institucijami iz držav donatoric	Blend 2.1: Število izvedenih skupnih dogodkov (študijski obiski v okviru vzajemnega učenja)	3	3
		Blend 2.2: Število članov osebja iz države upravičenke na izmenjavah	24	49
		Blend 2.3: Število članov osebja iz držav donatoric na izmenjavah	14	34
Outcome 3	Izboljšano izobraževanje in družbeno okolje namenjeno podpori prikrajšanih skupin	I.2.2 Outcome 2: Delež sodelujočih ponudnikov storitev, ki izkazujejo izboljšane spretnosti	95%	Da
		I.2.2 Outcome 1: Število upravičencev do obstoječih ali izboljšanih storitev	350	8342
Output 3.1	Vzpostavljene podpirne storitve za osebe NEET (mladi, ki niso zaposleni, se ne izobražujejo ali usposablja)	I.2.1.1 Število novih ali nadgrajenih storitev, razvitih in preizkušenih v lokalnem okolju	2	3
		I.2.1.2: Število članov osebja usposobljenih za delo z osebami NEET	20	49
		I.2.1.3: Število vključujočih aktivnosti, npr. dogodki, delavnice, usposabljanja itd	20	26
Output 3.2	Zagotovljena podpora mladim	I.2.2.1 Število novih ali nadgrajenih storitev	3	14
		I.2.2.2 Število usposobljenega osebja/delavcev	15	402
		I.2.2.3 Število aktivnosti, namenjenih mreženju, usposabljanju ali svetovanju za mlade	15	137
Outcome 4	Izboljšano usklajevanje poklicnega in zasebnega življenja	I.3.1 Outcome 1: Število upravičencev do obstoječih ali izboljšanih storitev	150	3052
		I.3.1 Outcome 2: Število akterjev, ki uporabljajo instrumente politike enakosti spolov ali instrumente usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja	3	34
		I.3.1 Outcome 3: Delež udeležencev z boljšim razumevanjem usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja in politik enakosti spolov	90%	Da
		I.3.1.1 Število izboljšanih ukrepov ali ukrepov, uvedenih na lokalni ravni, kot so nove ali nadgrajene storitve, proizvodi, orodja	3	13
Output 4.1	Vzpostavljeni lokalni sistemi, ki podpirajo usklajevanje poklicnega in zasebnega življenja	I.3.1.2 Število usposobljenih oseb kot so koordinatorji, mentorji, neformalni negovalci, animatorji itd.	20	351
		I.3.2.1: Število udeležencev, doseženo s sodelovanjem v aktivnostih za dvig ozaveščenosti in krepitev zmogljivosti v organizacijah	100	806
Output 4.2	Razvita organizacijska kultura, ki podpira usklajevanje poklicnega in zasebnega življenja ter politiko enakosti spolov	I.3.2.2: Število ukrepov, sprejetih v organizacijah, kot so orodja, smernice itd	4	4
		I.4.1 Outcome 1: Število uporabnikov obstoječih ali izboljšanih storitev	80	102
Outcome 5	Izboljšane spretnosti za dobro upravljanje in sodelovanje pri zagotavljanju storitev žrtev otrok	I.4.1 Outcome 2: Delež strokovnih delavcev, ki izkazujejo izboljšane spretnosti in kompetence	90%	Da
		I.4.1 Outcome 3: Število institucij, ki uporabljajo Barnahus model	1	1
Output 5.1	Uvedba novih ali izboljšanih modelov sodelovanja na področju storitev za otroke žrtve	I.4.1.1 Število podprtih izboljšanih/novih storitev	1	2
		I.4.1.2 Število pilotnih projektov, izvedenih v okviru storitev za otroke žrtve	1	1
		I.4.1.3 Število usposobljenih strokovnih delavcev	120	671
		I.4.1.4 Število programov usposabljanja	14	16
		I.4.1.5 Poročilo vrednotenja o pilotni izvedbi	Da	Da
		I.4.1.6 Načrt za vrednotenje in širitev	Da	Da
Output 5.2	Aktivnosti za dvig ozaveščenosti splošne in strokovne javnosti	I.4.1.7 Število kampanj ozaveščanja	3	3
		I.4.1.8 Število ljudi, ki bodo doseženi s s kampanijami ozaveščanja	100,000	100,000
		I.4.1.9 Število šol, vključenih v delavnice, namenjene dvigu ozaveščenosti	20	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	<i>Introduction</i>	1
2	<i>Overview of the projects within the Education, scholarships, apprenticeship and youth entrepreneurship programme</i>	1
3	<i>Evaluation goals and methodology</i>	3
3.1	Evaluation goals	3
3.2	Methodology	4
4	<i>Evaluation results</i>	7
4.1	Project evaluation by main evaluation criteria	7
4.1.1	Performance, including outcomes	7
4.1.1.1	Achievement of project goals and success factors	7
4.1.1.2	Meeting needs and addressing challenges of the programme area.....	15
4.1.1.2.1	Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal).....	16
4.1.1.2.2	Outcome 2: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning	19
4.1.1.2.3	Outcome 3: Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved.....	20
4.1.1.2.4	Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance	22
4.1.1.2.5	Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services	24
4.1.1.2.6	Outcomes of special concern	25
4.1.1.3	External impacts of the projects	26
4.1.1.4	The role of thematic and geographical coverage.....	28
4.1.1.5	Sustainability and long-term impact (beyond the project's end).....	29
4.1.2	Relevance.....	32
4.1.2.1	Alignment with programme expectations and added value of the programme	32
4.1.2.2	Overlap with other projects from the programme and other EU funded projects	33
4.1.2.3	Addressing gaps between achieved outcomes and emerging needs	35
4.1.3	Bilateral cooperation	35
4.1.3.1	Consideration of general bilateral goals in project planning and implementation	35
4.1.3.2	Donor project partners contribution to project implementation and outcomes.	36
4.1.4	Communication.....	38
4.1.4.1	Communication, project visibility and achievement of the communication plan	38
4.1.4.2	Perception of the projects/project results by target groups, stakeholders, and the general public	41

5	<i>Policy proposals</i>	42
6	<i>Conclusion</i>	45
7	<i>References</i>	45
8	<i>APPENDIX 1: Project descriptions</i>	47
8.1	Outcome 1: “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)”	47
8.2	Outcome 2: “Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning”	55
8.3	Outcome 3: “Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved”	55
8.4	Outcome 4: “Improved work-life balance”	63
8.5	Outcome 5: “Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services”	68
9	<i>APPENDIX 2: Project consortia structure</i>	70
10	<i>APPENDIX 3: Description of the methodology</i>	75
10.1	In-depth interviews with project promoters	76
10.1.1	Interview guide.....	76
10.1.2	Interview timeline.....	77
10.2	Focus group guide	77
10.2.1	Focus group guide.....	77
10.2.2	Focus group timeline.....	78
10.3	Survey	79
10.3.1	Questionnaire.....	79
10.3.2	Descriptive statistics.....	86
10.3.3	Proposals for changes (survey).....	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Projects by outcomes and main project results.....	2
Table 2: Projects' and programme evaluation dimensions	3
Table 3: Evaluation timeline	5
Table 4: Quantitative indicators: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal).....	18
Table 5: Quantitative indicators: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning.....	19
Table 6: Quantitative indicators: Support to youth provided	21
Table 7: Quantitative indicators: Support services for the NEET established	21
Table 8: Quantitative indicators focused on local systems supporting WLB*	23
Table 9: Quantitative indicators: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services	24

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Achievement of project results* (agreement, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)	8
Figure 2: Factors that contributed to achieving project results, agreement with selected statements (agreement, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*	9
Figure 3: Cooperation between project promoter and partners as seen by promoters (left) and project partners (right) (agreement, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)*	11
Figure 4: The frequency of encountering administrative challenges*	12
Figure 5: Administrative aspects of the project, agreement with selected statements (agreement, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*	13
Figure 6: Meeting the needs/ achieving programme outcomes and addressing the challenges of the programme area (average agreement with the statements, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)*	16
Figure 7: Average agreement with statements about relevance and overlap with other projects	34
Figure 8: Average agreement with statements regarding the ability to address emerging gaps.	35
Figure 9: The importance and role of cooperation with donor project partners (average agreement with the statements, 1= completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*	36
Figure 10: The importance of selected media (left, % of respondents that used a certain media, multiple answers were possible) and perceptions regarding the communication (right, average agreement with the statements, 1= completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*	39
Figure 11: Perceived benefits of the projects in the public and target groups as seen by project partners / project promoters (agreement with the statements, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)*	42

LIST OF TABLES IN THE APPENDIX

Table A 1: Expected main project results and specific outputs of each project to the overall desired outcome 1 »Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)« based on project descriptions and final reports	53
Table A 2: Outcome 3: The expected main project results and specific outputs to the overall desired outcome »Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved« based on project descriptions and final reports	60
Table A 3: Outcome 4: The expected main project results and specific outputs to the overall desired outcome of »Improved work-life balance« based on project descriptions and final reports	66
Table A 4: Pre-defined projects: The expected main project results and specific outputs expected to the overall desired outcome 2 »Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning« and outcome 5 »Improved skills needed for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services« based on project descriptions	69
Table A 5: Project promoter and project partners	70
Table A 6: Project methodology overview*	75
Table A 7: Date and time of interviews	77
Table A 8: Date and time of interviews	78
Table A 9: Under which outcome (Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme) did your project work?	86
Table A 10: Project role.....	86
Table A 11: Legal form of the organization involved.....	86
Table A 12: Region, where involved organizations, were located.....	87
Table A 13: Importance of the funding from the financial mechanisms for the achievement of the objectives you set for yourself within the project.....	87
Table A 14: Would the activities be carried out the project activities even if the organizations had not received funding from the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism.....	87
Table A 15: The percentage of the FP funds (%) that remained unspent against the planned cost plan.....	88
Table A 16: Reasons for not spending all funding (answers to open questions)*.....	88
Table A 17: Sources of information about the call	89
Table A 18: How often have you encountered problems in any of the following areas? Frequency and percentage of respondents that chose a specific answer	89
Table A 19: Agreement with the statements about the project success,.....	90
Table A 20: Agreement with the statements about project results	90
Table A 21: Agreement with the statements about project results	91
Table A 22: Agreement with the statements about gaps/disparities between set goals and emerging needs identified during the project.....	91
Table A 23: Agreement with the statements about project alignment with programme expectations and overlaps/synergies with other projects.....	92
Table A 24: Agreement with the statements about project visibility	92
Table A 25: Agreement with the statements regarding partner collaboration.....	93

Table A 26: Agreement with the statements regarding partner collaboration and work with the lead.....	93
Table A 27: Agreement with the statements regarding project work.....	94
Table A 28: Percentage of respondents and number, where projects had a foreign partner.....	94
Table A 29: Agreement with the statements regarding the donor project partner	94
Table A 30: Agreement with the statements regarding the donor project partner	96
Table A 31: Media, used in project promotion, percent of project partners/promoters that reported using a specific media (multiple choices were possible).....	96
Table A 32: Agreement with the statements regarding the communication	97
Table A 33: Agreement with the statements regarding reporting	98
Table A 34: Systemic changes resulting from the project	98
Table A 35: Results/impacts that will last beyond the project end.....	99
Table A 36: Suggested changes in the project application phase.....	100
Table A 37: Suggested changes regarding/ during the project implementation	102
Table A 38: Suggested changes regarding reporting	103
Table A 39: Other suggestions.....	104

1 Introduction

The 2014–2021 Financial Mechanisms by Norway and the European Economic Area (EEA) aimed to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States through financial contributions in the priority sectors¹. The educational programmes, which fell under Programme Area 3 'Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship', allocated €136.1 million to support innovation, research, education, and competitiveness in beneficiary states (Safin et al., 2022). These programmes were crucial for reducing social and economic disparities within the EEA and contributing to the broader objective of enhancing educational quality and relevance across all levels. They were designed to be highly aligned with national education needs and the EU policy framework, particularly the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) which directly supports the achievement of Europe 2020 targets, facilitating member states in improving educational systems through collaborative actions, such as peer-learning and sharing best practices (Safin et al., 2022).

This report provides an evaluation of the "Izobraževanje – krepitev človeških virov" (Engl. Education, scholarships, apprenticeship and youth entrepreneurship) programme, financed by EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 in Slovenia, in accordance with the evaluation guidelines, focusing primarily on the evaluation of the performance, relevance, communication, cooperation and areas of special concern. In continuation, the report first briefly presents the projects (a longer summary can be found in the Appendix), followed by a presentation of the evaluation goals and methodology. The main part of the report summarised the findings from the multimethodological evaluation, combining the findings from the in-depth interviews with project promoters, focus groups with project partners, contract managers, control unit and national focal point representatives and survey results. Policy proposals are provided at the end.

2 Overview of the projects within the Education, scholarships, apprenticeship and youth entrepreneurship programme

Based on the Programme Agreement between Donors and Slovenia, the programme »Izobraževanje – krepitev človeških virov« (Engl. *Education, scholarships, apprenticeship and youth entrepreneurship*) has been implemented. Within the programme objective of "improving people's skills, competences and knowledge" five outcomes were expected²:

- Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)
- Outcome 2: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning
- Outcome 3: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved
- Outcome 4: Improved work- life balance
- Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services

There were two pre-defined projects implemented under this programme: 1) "Blended learning in vocational education and training" (BlendVET)" contributing to Outcome 2 and 2) "Barnahus/Children's House" contributing to Outcome 5³. In total 24 projects were evaluated (Table 1, detailed descriptions in Appendix 1).

¹ [MoU Slovenia 2014-2021 Norway](#)- Article 1.

² [Programme agreement SI-EDUCATION](#)

³ In the Programme Agreement it is strictly noted that the National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that the pre-defined project "Barnahus/Children's House" is complementary and provides synergies with the "Barnahus/Children's House" project, between the Ministry of Justice in Slovenia and the Council of Europe, supported by the EU Structural Reform Support Programme and that the activities are not duplicated.

Table 1: Projects by outcomes and main project results

Project	Main project results
Outcome 1: »Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)«	
Raising Digital Competences (digi.komp)	Enhance digital competencies across different age groups
Innovative Methodology and Didactic Digital Tool for Experimental Teaching and Literacy in the Direction of Decarbonisation and the Goals of Digital and Green Transition (Green Penguin)	Develop a methodology and digital tools for teaching about decarbonization
Combined Learning Model for Vocational Education in the Field of Mechanical Engineering and Development of Competencies of Students and Teachers for Digital Education (Academy for Combined Learning)	Develop and pilot a combined learning model with new teaching practices to improve digital education competencies
Designing for Enhanced Competence through Active Participation in Higher Education (DECAP-HE)	New teaching and learning practices aimed at enhancing skills and competencies in education, contributing to the transformation of educational environments across Slovenia's higher education system
Empowering for Work in the 21st Century through Life Skills, Promotion of Wellbeing and Prevention of Mental Disorders (EMPOWER FOR 21)	Develop structured teacher training program that integrates innovative teaching and learning practices, particularly in communication, leadership, mental health, and critical thinking
Support for Professionals in Education and Employment in the Field of Autism (VIS A VIS)	Develop a support model for education and employment of people with autism
Supportive Environments to Enhance Transversal Competencies in Education (SETCOM)	Enhance teachers' social-emotional competencies (SEC) and AI literacy
Development of an Expert Support System for Competency Assessment in Higher Education (RESPO-VI)	Enhancing the competencies of STEM students in higher education
SCHOOL21- Let's Go Out! (SCHOOL21)	Transform educational practices in primary and secondary schools by introducing and implementing outdoor experiential learning methods
Heritage School for New Generations: Recognition and Understanding of Local Cultural Heritage and Restoration Skills in Primary School Education Using New Teaching Methods for New Generations of the 21st Century and Beyond (Heritage School for the New Generations)	Systematic education about cultural heritage using new teaching practices
Establishing New Education Modules in the Field of Augmented and Virtual Reality (Think XR)	Establish new educational modules in augmented and virtual reality (XR)
Outcome 3: »Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved«	
Empowerment and Integration of NEETs into the Labour Market and Development of a Comprehensive Program of Support Services for NEETs, Including the Solutions on Systemic Level (PreseNEETi se)	Establishment of a supportive environment that helps NEETs overcome barriers to education, employment, and social inclusion, their empowerment and social activation.
Activating Youth by Encouraging Them to Form Meaningful Connections, Take an Active Role in Their Local Communities and Empowering Them for a Violence-free Life (TRIALOG)	Empowerment and social activation of youth in the Podravje region, particularly those affected by COVID-19, addressing issues such as increased violence, lack of social contact, self-esteem, and mental health.
A Step Forward for Youth in Less Dynamic Environments (NEKSTEP)	Facilitating smooth and independent transition for youth (14-29 years) from education to the labor market, particularly in less dynamic environments.
Carinthian Network of Supportive Environment for Youth KOR-NET (KOR-NET)	Retaining youth in the Koroška region by creating a supportive environment, offering equal opportunities for work, education, and social engagement.
Fostering Entrepreneurship Skills in Schools (PoMP)	Developing a comprehensive and sustainable support environment that promotes entrepreneurship among young people, particularly those from less dynamic and rural areas.
Increasing Employment Potentials in the Pomurje Region (TALENT LAB)	Enhancing the employment prospects of young people in the Pomurje region by equipping them with the necessary skills and competencies for the labour market.
Development of Innovative Support Environment »Career Center Posavje« in the Posavje Region (Career Center Posavje)	Increasing the employment potential of young people in the Posavje region by establishing an innovative, dynamic, and digitally equipped support environment
Outcome 4: »Improved work-life balance«	
A Hospice Approach to Relieve the Physical and Psychological Burden of Working Men and Women Caring for Terminally Ill and Dying Relatives (IMRO)	Relieving the physical and psychological burden of informal caregivers by developing and implementing integrated care models and promoting workplace support through the creation of the "compassionate company" certificate.
Development of a Comprehensive Approach for Enhancing Work-life Balance of Professional and Private Life in Rural Areas, Based on the Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Regional Systems and Local Partnerships (TERA)	Empowering people in rural areas to effectively balance their professional and private lives and tackling traditional stereotypes as well as increasing economic independence of women in rural areas.
Creative Work-life Balance (BalanCed)	Enhancing the work-life balance among employees and their families in the Portorož region by using creative activities, particularly art, to strengthen coping skills, self-efficacy, and problem-solving abilities.
Transfer and Implementation of Good Practices for Improving Work-life Balance through Training and Education of Employees and Managers, with the Aim of Establishing an Organizational Structure and Culture of Companies, Based on Gender Equality (PROMETHEUS)	Improving the work-life balance within companies by promoting gender equality by educating and training employees and managers, raising awareness and fostering suitable organizational cultures.
Outcomes 2 and 5	
Blended Learning in Vocational Education and Training (BlendVET)	Preparing vocational education and training (VET) schools in Slovenia for the effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning by developing and implementing school strategies for blended learning
Children's House (Barnahus)	Providing child-friendly justice in Slovenia by improving the treatment of abused children through the implementation of the Barnahus model, using a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach that minimizes trauma and victimization during judicial proceedings;

Eleven projects were expected to contribute to the Outcome 1 “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)”. Seven projects were contributing to the Outcome 3 “Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved”, while four projects contributed to the Outcome 4 “Improved work-life balance”. Three projects contributed towards developing local systems in place to support work-life balance, while the fourth one addressed the role of organisational culture for work-life balance and gender equality generated. As already mentioned, two projects were pre-defined with two different outcomes.

The **project consortia** were well structured, the structure being oriented towards achieving the project goal. The consortia were led by Slovenian project promoters, which encompass entities such as educational institutions, non-profits, research centers, and private organizations. The consortia ranged in size, involving 2 to 10 project partners depending on the project's scope and objectives. Typically, each consortium included a Slovenian project promoter alongside a combination of local and international (donor) project partners. The foreign collaborators, predominantly from Norway, contributed specialized expertise in areas such as education, digital tools, environmental sustainability, and social innovation.

The number of project partners within each consortium highlights the diversity and scale of collaboration. **Napaka! Vira sklicevanja ni bilo mogoče najti.** Table A 5 in Appendix 2 describes the consortia structure in more detail. Smaller consortia, with 2 to 4 project partners, often focused on more specifics, narrower (targeted) outcomes such as skill development or institutional support. Larger consortia, involving 5 to 10 project partners, tackled broader objectives, incorporating multiple stakeholders from academia, regional development agencies, and professional associations. The donor project partners, which were present in all but two projects, generally represent universities, institutions, or professional bodies, working in the relevant field. The diverse consortia structure was expected to contribute towards efficient knowledge transfer and capacity building, leveraging the expertise of both local and international participants to address challenges effectively and implement sustainable solutions.

3 Evaluation goals and methodology

3.1 Evaluation goals

This report evaluates for each of the projects and the overall programme based on performance, relevance, bilateral cooperation and communication as well as selected special concerns in the Memorandum of Understanding (as highlighted in the Programme Concept Note Slovenia – p. 2⁴ and Table 2).

Table 2: Projects' and programme evaluation dimensions

Dimension	Questions
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the programme achieve the objectives of the individual direct impacts/outputs in terms of activities, types of beneficiaries and target groups? - What change has been achieved in the programme area in terms of meeting the needs and addressing the challenges of the programme area as identified in the programme design? - To what extent has the programme generated (positive or negative) impacts beyond the direct beneficiaries? - Which success factors have been key to ensuring success at project level? o Can you identify good practices? - Were the set indicators achieved? If not, what were the reasons for this? - To what extent did thematic and geographical coverage contribute to the success of the programme?
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How well are the project objectives and outputs aligned with the programme expectations set out in the programme design? - Does the programme add value without duplicating/overlapping with similar programmes in the programme area? If so, how?

⁴ [Concept-Note-Education.pdf](#)

Dimension	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the gap between what has been achieved and the remaining/emerging needs of the field at the time of the evaluation. - Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project outcomes and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the projects be ensured?
Bilateral cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the financial mechanisms considered in the programme design and implementation? - How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) add value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o to the implementation and achievements of the programme; o to programme promoters, programme partners from the donor country, project promoters and project partners from the donor state? - How could bilateral cooperation be further strengthened? - Given the level of funding allocated to donor country partners, what is the added value of bilateral partnership to project implementation and would the project be feasible without the bilateral partner?
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has been achieved in the implementation of the Communication Plan and the achievement of the objectives set? What can be improved? - How is the programme perceived by the target groups, in particular relevant stakeholders and the general public?
Special concerns*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of the support and outcomes regarding special concerns: pilots and models, improved cooperation of stakeholders, measures for easing transition of youth to labour market, measures to improve work-life balance, cooperation with Norwegian and international entities, scholarships and grants

*Special concern topics overlap with the topics referring to the content analysis (outputs, outcomes) and will be covered in the analysis. In the evaluation report, these topics will also be highlighted separately.

3.2 Methodology

A mixed-method evaluation approach. The evaluation methodology relied on several approaches: desk research, which encompassed theoretical research with literature review, project proposal and data analysis, qualitative analysis (in-depth interview and focus groups) and quantitative analysis (survey)⁵:

- **Desk research** (primary and secondary) refers to gathering, reviewing, and analysing existing information from sources such as reports, publications, databases, and relevant documents. It can include both secondary desk research (collecting existing data) and primary desk research (identifying data, challenges, findings by oneself). Desk research provides contextual understanding, is cost- and time-efficient, allows benchmarking projects as well as helps identify gaps and provides selected empirical evidence (Moore, 2006).
- **Qualitative research** typically uses semi-structured or unstructured interviews, focus groups, observation, to obtain in-depth understanding the reasons, trends, context of the field of interest (DeFranzo, 2011). The structure of the semi-structured **in-depth interview** is tentatively determined in advance by the researcher based on the objectives of the analysis. First, indicative interview questions or themes are defined, which are later appropriately complemented during the interview depending on various factors. The questions are open-ended and thus allow the interviewee to explain their experience, which is also the aim of the data collection. The literature suggests that 10 to 15 interviews can uncover most major issues for each of the researched topics (Galvin, 2015), depending on sample characteristics and homogeneity of the group, complexity and depth of the interview and the analytical strategy (Kirsti Malterud et al., 2015) and research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; DeFranzo, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).
- **Focus groups** involve a small group sharing personal experiences and discussing a topic under a moderator's guidance (Plummer-D'Amato, 2008; Powell & Single, 1996; Wilkinson, 1998). This setting

⁵ The details on methodological approach are provided in Appendix 3, including the evaluation timeline.

is well-suited to gather opinions and attitudes towards different issues, feedback on needs and expectations as well as to stimulate brainstormed ideas, resulting from group interaction. Focus groups can uncover rich details and group reasoning. While it is impossible to fully generalize findings, focus groups can deliver rapid, in-depth qualitative data (Stokes & Bergin, 2006; Wilkinson, 1998). Focus groups were conducted with project partners, contract managers, control unit and national focal point representatives to obtain their perspective on the key evaluation questions, while also challenging them with selected findings from the in-depth interviews with the project promoters.

- **Surveys** among project activity participants are important in project evaluation, since they provide direct insights from those who have experienced the project’s activities. Surveys contribute to the evaluation for several reasons. First, the surveys provide quantitative data that can be easily analysed to assess the effectiveness of various project components. Through both closed and open survey questions, survey allows gathering feedback on participants’ personal perceived experiences, satisfaction, perceived benefits. This allows the assessment of how the project has met its objectives from the perspective of its direct user. In addition, surveys allow participants to share their personal perspectives on the project’s impact via open-ended questions. In sum, survey complemented the interview/focus group results, ensuring a more robust, triangulated evaluation (see e.g. Keller & Warrack, 1999)

Desk research was used first to obtain deeper understanding of the individual projects (Appendix 1 provides brief project descriptions), then primarily as input into the qualitative analysis and to obtain quantitative information about the project results. Access to all project proposals and documentation was provided to the evaluators in accordance with the contractual agreement and upon signing the non-disclosure agreement. The first step, following the analysis of the project proposals and other available documentation, was the preparation of the methodological proposal, which was done between July and August 2024. The methodological proposal was prepared and confirmed by the Programme Operator (at the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, the Cohesion Directorate, Interreg and Financial Mechanisms Office, Financial Mechanisms Division) on 29 August 2024. Following an interim meeting (13 November), when preliminary findings were presented, minor changes to the methodology were agreed upon.

Table 3: Evaluation timeline

Step	Period	Focus	Methodological approach
1	August 2024	Methodology preparation	Desk-research (analysis of project proposals, identification of goals, study of evaluation goals and preparation of appropriate methodologies)
2	September and October 2024	Data collection and analysis	In-depth interviews with project promoters Preparation of interim report
3	November-December 2024		Focus groups with project partners Survey among project promoters and project partners Focus group with representatives from Programme Operator (in January 2025)
4	December 2024 and January 2025	Analysis and preliminary report preparation	Statistical analysis Writing-up of the preliminary report Submission of the preliminary report Revision of the preliminary report
5	January 2025	Final report	Submission of the final report

Semi-structured interviews, conducted with project promoters, were used as the first step to gain detailed insights into their experiences and opinions for each of the key evaluation aspects (Table A 5). The interviews were held in September and October 2024, except for one, which was done later.⁶ All invited individuals responded positively to the invitation to the interviews. The interview questions followed the evaluation focus aspects, however, were amended during the interview with sub-questions, where needed. The interview guide is summarized in Appendix 3.

⁶ In case of one project, two interviews were conducted.

The interviews complemented the desk research, providing explanations of why and how activities proceeded, as well as good practices or challenges. In-depth interviews offered nuanced perspectives on different project aspects depending on partner perspective and experience, they allow a more flexible and in-depth exploration of any relevant, also unexpected themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; DeFranzo, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Findings were also used to better prepare subsequent focus groups and survey questions, to compare opinions and experiences of project promoters, project partners, contract managers, control unit and national focal point representatives. An indicative question list was prepared and used in all interviews, following the evaluation goals and proposed methodology (Appendix 2). Additional questions were asked, depending on the interviewee's experience and role. Since interviews with all project promoters were conducted, the criterion was met, which was also evident from the saturation (the repetition of main topics in interviews).

Seven **focus groups** with project partners were conducted in November and December 2024. One focus group was conducted with donor project partner representatives, aiming primarily at understanding their role and their perceptions regarding their contributions, expectations regarding the project as well as cooperation benefits and challenges. Six focus groups were held with Slovenian project partners between 21 November and 2 December. Out of a total of 24 projects, one or more Slovenian project partners from 20 different project consortia participated in one of the focus groups. The first two focus groups, which included Slovenian project partners involved in 11 project consortia, aimed at developing new pedagogical practices for work and life and sharing knowledge and good practices in increasing skills and competencies in education and were attended by 21 project partners in total (38 project partners were invited to participate in the focus group). The third focus group brought together project partners in seven projects in the context of promoting the improvement of the learning and social environment to support disadvantaged groups. Out of a total of 26 invited project partners from the seven project groups, 11 Slovenian project partners participated in the focus group. Partners in projects focusing on improving work-life balance were invited to participate in the fourth focus group. Out of 18 project partners who were involved in the four projects, three participants were interviewed. The fifth and sixth focus groups involved project partners from the pre-defined projects KIPSI/BlendVET and Children's House/Barnahus, and all project partners responded to the invitation to be interviewed so there were four participants in the fifth focus group and two in the sixth. As the key purpose of the focus group is to exchange views between Slovenian project partners who have played different roles in the implementation process, the project promoter was exceptionally invited to participate in the last focus group, as otherwise, there would only be one interviewee. During the process of organising the focus groups, we faced the challenge of finding a suitable timeframe in which the Slovenian project partners could participate. As the interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes and the Slovenian project partners were busy in other areas of their companies and organisations, this caused slightly lower-than-expected participation, especially in the third and fourth focus groups. In addition, it should also be noted that many Slovenian project partners and project promoters in their respective organisations were no longer employed in the organisations and companies that participated in the project at the time of the focus groups. The transcripts of the interviews and focus groups are stored with the evaluators, while the key findings and selected citations are presented in the report. The eighth focus group was conducted on 29 January 2025 with five people representing contract managers, the control unit and the national focal point. The focus group lasted for 120 minutes. A key purpose of this focus group was to reflect on the findings from focus groups conducted with project partners and interviews with project promoters as well as presenting their views on different evaluation dimensions. The final eighth focus group, held on January 29, 2025, included five representatives from the Programme Operator (contract managers, control unit and national focal point), discussing evaluation findings and offering perspectives on project impacts and processes.

The survey was prepared in November and distributed in December 2024. It was prepared using two main sources: the findings from the interviews and focus groups as well as the evaluation report of the 2009–2014 evaluation (Brečko et al., 2018). In total, the survey comprised in total of 32 questions (30 main questions and 2 sub-questions), focusing on all relevant aspects of evaluation: performance, relevance, bilateral cooperation, communication, and other (horizontal) aspects as well as some general questions about the project partners and the project itself. The survey was active between 1 December 1st and 20 December 20th and was distributed to all (115 in total) individual contacts, i.e. using email addresses, obtained from the programme operators for the purpose of the evaluation. Two reminders were sent. In

total, 57 questionnaires were completed fully, while 71 were at least partially completed (or fully). In the analysis, the entire dataset was used in the analysis, not only fully completed questionnaires. The main text comprises only selected survey results, while the entire set of results is provided in Appendix 3.

Among the 71 respondents, who completed the survey at least partially, 79 percent were project partners, others were project promoters. Most of the respondents were organisations financed by public funds and established by the State or a municipality (49 percent), followed by non-governmental organisations, institutes or associations (26 percent). Regionally, most of the respondents were from the Podravska region (26 percent), followed by the Osrednjeslovenska region (22 percent), Savinjska region (11 percent) and Gorenjska region (10 percent). The projects the respondents worked on were involved in were working towards the outcomes under the goals of “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and non-formal education” (35 percent), “Improved skills and competencies of staff members and students involved in combined education” (26 percent) and “Improved education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups” (24 percent). Details are provided in Appendix 3.

4 Evaluation results

The evaluation follows two main goals: the evaluation of the projects according to the main evaluation criteria, and the evaluation of the achievement of the desired outcomes. This chapter is consequently structured into several subchapters, according to the main evaluation aspects (as highlighted in the Concept note): performance, relevance, bilateral cooperation and communication as well as selected special concerns. In continuation, the results are discussed also from the overall perspective of the programme and the desired outcomes of the programme.

The results are presented in a condensed manner, combining each aspect of the findings from the survey, the interviews as well as the focus groups for a comprehensive overview of the main findings. The numerical presentation of findings from the survey results is followed by an in-depth explanation, highlighting relevant findings from the qualitative analysis.

4.1 Project evaluation by main evaluation criteria

4.1.1 Performance, including outcomes

Overall, the projects can be evaluated as successful in achieving their outcomes, with only minor deviations from the desired goals.

4.1.1.1 Achievement of project goals and success factors

The positive evaluation is supported by both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

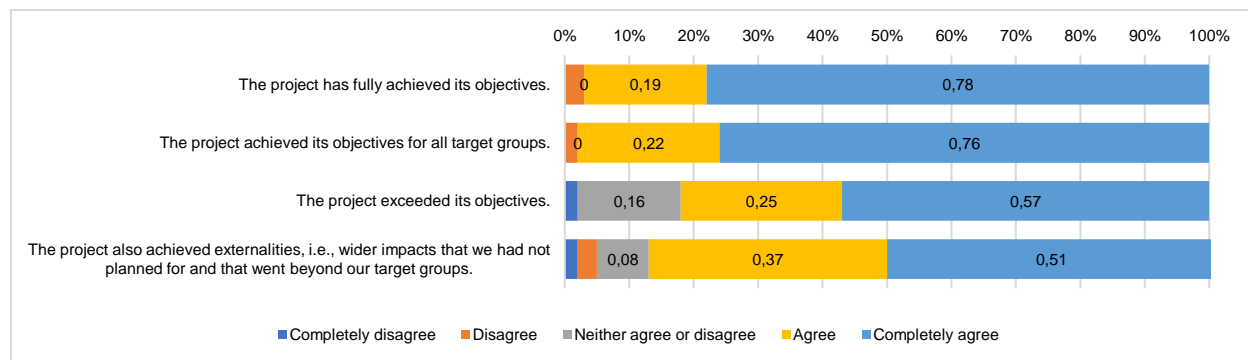
Interviews and focus groups provide additional details about the achievement of project results. Regarding questions on whether the programme achieved its objectives based on planned activities, types of beneficiaries, and target groups, and whether the set indicators were met, the main findings can be summarized as follows.

shows that 78 percent of respondents believe that the project objectives have been fully achieved, while 76 percent believe that the project also achieved objectives for all target groups. More than half strongly agree that the project exceeded the objectives and around a half strongly agree that the project objectives were exceeded also by externalities or wider impacts that went beyond the set objectives. Those, who stated that the objectives were not fully achieved, listed among the reasons for example the following: “Basically, we set very high targets, which were easily met, while other targets were more difficult to achieve. The main reason for meeting or not meeting the targets is the relatively short lead time of the project.” Also, cooperation challenges (“poor participation of other partners”, “non-cooperation of public institutions”) and ambitious goals (“they were too ambitious”) were named among the reasons. Generally, project promoters

were more positive towards the achievement of the project goals. Only 2 out of 15 project promoters, who responded to the questionnaire, only “agreed” with the statement that the project has fully achieved the objectives, which represents 13 percent, while 87 percent completely agreed. Among the project partners, 19 percent agreed and 4 percent disagreed, while 76 percent completely agreed.

Interviews and focus groups provide additional details about the achievement of project results. Regarding questions on whether the programme achieved its objectives based on planned activities, types of beneficiaries, and target groups, and whether the set indicators were met, the main findings can be summarized as follows.

Figure 1: Achievement of project results* (agreement, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)



*63 valid responses

Overall, the project promoters and partners considered the projects successful, often exceeding their goals. Projects were mostly assessed as either successful or very successful, as they achieved all the goals they set. Interviewees (project promoters) frequently emphasized that the results met expectations and even exceeded some of the set goals. Similarly, this is true also for project partners (focus group participants), who also emphasized that the objectives frequently surpassed expectations, particularly regarding a larger number of participants in workshops, higher levels of training, and additional materials or activities that were not initially planned in the project application. However, one of the participants mentioned that goals were partially met because they were set unrealistically high by an external agency which helped the project promoter prepare the project proposal.

Quality was as important as the achievement of quantitative goals. Results were generally achieved with the expected quality. Participants emphasized that key activities, such as training, material development, and the implementation of innovative methods, were carried out very professionally and with attention to quality in mind. Educational materials developed for external learning were of high quality and tailored to the specific needs of schools. Some projects focused on fewer but more engaging activities, such as small workshops, to achieve a greater individual impact.

Several different factors contributed to the projects’ success. The survey (Figure 2) and the qualitative analysis highlighted the role of the project preparation, in particular also involvement of project partners already in the early stage of project proposal preparation. Strong domestic partnerships, good organization of work, and focus on practical solutions were also important, the survey respondents highlighted these in particular. Interestingly, collaboration with an international partner was evaluated in the survey as relatively low, although the qualitative analysis highlighted also the importance of the donor project partners. In continuation, additional details are provided.

"(...) I would probably give it a plus 5 because we actually achieved more than we had planned. Even the target groups were included in greater numbers, and I would say (...) beyond expectations (...) The partnership was very strong, proper, and very passionate about their work. They were also very, very efficient" (Interview 3).

"We basically achieved the set goals. Many of them we then exceeded at the level of implemented activities, the number of activities, and the level of involvement and reach of target groups. I would say everything was checked off. Now, I would want more. I don't know if more quantitatively, but I would maybe want something different. (...) It was the first experience for all of us with Norwegian financial mechanism" (Interview 22).

"I feel that we were very successful because we set really safe numbers in the application" (Interview 12).

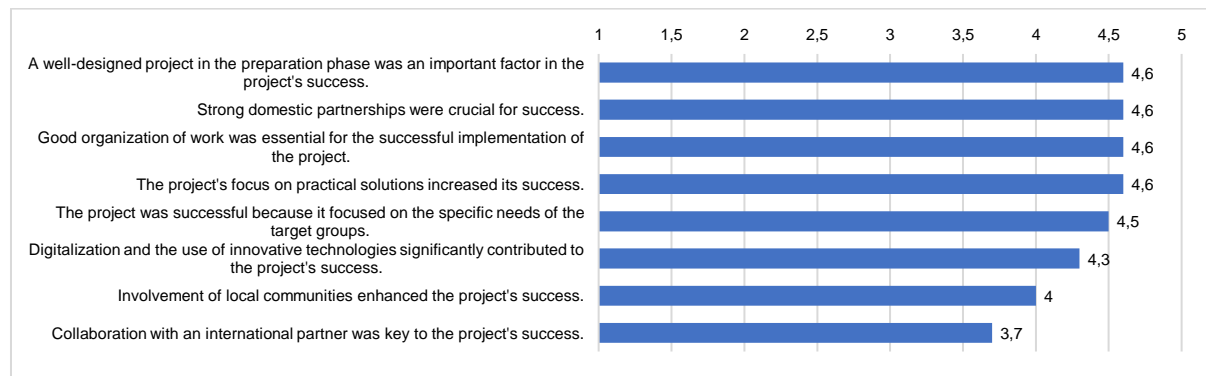
"(...) At the beginning, when we gathered as partners and wrote the project together - there were four of us - it's true that there were some initial difficulties (...) with communication with the Norwegian partner, but later, it developed as it should (...)" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) The promoter was a company that prepared the application with the help of an external agency. Our involvement was minimal – perhaps they only occasionally asked us something. As a result, the project was set up very grandiosely, with a large number of tasks that later turned out to be unfeasible, at least not to the extent or in the way originally envisioned. The problem was that the application was prepared by one person who had a specific idea and developed it with the help of an external agency (...) After the project was approved, this person no longer worked at the company – the tasks were taken over by new people who were not involved in the application process. It turned out that the project included many activities that served no real purpose and were neither feasible nor meaningful. This also affected the financial plan, which was not adequately prepared. We had to revise the project application and financial plan in collaboration with the Programme Operator (...)" (Focus Group 1).

For example, the Barnahus project significantly exceeded its targets by training many more professionals than planned and including additional groups such as judges and prosecutors. Similarly, organizers of clay design workshops highlighted their success:

"(...) We exceeded all expectations in terms of participant numbers, which made us very happy (...) We were slightly concerned that others might think we had deliberately set lower goals to make them easier to achieve, but the response to our workshops was unexpectedly great (...)." (Focus Group 3).

*Figure 2: Factors that contributed to achieving project results, agreement with selected statements (agreement, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)**



*N=51-58 (some respondents did not answer/evaluate selected aspects)

Well-designed projects with flexibility were important for success. Projects involving Slovenian project partners and donor project partners that collaborated from the start (in drafting project applications) showed better alignment and complementarity, allowing for more effective implementation. These projects adapted to challenges (e.g., delays and staff changes at partner organizations) and resolved issues without significantly affecting results.

Learning and knowledge transfer were also important success factors. Projects and project design enabled the exchange of good practices between Slovenian project partners and donor project partners.

Study visits and collaborations enriched existing methods and improved local practices. However, some of the participants mentioned that lags in teaching methods are not so evident as they were in the past.

"(...) We learned a lot from our Norwegian partners. While we had already worked on similar issues before, this time we approached them in entirely different way. Their knowledge was adapted, developed further, and applied to our work (...)" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) There is often a misconception that Slovenia lags behind in teaching methods, as might have been the case in the past. (...) We found that we have already made significant progress in certain areas and that some things we do just as well, if not better. When we went to Norway, our expectations were higher because we thought we would see methods that were still unknown in Slovenia. Honestly, there was nothing particularly special – everything we saw we already knew and used. (...)" (Focus Group 1).

Activities tailored to target groups and target group engagement contributed to project success.

Participants emphasized that activities were well-adapted to the needs of target groups, such as children, teachers, students, and employees. This increased the usability of project results during the project and beyond. Due to the tailoring of activities and intense engagement to project success and attractiveness of the outputs, some workshops and content consequently exceeded their original plans, resulting in greater reach than anticipated.

In addition, adaptability and flexibility contributed to success. Adaptation of content to the needs of target groups and flexibility in response to emergent needs contributed significantly to the projects' success. In some cases, projects were successful because of their ability to adjust plans as needs were identified along the way.

"(...) We absolutely didn't expect all the target groups to join us in such numbers – schools, companies, and professionals. Really, we exceeded all the numbers everywhere" (Interview 3).

"(...) We facilitated the transition of young people from formal education to employment through various activities: workshops, one-on-one counselling, lectures, and other forms of support. Each partner established a counselling point at their location, where young people could seek advice or arrange individual consultations" (Focus Group 4).

"(...) I believe our group was carefully selected, which is key for a successful project (...) Clearly defined roles and close collaboration among partners enabled high-quality implementation of activities" (Focus Group 1).

However, issues arose when the promoter did not involve others adequately during the preparation of the application:

"(...) The promoter consulted us minimally, especially regarding financial aspects, which should have considered content and cost requirements. This led to implementation problems" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) In some areas, we exceeded expectations; in some areas, we maybe missed a bit or redirected ourselves somewhat from what was initially planned" (Interview 4).

"(...) We conducted focus groups, gathered information (...) from individuals, and adjusted the programme to the individual needs of each participant" (Interview 20).

A combination of national and international project partners boosted success. The combination of national and international project partners played a critical role in achieving the set objectives. Donor project partners largely met expectations, contributing valuable expertise that enhanced project outcomes. Participants also praised practices developed in Norway and Iceland, noting that knowledge exchange occurred in both directions. In some cases, donor project partners were also described as unresponsive, disorganized, or insufficiently engaged. Staff changes at Norwegian project partner institutions disrupted progress, creating additional work for Slovenian project partners and reducing expected synergies. However, overall, the mix of diverse experiences and expertise contributed to the success of the projects, which was highlighted both by the project partners as well as project promoters.

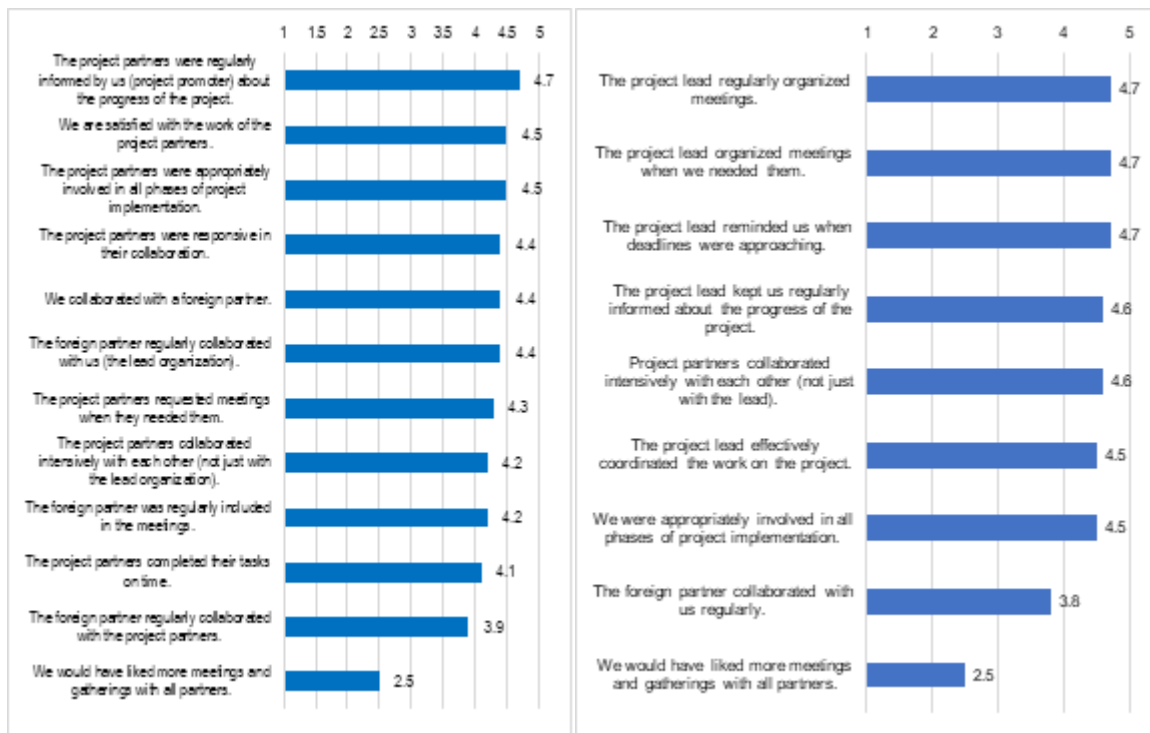
"(...) We had study visits to Norway and Iceland, and they also visited us here in Slovenia. This was very helpful. We really (...) saw things that we could use at home. Or maybe not because we weren't ready for them." (Interview 10).

"(...) Major issues with donor project partners arose in projects as they were unprepared to fulfil their tasks. Projects in which partners were involved from the start demonstrated better alignment and complementarity (...)" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) We expected their level to be much higher, but we found things to be quite comparable. The exchange of knowledge between Slovenia and Norway went both ways." (Focus Group 1).

Communication and efficient cooperation among project partners were also important and contributed to project success. Project promoters and project partners generally rated cooperation and communication among them as effective (Figure 3). This was, as revealed in the qualitative analysis, particularly so where roles were clearly defined, and open dialogue was established early in the project. High-quality communication facilitated better coordination and resolution of ongoing challenges. Project partners with prior collaboration experience reported excellent relationships, easing activity implementation and quick problem-solving. Some Norwegian project partners were not sufficiently responsive, complicating timely coordination and execution of specific activities. This occasionally led to frustrations among Slovenian project partners. Projects, where all partners were not involved from the planning phase, faced challenges in understanding project goals and individual roles. Efficient cooperation was in some cases also challenged because of turnover of people working on the project.

*Figure 3: Cooperation between project promoter and partners as seen by promoters (left) and project partners (right) (agreement, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)**



*N=14 in the left panel, only project promoters answered this question. N=44 in the right panel, only project partners answered this question.

Some projects were also facing challenges in achieving the results. The main challenges that project partners and project promoters listed as causes of not fully achieving the project results, can be summarized as follows. First, **in some cases, project partners**, primarily those from donor states were **not responsive enough**, were not well-organised or not engaged sufficiently. In some cases, key contact persons on the

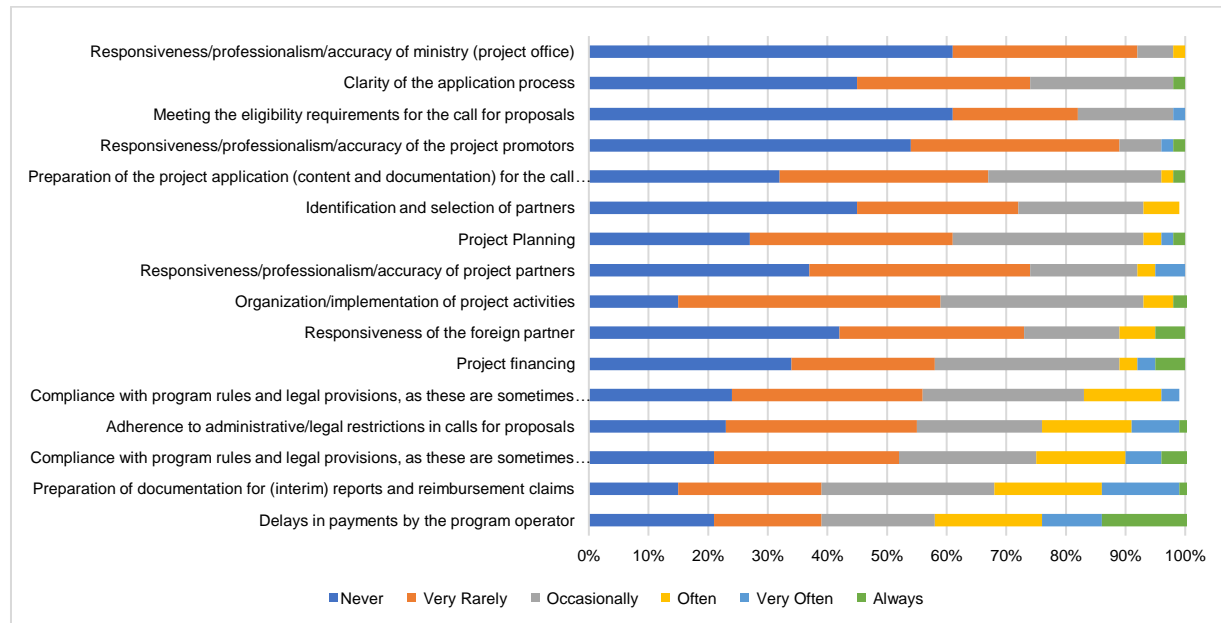
side of the donor project partners changed, which caused additional work for Slovenian project partners or even lowered the expected synergies.

"(...) We had significant issues with the Norwegian partner. While communication was fine, achieving project goals was challenging due to staff changes at the donor institution. New people who didn't internalise the project goals took over responsibilities, causing delays" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) The Norwegian partners were supposed to demonstrate their teaching practices during a visit. Instead, we only received a superficial presentation, which was entirely unacceptable for someone with a long career in this field. As a solution, we arranged access to local classrooms in Slovenia" (Focus Group 1).

Administrative complexity and reporting burden were listed as another obstacle. When asked about the frequency of encountering administrative challenges, more than 50 percent of survey respondents occasionally or often had challenges regarding the preparation of documents or delays in payment by the Programme Operator (Figure 4). Frequent revisions and adaptations of reports consumed significant time and effort, leaving less time for project content. Staff changes at the control unit also caused reporting demands to change, repeated processes and additional demands. Extensive administrative requirements caused also significant delays. The challenges of reporting were highlighted in both qualitative analysis as well as the survey. When we addressed these reporting challenges during the focus group with Programme Operator representatives, they highlighted that they are responsible for monitoring the reporting of multiple EU funded projects and various programs within the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, with a limited number of controllers. From an organizational perspective, the process can only be executed by distributing the financial reports for review based on the principle that the next controller in line takes the review. They also pointed out the positive outcomes of this arrangement as it is possible for one controller to make an error, which can then be identified by another controller in the subsequent report.

Figure 4: The frequency of encountering administrative challenges*



*62 responses. The question about the responsiveness of the project promoter was only answered by project partners (46 answers).

"(...) The lady came, we reviewed and discussed the situation, so we resolved matters as needed." (Interview 1)

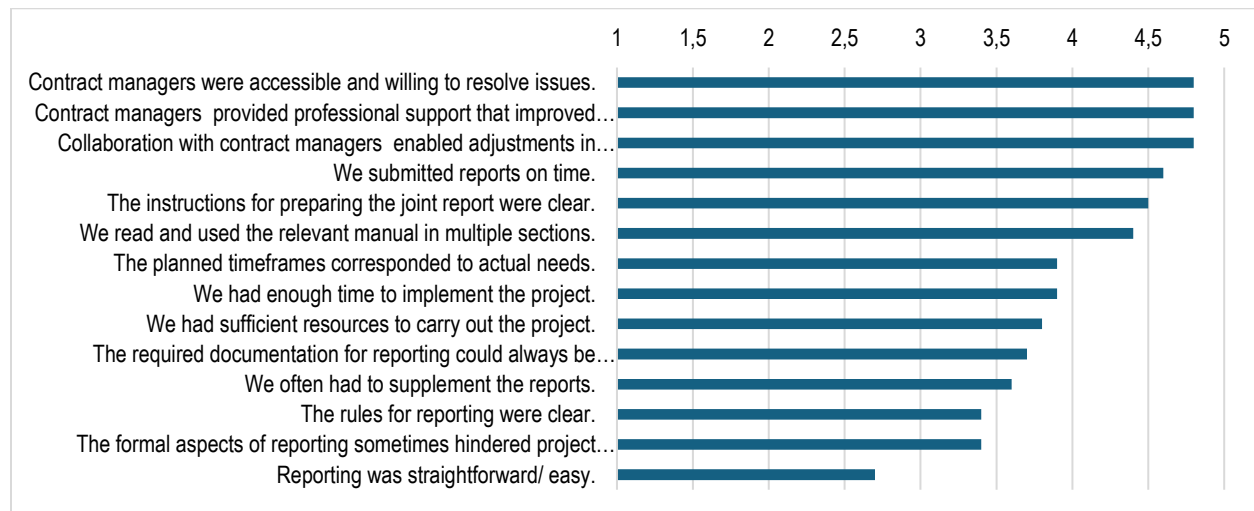
One respondent mentioned their "incredible responsiveness and kindness." (Interview 9)

"(...) I must say that the contract managers proved their responsiveness when we had to adapt and change certain aspects of implementation." (Interview 14)

"(...) I would especially like to commend the contract manager because communication with her was incomparably excellent compared to other projects. And in these projects, the communication you have with the person above you is very important, and in this case, both the contract manager and the Programme Operator were supportive - when we needed them, they responded within a few hours, and that is priceless. We work on other projects too, and sometimes you wait weeks for a response, which is not acceptable. Here, the communication was excellent." (Interview 17)

On the positive note, the contract managers were complimented for their (1) accessibility and willingness to resolve issues, (2) positive collaboration experience and involvement in project work, in particular their proactivity and support in engaging key stakeholders, (3) assistance in adapting to project requirements, in particular when unforeseen situations arose and the (4) responses to questions and professional support. Contract managers were valued for their professionalism and advisory skills, which contributed to the higher quality of project implementation, which is also confirmed by the survey results (Figure 5).

*Figure 5: Administrative aspects of the project, agreement with selected statements (agreement, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)**



*Questions about the contract managers were only answered by project promoters (14 responded), while other questions were answered by everybody (58 respondents).

However, there were also several issues related to reporting, which were perceived as an obstacle to achieving project results more efficiently (Figure 5). In particular, the reporting was not really perceived as straightforward (easy), the rules were not perceived as clear, although the respondents claimed to have read the relevant manual. Since this challenge was most often mentioned by partners who were participating in an international project team for the first time, the complaints about the rules could also be a result of a misunderstanding of the reporting rules indicating the need for additional workshops.

"(...) Reporting was extremely detailed and time-consuming, unlike in Norway. It often felt overwhelming" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) Revisions to submitted reports were requested repeatedly due to unclear or changing requirements" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) Frequent staff changes at the project promoter institution complicated communication and slowed down progress" (Focus Group 1).

Project design, unclear or overly ambitious project design or lack of active cooperation in project application were mentioned as one of the main factors challenging the success of the project. In cases where project partners were not involved in the preparation of the project application, it often happened that certain activities were not designed in a way that would contribute to achieving the goals, or the goals were set too ambitiously considering the project's duration and available financial resources. The misalignment of activities with the project's goals caused complications in project implementation. Projects where partners were not involved from the beginning (during the application writing process) often resulted in reduced coordination and understanding among the project partners. In some cases, different challenges also caused **delays in project implementation**. These were mostly associated with administrative requirements, initial difficulties in coordination, and organisational challenges.

Administrative delays were mostly related to the challenges with reporting and extensive documentation. (1) Slovenian project partners frequently reported delays caused by extensive administrative procedures. These challenges included resubmission of documentation due to unclear or changing requirements from funders. (2) Lengthy procedures for verifying accounting records and cost adjustments burdened project partners and caused delays in implementation. (3) Frequent changes in personnel responsible for auditing financial reports required additional explanations for already submitted reports, leading to delays in their review. After the focus group with Programme Operator representatives, it became apparent that delays particularly occurred where reports were submitted at the last minute (on the final day), and due to the increased workload, controllers were unable to review the reports as quickly as for those projects that submitted their reports before the deadline. It also turned out that those projects that prepared their reports progressively had significantly fewer reporting issues and also received reimbursements faster.

"(...) For example, I had to work a lot of overtime because otherwise it simply wouldn't have been possible. I spent most of the time I had available for the project just writing reports. When we talked with Norwegian partners, I learned that reporting there is not as demanding. Here, however, reporting for these projects seems to be extremely detailed and time-consuming (...)" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) Essentially, there was a lot of work involved in finding and copying information. I couldn't see the logical structure of this reporting (...) We had to prove the execution of workshops with photographs (...) Uploading photos, resizing files, and then placing the same photos differently across four separate documents caused chaos (...) I still don't know if the content reporting made sense because it all felt very confusing" (Focus Group 3).

Different coordination challenges among project partners were another important reason. In some cases, a lack of coordination was present already in the project proposal stage and led to disconnection in the initial project design. Projects where all partners were not involved in the design phase reported greater difficulties in coordinating tasks and priorities, causing delays in implementing project activities. Frequent staff turnover at the project promoter and project partners additionally lowered the efficiency of cooperation. Consequently, employment continuity was highlighted as a success factor.

"(...) One of the biggest challenges was the constant turnover of personnel at the project promoter organization. Over the two years of the project, at least four different people were responsible for management. This seriously hindered communication, as every new person had to figure out what was happening and how the project was progressing. Because of this, we, partners, barely collaborated with one another and were almost entirely dependent on the project promoter (...)" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) All the partners had the same people present throughout the entire project, which ensured continuity and significantly contributed to the project's success (...)" (Focus Group 1).

Technical and organisational delays also caused some delays. These were referring to different aspects. First, there were the delays caused by the processes revolving around the **establishment of new institutions**. For example, projects that involved the creation of new organizations or infrastructure reported delays due to lengthy legal procedures. An example of this was shared by participants involved in the Barnahus project, which required the establishment of a public institution and completion of all formal procedures. Delays were also reported in projects requiring **suitable room/ spaces for project activities**. Delays due to **lengthy and complex procurement processes and equipment delivery** were also

mentioned. Some projects experienced delays in procuring or delivering equipment, which slowed down activity implementation. These delays were often attributed to a lack of experience with public procurement procedures by the project promoter.

“(…) There was a delay in opening the creative centre because we were still looking for suitable premises, which slightly extended the process. Nevertheless, we carried out activities in the field and organized workshops that were feasible during this time (…)” (Focus Group 3).

“(…) Our project had a dual focus – on cultural heritage itself and its integration with various professional profiles. Our team includes more than 20 different experts, from civil engineers, mechanical engineers, architects, landscape architects, ethnologists, and others. (…) The project promoter was not well-versed in public procurement regulations, which caused delays, incorrect explanations, improper requests, and so on. Additionally, the project promoter didn't fully understand what we needed, which led to quite a few technical conflicts (…)

Nonetheless, **project partners in most cases managed to adapt** their activities in a timely manner and achieve planned results. **Key factors that helped overcome delays** were:

- i. Flexibility of project partners, who often adapted their activities and schedules to make up for delays and ensure the timely completion of key tasks.
- ii. Effective leadership. Projects with experienced project managers and clear plans for handling delays addressed timeline challenges more successfully.
- iii. Support from the project contract managers. In cases where the project contract managers showed an understanding of complications, delays were managed without significant impact on outcomes.

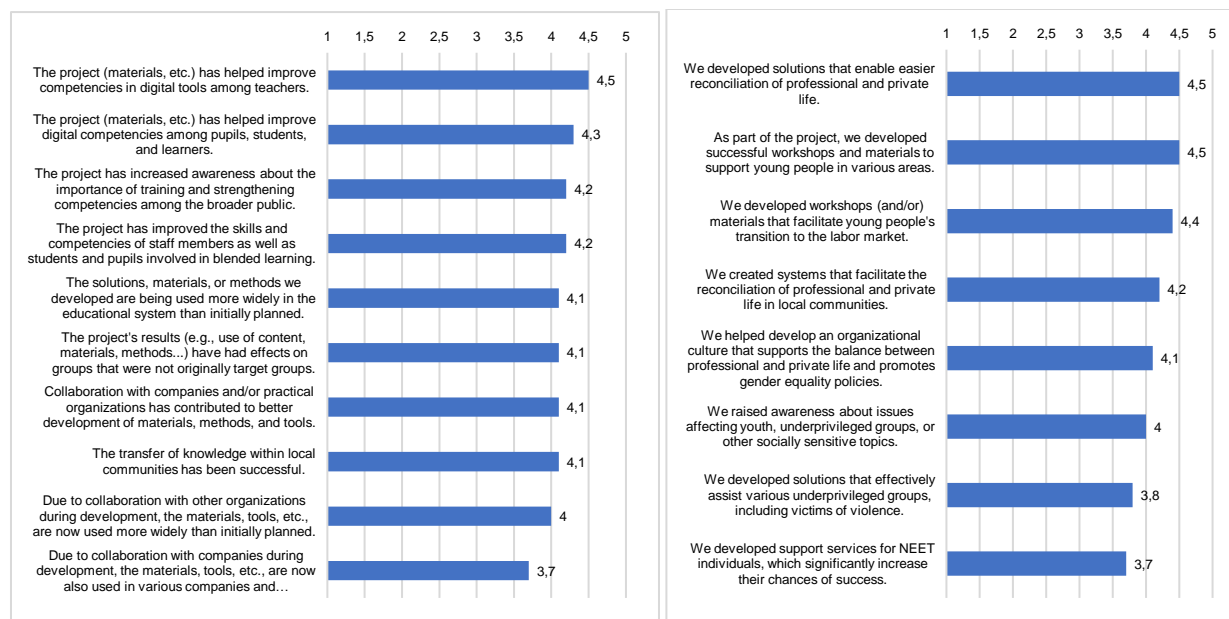
4.1.1.2 Meeting needs and addressing challenges of the programme area

Generally, the programme had specified five desired outcomes that the projects targeted. These outcomes included improved institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and informal education, improved educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups, improved balance of work and private life and outcomes of improved skills needed for good governance and cooperation in the provision of services for child victims of crime and improved skills and competences of staff members and students involved in combined education. The analysis in continuing is divided into two parts. The analysis of the quantitative measures by each outcome is provided separately, followed by an analysis of the perceptions of project promoters and project partners from the qualitative analysis and survey.

The results show that both project promoters and project partners believe that the work within their projects successfully contributed to the achievement of the goals of the programme area. This is highlighted both by the results of the survey, indicating a generally high level of agreement that the project improved competences in digital tools among teachers and pupils, contributed to blended learning, developed solutions that enabled better balance between private and work life, contributed to youth empowerment, NEET empowerment, empowerment of disadvantaged groups, gender equality and other (

Figure 6).

Figure 6: Meeting the needs/ achieving programme outcomes and addressing the challenges of the programme area (average agreement with the statements, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)*



* The left part comprises statements that were answered only by respondents (31–38 respondents, not all answered all questions) within relevant programme goals 'improved educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups' and 'improved skills and competencies of staff members and students involved in combined education'. The right part comprises answers from the remaining project members, involved in projects working towards other outcomes (19–31 respondents).

In response to the question regarding the changes achieved in the programme area in terms of **meeting the needs and addressing the challenges identified in the programme**, the qualitative analysis also highlighted a few interesting findings. They are presented according to the programme outcomes.

4.1.1.2.1 Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)

In total, eleven projects contributed towards achieving the outcome of “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal).” Indicator values show that all projects achieved or significantly surpassed the project goals (Table 4). Projects were, in particular, successful in achieving the outputs of “Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competencies in education”, particularly in the field of the number of peer learning activities carried out and the number of participants in peer learning, where specific project targets were surpassed even by 400 percent. The projects were also very successful in reaching the output of “New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed”, where the targets were most significantly surpassed in reaching the outputs of “Number of staff participating in developing and testing teaching models”.

Qualitative analysis also highlighted several important aspects. The projects contributed to this outcome by fostering collaboration between various educational institutions and other stakeholders, including ministries, schools and universities. Key actions included forming project **groups that involved representatives from different stakeholder organizations, which enhanced communication and mutual understanding**. Despite challenges, such as differences in responsiveness among institutions, the projects and **cooperation between project partners encouraged the integration of new solutions into educational practices, which is confirmed also by the quantitative indicators**. Efforts to align local educational practices with broader institutional objectives further supported the development of effective cooperation frameworks. In the context of collaboration, the following aspects are particularly important. First,

collaborative projects and multi-stakeholder project consortia, which included representatives from schools, universities, non-formal education providers and ministries, were **first improving cross-sectoral collaboration and deepening understanding as well as leading to spillover effects** (unplanned external effects of the project). Second, development of educational frameworks and guidelines applicable to both formal and non-formal education sectors, on the one hand strengthened understanding and collaboration ensuring alignment and coherence. Next, **training sessions brought together teachers from different fields**, but also administrative staff and representatives from companies, other institutions, improving communication and mutual understanding between different levels of the educational system. The projects **introduced digital platforms** that also help develop cooperation and **facilitates institutional communication and resource sharing**, making collaboration more efficient.

The importance and **benefits of collaboration with companies/industry** was also perceived as important. One of the main challenges resolved by the projects was effective collaboration between educational institutions and industry. **Companies** were able to **participate** in the **development of educational content**, which enhanced the **practical applicability** of the knowledge. In addition, **raising awareness of specific issues**, such as autism, gender roles, stereotypes and also the impact of informal care and involving companies to achieve broader changes (including specialized areas), is also an important result, which is first directly related to some projects' goals, but also represents an important horizontal impact of the projects.

"The large number of participants in the workshops surprised us; we had expected less interest, but the enthusiasm was overwhelming" (Interview 6).

"We conducted multiple workshops for teachers, introducing new teaching methods tailored to different age groups" (Interview 3).

"These were long-standing goals that we were finally able to realize. A large portion of these results came from the intense collaboration of the entire team" (Interview 5).

"We developed really high-quality content, and teachers who participated in the workshops praised it highly. They were enthusiastic and wished for even more" (Interview 8).

Table 4: Quantitative indicators: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)

	Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)				Output 1.1: New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed		Output 1.2: Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competencies in education		
	Number of intellectual outputs generated by institutional cooperation	Share of cooperating education training institutions applying new teaching and learning practices	Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	Number of institutions which are using the new teaching models, methods strategies	Number of staff participating in developing and testing teaching models	Number of staff trained	No. of peer learning activities carried out	No. of participants in peer learning (educators, staff, other education stakeholders)	Number of professional staff trained
Program target	30	85%	3.5	10	200	15	16	300	60
Project 1	Target	6	100%	3.5	2	12	6	40	11
	Value	6	100	4	2	15	6	226	31
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	114.3	100.0	125.0	100.0	565.0	281.8
Project 2	Target	7	100%	4	6	30	9	60	12
	Value	8	100	4.7	7	50	9	319	77
	% achieved	114.3	100.0	117.5	116.7	166.7	100.0	531.7	641.7
Project 3	Target	29	87.50%	4	7	24	8	40	8
	Value	38	100	5	8	55	8	51	132
	% achieved	131.0	114.3	125.0	114.3	229.2	100.0	127.5	1650.0
Project 4	Target	39	85%	4	20	115	25	150	15
	Value	39	85	5	45	267	24	316	15
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	125.0	225.0	232.2	120.0	210.7	100.0
Project 5	Target	5	100%	4	2	34	4	75	10
	Value	5	100	5	2	43	4	102	10
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	125.0	100.0	126.5	150.0	136.0	100.0
Project 6	Target	1	20%	4	2	40	14	61	40
	Value	1	40	5	2	160	3	216	15
	% achieved	100.0	200.0	125.0	100.0	400.0	30.0	354.1	37.5
Project 7	Target	6	100%	4.5	7	40	15	75	10
	Value	6	100	4.6	7	60	6	81	4
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	102.2	100.0	150.0	40.0	108.0	40.0
Project 8	Target	7	100%	3.8	2	45	6	83	18
	Value	7	100	4.9	2	49	8	101	23
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	128.9	100.0	108.9	133.3	121.7	127.8
Project 9	Target	12	85%	3.5	14	36	8	1381	14
	Value	12	10	4.88	14	51	8	3289	88
	% achieved	100.0	117.7	139.4	100.0	141.7	100.0	238.2	628.6
Project 10	Target	9	33%	3.8	2	20	3	30	20
	Value	9	33	4.57	2	20	3	30	27
	% achieved	100.0	100.0	120.3	100.0	100.0	225.0	100.0	135.0
Project 11	Target	5	100%	4.5	2	24	5	70	9
	Value	13	100	5	2	42	5	119	16
	% achieved	260.0	100.0	111.1	100.0	175.0	533.3	170.0	177.8

Data: Final project report.

4.1.1.2.2 Outcome 2: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning

The project “Blended Learning in Vocational Education and Training” provided opportunities for professional development for staff and students in blended education focused on achieving “Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning”. Indicator values show that the achievement of targets was successful. In particular, the vast project consortium (11 institutions) efficiently cooperated (Table 5) and knowledge exchange both between the donor states institutions and other project partners was fruitful, leading to overall satisfactory results.

Table 5: Quantitative indicators: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning

		Target	Indicator	% achieved
Outcome 2 Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning	Level of satisfaction with the institutional cooperation	3.5	4.6	131.4
	Number of institutions which are using intellectual outputs created	15	15	100.0
	Share of educational staff who declare improved skills and competencies through involvement in blended learning	90%	100.00%	111.1
	Number of institutions that have implemented a satisfactory strategic framework for offering blended learning	7	7	100.0
Output 2.1 Teaching and learning practices in blended learning improved	Number of students that participated in blended learning	260	266	102.3
	Number of joint intellectual outputs created	4	4	100.0
	Number of staff trained in blended learning methods	62	71	114.5
	Share of students who declare improved skills and competences through involvement in blended learning	90%	100.0%	111.1
Output 2.2 Knowledge and best practices shared with donor states institutions	Number of joint events	3	3	100.0
	Number of staff from beneficiary state in exchanges	24	49	204.2
	Number of staff from donor states in exchanges	14	34	242.9

Data: Final project report.

Training programmes incorporated advanced methodologies, including the use of interactive materials and innovative teaching practices, to enhance learning outcomes. Collaboration with **external experts** ensured that participants were exposed to best practices in the field, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. First, **addressing the need for educational content and new methods of work/learning, focusing on interactive learning, and successful development of materials** was particularly strongly highlighted. The project successfully targeted the **needs of VET educational institutions**, especially in the areas of digitalization and sustainable practices. A significant focus was on **providing free materials** that teachers and students require to enhance the educational process. For VET institutions this development was particularly significant, as is highlighted in the quotes. Training included the integration of **innovative and interactive teaching tools**, such as gamification and blended learning techniques, to enhance student engagement. Although **not all students have suitable digital skills**, which revealed a practical challenge as well. The project helped **improve access to educational materials** in digital format, which was crucial for a modern learning process. The need for digital content and interactive learning was particularly emphasized, as several projects under different outcomes also addressed these aspects.

Adapting content to the specific needs of target groups to enhance usability and reach is also important, not only as success factor, but also as a factor contributing to stronger and wider impact. Project adapted on an ongoing basis to better address the specific needs of target groups. By tailoring educational content, they achieved broader applicability, even among companies and higher education institutions. Feedback from participants indicated a strong appreciation for these programmes, which helped bridge the

gap between traditional and modern educational approaches. But the workshops also showed that often teachers have a lot of work and thus are not **able to focus on being also innovative**.

It is also important to mention skill-building workshops, that focused on modern pedagogical practices, including collaborative and experiential learning. Meetings, content development and training sessions also facilitated **cross-institutional peer learning** allowed educators and students to exchange experiences and strategies for combined education. Specific programmes aimed to improve the digital skills of educators and students, ensuring proficiency in online and hybrid teaching environments. **Developed solutions are freely available and can become also systemically used**. Knowledge transfer was very valuable as well as peer learning. The project outputs significantly contributed to “Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning”, generated both tools, materials as well as built competencies among educators and pupils. As such the project represents an important step towards building efficient blended learning.

“That was great, it was really good, because we also went to different parts of Slovenia (...). It really helped. We honestly saw some things in Norway and Iceland that we will be able to use here (...) that was really good, because for example in Koper they had some different programs than we did (...). So, we covered various professional areas and, geographically too, yes, it contributed because we (...) could see what’s going on elsewhere” (Interview 11).

“It’s not yet at the level where we could say, ‘Yes, we have the right conditions, (...) to implement blended learning. (...) It’s more about starting to work on this at a systemic level (...) We also presented this to some teachers; some of them will use certain things on their own, but now it all depends on each individual’s willingness” (Interview 11).

4.1.1.2.3 Outcome 3: Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved

Several projects focused on the outcome of improved “Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups”. First, six projects focused on the output of **“Support to youth provided”**. All projects were successful in achieving the quantitative indicators (Table 6). In particular, the projects were successful in achieving training goal targets and beneficiaries. The qualitative analysis confirmed the relevance of the project outputs for supporting the youth, in particular the activities, whose direct benefits were acknowledged also more widely, opening the potential for sustainability of results beyond the project’s end. Importantly, the training also highlighted the desire for continuous training by the counsellors, which can lead both to improved outputs, better outcomes as well as sustainability.

“I might start with the entrepreneurial content (...) I think this aspect, the entrepreneurial aspect, helps young people see that entrepreneurship is actually an option. (...) The same goes for general career guidance – they began to realize that waiting until the last minute is not ideal. (...) They got to know real professions and realized that what they learn in school is not always directly applicable in the workplace. They also received tips on how to prepare for an interview, how to present a résumé, a digital profile, a video CV ...” (Interview 14).

“I believe that counsellors working with young people gained the most from this project – after every workshop, they said they wanted more of it, longer meetings, and specific exchanges of experiences, because they really miss that in their regular training” (Interview 22).

“We organized an event called a ‘career Olympics,’ where we brought together young people and a company that presented its challenge. The students then worked on this challenge in a hackathon-style format. (...) They came up with some really interesting solutions....” “The municipality recognized the importance of these activities, which are now continuing using their budget (...). We also created infographics, videos, and worksheets that anyone can use. All of it is collected in a handbook, which remains available even after the project ends” (Interview 22).

Table 6: Quantitative indicators: Support to youth provided

		Output 3.2: Support to youth provided			Outcome 3: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	
		Number of new or upgraded services	Number of staff trained	Number of networking, trainings or advisory activities for the young	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	Share of involved service providers who declare improved skills (%)
Project 1	Target	3	56	29	2500	95
	Indicator	4	70	33	5451	95
	% achieved	133.3	125.0	113.8	218.0	10000.0
Project 2	Target	3	15	15	150	95
	Indicator	3	46	15	517	97,83%
	% achieved	100.0	306.7	100.0	344.7	103.0
Project 3	Target	3	25	26	1410	95
	Indicator	3	27	26	1604	100
	% achieved	100.0	108.0	100.0	113.8	105.3
Project 4	Target	2	70	20	60	100
	Indicator	2	196	20	399	100
	% achieved	100.0	280.0	100.0	665.0	100.0
Project 5	Target	1	10	17	50	100
	Indicator	1	51	23	84	100
	% achieved	100.0	510.0	135.3	168.0	100.0
Project 6	Target	1	10	15	120	95
	Indicator	1	12	20	187	100
	% achieved	100.0	120.0	133.3	155.8	105.3

Data: Final project report.

One project focused specifically on the output of establishment of **“Support services for the NEET established” creating tools and methodologies not only to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, but also other groups.** Quantitative indicators (Table 7) show that the project was successful, all indicators were achieved as planned, while some were substantially surpassed, in particular the number of inclusive activities for NEETS and the number of upgraded or new services.

Table 7: Quantitative indicators: Support services for the NEET established

		Program agreement target	Project target	Indicator value	% achieved
Outcome 3: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	Share of involved service providers who declare improved skills	95%	285 (95%*3)	100	105.3
	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	350	350	352	100.6
Output 3.1: Support services for the NEET established	Number of new or upgraded services developed and tested in local environment	2	2	3	150.0
	Number of staff trained to work with NEET	20	45	49	108.9
	Number of inclusive activities (events, workshops, trainings)	20	21	26	123.8

Data: Final project report.

Qualitative analysis also highlighted satisfaction with the work done and the impact made. The **workshops and training programmes which were developed to empower educators** and provided them with practical resources for inclusive education. While these initiatives aimed to reduce inequality, challenges in engaging broader institutional and private support remained a barrier to broader systemic change. **Training sessions** focused on equipping educators with tools and methods to better integrate children from disadvantaged backgrounds into the classroom environment. The projects **produced teaching aids and materials specifically designed for disadvantaged groups**, helping to reduce barriers to learning as well as **help educators working with disadvantaged groups**. Dedicated career counselling sessions were organized to guide disadvantaged youth toward better educational and employment opportunities and **cooperation with employers** directly targeted their employability. An innovative approach, which included social enterprise initiatives and different activities highlighted the role of local crafts in providing disadvantaged groups empowerment. Despite satisfaction, the work also highlighted that in the future, more focus could be placed on counselling, further improving the quality of the support of NEETs.

“We believe we made a big breakthrough with the project we developed (...) Especially because we still keep track of these young people and see a lot of positive changes for them. In fact, just now before joining this call, we were talking about one participant who is still active” (Interview 20).

“Later in the program, our colleagues also developed a new methodology (...) essentially guidelines on how to identify NEETs, which we see as the main issue. This methodology was also presented at ..., and I believe it will continue to develop” (Interview 20).

“Perhaps more psychosocial counselling—even though we did provide it as part of the project, we could use more. Maybe (...) more informal gatherings. In essence, the problem lies in the lack of a social network for these young people, so we would focus on that more. Although we did still run some workshops” (Interview 20).

4.1.1.2.4 Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance

Improved work-life balance was the focus of three projects, IMRO, TERA and BalanCed, which focused on establishing local systems to support work-life balance (WLB). PROMETEJ was focused on the organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality. The analysis of the target values of quantitative indicators and achieved values shows that the results were achieved as planned in all four cases. The output was surpassed particularly in the aspect of awareness raising and professional staff training.

The aforementioned four projects directly targeted the work and private life balance, in particular those focused on care provision, including palliative care, which is going to be in the ageing society with a lack of efficient institutional care more important. The outputs significantly contributed to easing of achieving work-life balance through a comprehensive approach that combined practical, educational, and technological solutions. The implementation of integrated care models for older adults in urban and rural areas reduced the caregiving burden on informal carers, providing them with more flexibility to balance their professional and personal lives. Additionally, the comprehensive educational program addressed work-life balance challenges by raising awareness among employees and educating leaders on the importance of gender-equal organizational structures. This program empowered both employers and employees with the tools and knowledge to foster environments conducive to work-life harmony. A set of measures for balancing work and home life in remote work settings was introduced, addressing the specific challenges of working from home. To support broader knowledge dissemination, an interactive online platform, was established, offering resources, tools, and guidelines to promote effective strategies for work-life integration. Furthermore, targeted training programs enhanced the skills and knowledge of employees and employers regarding work-life balance and gender equality, emphasizing practical steps to implement these concepts within their organizations.

Table 8: Quantitative indicators focused on local systems supporting WLB*

		Targets**	Project 1			Project 2			Project 3			Project 4		
			T	A	%	T	A	%	T	A	%	T	A	%
Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	150	600	1158	193	700	1545	220.7	70	349	498.5			
	Number of institutions applying gender equality instruments	3	5	5	100	22	22	100	1	2	200	5	5	100
Output 4.1 Local systems established supporting WLB	Share of participants with an improved understanding of WLB and gender policies	90	90	92.2	102.4	360	500	138.9	180	197.5	109.7	270	277.7	102.8
	Number of measures improved or introduced at the local level	3	4	4	100	6	6	100	3	3	100			
	Number of professional staff trained	20	30	30	100	40	44	110	10	277	2770			
Output 4.2: Organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality generated	Number of participants reached by awareness raising and capacity building activities in organisations											125	806	644.8
	Number of measures adopted in organisations											4	4	100

Data: EMS, final project reports. *T=target, A=achieved indicator value, %=% achieved, **Programme agreement targets

In addition, also other projects, which were directly contributing to other outcomes, contributed indirectly to the improved work-life balance. For example, the development of **new, digital, more efficient educational resources** that parents, teachers and other professional staff could use, which was the focus or at least contribution of many projects, improves learning and reduces educational stress, stimulating better work-life balance in families. In this context, also **innovative stress reduction methods**, such as those, using local crafts, contribute not only to stress management, but also stimulate activation, inclusion, empowerment of different groups. Time-saving digital solutions, such as different tools and apps were introduced to reduce administrative burdens for teachers, allowing them to focus more on their personal and family lives.

The projects contributed to this outcome also by **implementing activities that support work-life balance, particularly for educators and parents as well as project partners (employees)**. Flexibility in project execution, such as accommodating local contexts and providing tailored resources, was a critical factor. Efforts to integrate educational tools into everyday teaching and parenting practices allowed participants to manage their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. However, achieving broader systemic recognition for these practices remains a challenge, highlighting the need for additional institutional support.

4.1.1.2.5 Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services

Outcome 5 “Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services” was focused on two main outputs: “New or improved cooperation models piloted for child victim services” and “Awareness-raising activities carried out”. The project Children’s House contributed towards this outcome, as it helped develop a more suitable environment, tools and strategies for handling sensitive cases, which is particularly important for children, ensuring their well-being, but also fostering a better judicial system service delivery. The project was successful, which is shown both by quantitative and qualitative indicators (Table 9). The indicators show that all planned outputs were achieved, with some significantly surpassed, contributing to the overall achievement of the desired outcome positively.

Table 9: Quantitative indicators: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services

			Indicator targets	Achieved indicators	% achieved
Outcome 5	Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services	Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	80	102	127.5
		Share of professional staff who declared improved skills and competences	90	90%	1.0
		Number of institutions using the "Barnahus/Children's House" model	1	1	100.0
Output 5.1	New or improved cooperation models piloted for child victim services	Number of improved/new services supported	1	2	200
		Number of pilot projects implemented for child victim services	1	1	100
		Number of professional staff trained	120	671	559.2
		Number of training courses organized	14	16	114.3
		Evaluation report on the pilot implementation	1	1	100
		Plan for evaluation and expansion	1	1	100
Output 5.2	Awareness-raising activities carried out	Number of awareness-raising campaigns	3	3	100

Data: EMS, final project report.

The Children’s House is fully operational. The most important achievements also include the training “Sexual Abuse – When a Child Speaks Up” for professionals from four regional primary schools, providing guidance on handling a child’s disclosure of sexual abuse, where the project significantly surpassed the planned values. An interactive online guide was prepared, explaining the entire process from the moment a child discloses abuse to the conclusion of criminal proceedings. An evaluation of the pilot phase provided recommendations for future work as planned. Well-designed communication activities contributed to the acknowledgement of the project as well as helped raise awareness on the topic.

Building on existing foreign experience the project introduced innovative approaches, offering insights into effective practices from Norway. These experiences not only **improved local approach to handling the most sensitive cases**, but also promoted knowledge exchange and the **development of a stronger support network for child victims**. Importantly, the project also **led to a systemic solution that is going to last beyond the project end and has been incorporated in the justice system**. It is also relevant, that the **developed approach can be used not only in criminal cases, but more broadly**.

Within this context, it is important to mention first the **ensuring a suitable building and equipment of the institution**. Specialized **training programmes** equipped relevant personnel, social workers, educators, and law enforcement personnel with skills to handle sensitive cases involving child victims of crime. In this

context, **the best practices** from Norway on governance and service provision for vulnerable children was particularly beneficial. **Improving also cooperation between institutions and law enforcement agencies**, is enabling better collaboration in protecting children.

"(...) We highlighted the establishment of a national institution, which was sustained through the law, ensuring its permanent functioning" (Interview 25).

"(...) The issue is that the institution does not only deal with criminal cases. The policy has been expanded to include civil proceedings, especially in highly sensitive cases (...) We trained 350 professionals, including social workers and judiciary representatives, significantly improving their capacity to handle sensitive cases" (Interview 25).

4.1.1.2.6 Outcomes of special concern

The desired outcomes address also specific issues such as transitioning into the labour market, new projects, partner collaboration, and balancing work and private life. The qualitative analysis and the survey highlighted that several projects contributed to an **easier transition to the labour market**. Some projects (depending on the area of work) had a positive impact on young people's transition to the labour market by connecting educational institutions and industry and by emphasizing practical skills acquired by secondary school and university students during the project. In addition, the **disadvantaged groups** were also a specific group of end beneficiaries, where the projects contributed to raising awareness and improving their labour market position as the most important outcomes.

"(...) By collaborating between schools and companies, we ensured that students gained practical experience, which made their transition into the labor market easier" (Interview 13).

The projects also emphasized **balancing private life and work**, the importance of NGOs, especially in certain segments, and strengthening promotional certification mechanisms. Some projects also addressed areas that directly affect the possibility of better work-life balance, where the desired outcome is achieved by raising awareness about the importance of work-life balance as well as for example targeting challenges of end-of-life care.

"(...) I think certification is a wonderful thing, and I hope that employers will be willing to adopt it not just in principle but also in practice, so that the attitude and awareness will be different in reality" (Interview 2).

The projects provided **new employment opportunities**, including for those participating in the projects. By being involved in projects, participants often gained new knowledge and skills, which directly impacted their employability. This was especially true for young participants, who acquired practical experience.

"(...) The skills and knowledge I gained through the project opened doors for new employment opportunities" (Interview 19).

The exchange of professional knowledge and strengthening competencies among project partners was another outcome. One of the most important achievements was the exchange of knowledge and best practices among project partners. This collaboration improved the expertise of everyone involved and created long-term connections.

An important outcome of the cooperation in the project is also improved cooperation, leading to new projects and/or project proposals. The results also showed that collaboration among project partners is key to success and in some cases led to the outcome of improved cooperation, leading also to further collaboration and new projects, as they established important networks of international and local partners, enabling new funding applications.

4.1.1.3 External impacts of the projects

In addition to the planned outcomes, projects generated impacts that extend beyond the initially planned goals (see also

), which were also highlighted in the qualitative analysis. Based on discussions with focus group participants, it can be summarized that projects have stimulated **broader social, economic, environmental, institutional, and multiplicative effects** that will influence future well-being, and increased equality, even among those who were not direct beneficiaries. The broader (external) effects can be summarized in several points.

Broader social effects. One of the observed social effects is the **increased awareness of socially important issues**. Projects such as Children’s House have enhanced the understanding of child-friendly justice systems and the needs of vulnerable groups. This has led to better support for children in the justice system and the development of new policies and practices in this field. Projects addressing work-life balance issues have fostered greater awareness of sustainability and recycling, resulting in long-term effects on local communities. Projects aimed at youth have promoted mental health, social inclusion, and empowerment, particularly in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby improving support for young people in local communities.

Numerous educational effects can be expected to also have more lasting effects on education, primarily those, which were well accepted. For example, results include new methods such as outdoor education, which besides direct educational effects also provided participants with a deeper understanding of the natural environment and the importance of its preservation, and new digital platforms with teaching and learning materials.

These impacts among others include first a **broader use of materials within the educational system**, than was initially planned. The use of the prepared materials extended beyond the originally planned target groups by being used in more schools, higher education institutions, and universities. Free digital materials, initially intended for secondary school students, began to be used by students and professors at higher levels of education. These educational materials were for example also reported to be **used among non-target groups**, as it was reported that some **companies**, used the materials to train their employees, which was not originally anticipated. The **use of digital tools developed within the projects** had unexpected effects on increasing **competencies in digital learning**, not only among students but also among teachers and entrepreneurs.

Due to the **interest in the project activities**, the project partners and promoters were providing **broader access to education and training**. In addition to the planned number of participants, projects attracted other groups not initially included, enhancing access to new knowledge and methods for a broader population.

“(…) These materials were offered to companies for free, and we told them, ‘Look, this is free; you can also use it.’ (…) It was surprising to see many professors from higher education institutions using it. (…) This material is genuinely useful, not just for students in regular schooling but also for someone seeking additional education. (…) Its impact covers not just schools but also companies, higher education institutions, and universities — a truly broad application” (Interview 6).

“(…) Competency building in leadership, communication, and digital communication was intended to be conducted once for learners and once for educators. However, due to overwhelming interest, we conducted two additional sessions because the initial slots filled on the first day, and we had waiting lists—and we still have waiting lists for these sessions” (Interview 7).

The results of the projects were presented and utilized beyond the direct target groups, for example, in other schools. **Digital solutions** developed during the projects are **freely accessible**, significantly increasing the projects’ impact on a national level. The **use of modern technologies and materials** is an additional value added. In addition to the planned results, projects facilitated the development of additional

resources and tools, such as interactive platforms, teacher manuals, and equipment for outdoor learning. Products developed in the digital environment are accessible to the wider public.

Projects focusing on youth exceeded their original goals by incorporating additional activities that **improved mental health and social inclusion**. **Improving the work environment and raising awareness of the importance of work-life balance and the position of the disadvantaged** in the labour market was another positive broader social as well as economic impact, which was reported. Projects focused on soft skills and improving working conditions have promoted a balance between professional and private life and fostered a culture of inclusion and equality in companies.

During the implementation of the project, awareness of sustainable practices was raised not only among the target groups, but also among the general public, exceeding the initially set goals. It was highlighted that participation in projects led to spreading their impact at the local level, including the transfer of sustainable practices within households and local communities. In addition, the **collaboration with industry to increase understanding of needs and enhance employment opportunities of different groups** also led to unforeseen benefits. Strengthening partnerships with companies helped facilitate employment, even though such employment may not have always been permanent (highlighted in the quote). Collaboration between educational institutions and local businesses contributed to better integration of young people into the labour market and improved recognition of local economic needs.

"(...) When we started discussing the need to employ this person (a person with special needs), we selected them based on their expressed work preferences, and the partner we chose was a company that was the right size—large enough but also flexible enough to accommodate their needs" (Interview 2).
"(...) We are well recognized in Slovenia for this. Even when companies or chambers of commerce invite us to give lectures on sustainability, (...) they just call us directly" (Interview 4).
"(...) Involvement of children in the projects encouraged discussions about sustainable practices within their families and local communities" (Interview 4).

Connecting various stakeholders and establishing partnerships that remain active also after the end of the project, is another important result with a lasting impact. Participants in focus groups also highlighted that the work on the project contributed to strengthening the **mutual cooperation among project partners**. Projects often encouraged collaboration among educational institutions, businesses, local authorities, and NGOs. These collaborations enhanced dialogue between different stakeholders and created opportunities for further cooperation in new project consortia and beyond. Projects encouraged long-term connections between schools, companies, and non-governmental organizations within specific regions as well as more broadly. Partnerships established during the projects have remained active even after their conclusion, enhancing the sustainability of results.

"(...) This was the first project we carried out together, even though we had known the partners before. We really enjoyed it because we saw that working with them was very effective. Based on this first project, we also started developing other joint activities. For the local community and the broader region, it was a truly excellent experience, and I am very much looking forward to future projects" (Focus Group 1).
"(...) They are also applying for new projects together: "(...) As part of another project, we are conducting similar workshops, but the target groups are different (...)" (Focus Group 4).

Economic impacts. Economic effects encompass several positive impacts that stretch beyond the project timelines. Projects focused for example also on **strengthening local entrepreneurship**, as the activities supported the development of local businesses and innovative solutions. Participants gained knowledge and skills that they applied in launching new initiatives or improving existing business processes.

Project results **facilitated the transition of youth into the labour market**. Career centers or activities focused on facilitating the transition and empowering (disadvantaged) youth as well as improved connections between youth and employers, and helped to bridge the gap between labour market needs and available skills. Such projects also accelerated youth integration into the labour market and reduced

the brain drain from the region. Through participation in the projects, target groups/participants **gained soft skills** such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution, which **improved their employability**.

Environmental effects and promoting sustainable consumption practices. Projects addressing sustainability encouraged the use of environmentally friendly materials and practices, such as recycling, waste reduction, and the adoption of renewable energy sources and critical thinking among participants.

"(...) In our creative center, we strived to provide a relaxing environment where participants could step away from daily stress and create in a peaceful setting. (...) Participants became more connected to the products they created themselves and preferred using items they made over mass-produced industrial products. (...) Such items are more durable and can be recycled when damaged" (Focus Group 3).

"(...) Participants become more mindful of what they create and learn to appreciate the quality of their products. This also helps reduce the use of plastic and other waste materials (...)" (Focus Group 3).

Institutional impacts. There are also **several institutional effects**. First, it is important to mention improving management practices and capacity building, which both have a lasting effect. Institutions participating in the projects **improved their administrative, project management and organizational skills**, increasing their success in applying for new projects and enhancing the efficiency of managing and implementing future initiatives. Collaboration with donor project partners also enhanced knowledge of international project management and established long-term partnerships with potential for future endeavours. Projects such as the Children's House project created a new institutional form/framework that will continue to operate as part of the system, providing long-term support to target groups.

In addition, the project outcomes also have several multiplicative effects. First, the **transfer of best practices and knowledge transfer** (and exchange) are expected to have a lasting impact. Project partnerships also led to the development of new methods and practices. Study visits to Norway and Iceland provided insights into practices such as establishing a creative learning environment in the Slovenian context by improving teaching methods and pedagogical practices in schools. **New teaching and mentoring methods** were developed, which included some that were implemented beyond the scope of the projects, increasing the impact of the results. Donor states practices, such as blended learning, outdoor education, and sustainable methods, were adapted to the local context, encouraging reflection on teaching methods in schools.

4.1.1.4 *The role of thematic and geographical coverage*

The qualitative analysis also highlighted the role of thematic and geographical coverage and diversity in achieving project success. First, **geographical diversity increased access to different experiences, knowledge and stakeholders and incorporated various experiences** and perspectives. Collaboration with project partners from different regions brought broader viewpoints and diverse experiences, enhancing the quality of the projects. This diversity was reported to contribute to more innovative solutions. Greater **geographical coverage enables broader reach and a higher possibility of achieving goals**. Projects involving partners from different geographical regions achieved greater reach and impact as they could implement solutions on a broader level, including cross-border initiatives. Projects involving specific geographical areas were able to **adapt their solutions to the specific local needs, increasing their effectiveness**.

"(...) The geographical coverage was (...) in this project undoubtedly one of the best among the projects I've ever participated in. Also, the fact that all partners had prior experience, knew what we wanted, and already had connections with the users of what we were creating in the project, was extremely beneficial" (Interview 24).

*"(...) It was undoubtedly beneficial that we had partners from different parts of the region. So, I'm speaking only about the Slovenian partners; we covered ***, so we were based in **. (...) The geographical division of partners and their roles greatly influenced the project implementation, and I feel that we also learned from each other and exchanged perspectives (...)" (Interview 22).*

4.1.1.5 Sustainability and long-term impact (beyond the project's end)

The projects contributed several relevant outputs, which will also have lasting impact on society. The benefits of the projects will undoubtedly be visible over the next years due to good design, the inclusion of sustainable practices, and institutional support. The qualitative analysis specifically highlighted several important aspects in the sustainability of project results from the perspective of their outputs, impacts on target groups, capacity building, local economy strengthening and impact on sustainability in the long term.

Lasting project results. Most projects were designed to have long-term benefits. Materials, methods, and infrastructure developed within the projects will remain in use, allowing lasting impacts on target groups and broader society. Examples include teaching methods and materials. During the projects, several solutions of a lasting nature were developed (materials and examples), and the projects also contributed to certain systemic solutions. The introduction of digital platforms and materials enabling continued education and training was recognized as one of the most lasting solutions. Digital tools remain accessible to users even after the funding ends. The inclusion of new practices in the education system as a lasting improvement. Developed methods, such as outdoor learning, have become part of daily pedagogical practices. Projects often contributed to long-term changes by introducing new content — specialized, digital, or sustainability-oriented — into open educational resources. This ensures that knowledge gained through the projects is transferred to future generations. Online platforms and e-classrooms, developed as part of the projects, remain active, ensuring long-term access to educational content for teachers, mentors, and students. The founded competence centres, equipped with tools like robots loaded with Slovenian language models, VR goggles, 360-degree cameras, and other aids, will continue operating despite a lack of systemic funding.

"(...) Free materials, multimedia, interactive tools and so on (...) these materials are freely accessible" (Interview 6).

"(...) From the perspective of sustainability, perhaps the easiest way to explain the impact of these digital contents. These include various infographics and videos. For example, all the content we included in career and entrepreneurial workshops and those for counsellors. They are combined in this handbook, which is freely accessible and will remain available. Materials are accessible even after the project ends, so anyone can access them anytime" (Interview 22).

"(...) This handbook is a lasting solution. Another durable aspect is the online classroom, which is freely accessible. All that is needed is a free user registration. (...) Additionally, we agreed that this will remain accessible for at least five years. Even after the project ends, it will continue to be available. Moreover, we created a support network of institutions to back this up" (Interview 24).

"(...) Ensuring these are part of an open curriculum guarantees sustainability. I've already mentioned that we are looking for new developmental opportunities with partners, for more projects where we want to develop tools, materials, and educational resources that could be applied elsewhere. Our focus has been more on engineering or physics, but I personally believe that this approach could extend to other subject areas, such as chemistry, biology, labs, digital twins, and so on" (Interview 3).

"(...) The project will have a long-term impact on changes in pedagogical practice. Students want new approaches, and we also learn from them as they often adapt to new technologies more quickly. Thus, adapting the school system to modern needs and making lessons more dynamic will also help with their transition to the labor market" (Focus Group 2).

"(...) Schools and educational institutions can borrow equipment from us and receive training and support for its use. This activity remains ongoing, and we are very satisfied with this work (...)" (Focus Group 1).

The exchange of knowledge and practices among project partners and the establishment of long-term cooperation continues to spread the developed ideas. In addition, the establishment of a network of partners who continue to exchange knowledge and practices even after the funding period ends. Good practices also attract other schools, which were not directly involved in the project.

"(...) We now have ideas for the future, for new projects. We are currently writing one, applying for a call. Three partners from the entire partnership are moving forward together, and of course, we will use the knowledge we gained there, making it easier for us now" (Interview 2).

"(...) A key step was pilot implementation at two schools (...) At both schools, we trained ten teachers each, calling them 'multipliers.' These teachers were trained in the outdoor learning method, which we brought from Norway and adapted to the Slovenian education system. Additionally, both schools received physical outdoor classrooms as part of the project. This is a significant achievement, as schools often lack the funds for such investments (...) Outdoor classrooms are already in use. I often see children using them on my way to work, which is truly heart-warming. I believe this is concrete evidence that the project lives on" (Focus Group 2).

"(...) We noticed significant interest from other schools, as more are recognizing the need for new teaching methods that encourage active learning. In this way, we were able to achieve broader influence, demonstrating how schools can start making such changes even with limited resources" (Focus Group 2).

Institutionalizing effective practices is another important result. The Barnahus project has established a standardized approach for helping children who are witnesses or victims in criminal proceedings related to sexual integrity. This practice is now widely used, enhancing child protection and preventing further victimization in legal proceedings. The project has become part of the institutional system and is funded systemically, ensuring sustainability. In addition, the certificate of a "informal care" friendly company is another institutional solution, which could lead to lasting impact.

Lasting impact on target groups. Professional staff and teachers can benefit in the long term from being involved in the project. Training for teachers, youth workers, and other professionals has contributed to long-term competency development. These professionals now pass on their knowledge to new generations of students and colleagues. **Youth** was an important target group and projects have developed solutions and raised awareness with long term positive impact. Some projects have fostered entrepreneurial competencies, problem-solving skills, and social inclusion among youth, strengthening their readiness for the labour market or further education. For instance, the Career Center Posavje project improved connections between youth and local employers. **Employees and companies** were the third important target group that may have long-lasting positive effects. For example, one of the projects developed a competency measurement app, enabling companies to create lifelong learning systems for their employees. They also benefit directly from other solutions, such as the aforementioned certificate, the training tools, raised awareness about sustainable employment practices and awareness about the position of the disadvantaged groups.

"(...) It's a practical solution usable both in companies and higher education (...), as it's crucial today to first identify the competencies people already have and then plan how to enhance or empower them to meet the challenges of modern society" (Focus group 1).

"(...) This collaboration with companies, especially local ones, is very important. Previously, we had not worked with some of these companies, but now we have established excellent connections. This is extremely valuable as it allows us to work together to find practical and useful solutions. In this way, we can better understand how companies operate and support them with our knowledge" (Focus group 3).

Institutional impact and collaborative stability are the next important elements. First, the institutionalization of successful practices is very important. For example, Children's House has become a permanent institution funded by the state budget, ensuring its continued operation and dissemination of results at the systemic level. **Strengthened networks of stakeholders** is another already mentioned lasting result. Projects have facilitated stronger networks among schools, companies, and NGOs, supporting ongoing collaborations and new initiatives.

"(...) As the founder of kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools, we played a key role in connecting stakeholders. Within the municipality, we have a department that collaborated on staff education in schools and kindergartens (...) We believe the sustainability of results is ensured as the implemented practices continue to evolve and spread" (Focus Group 1).

Lasting economic results comprises the impact on youth, and business (local economy) development. **Improved employability of youth** is the first important impact, which may have a lasting result. Projects that connected educational institutions and local employers enhanced job opportunities for youth and promoted a better understanding of labour market needs. Companies involved in projects gained new approaches to problem-solving and increased their roles within local communities, fostering long-term collaborations with educational institutions. This can foster **business development** as well as **local development** at large. However, the **lasting impact of these benefits will depend also on stable funding, support from local communities, and the continued development of capacities to implement and disseminate the achieved results**. According to the qualitative analysis, the sustainability of project results beyond the projects' end will largely depend on several factors. First, the **financial capacity** is important and was mentioned several times. Financial limitations after project completion are a key barrier to the sustainability of solutions, as there is often a lack of funding after the project ends. Many solutions rely on additional resources, which may not be guaranteed. Maintaining and expanding developed solutions becomes a challenge once funding ends. Stable funding is essential for maintaining and upgrading developed solutions.

"(...) The general issue is that during a new financial perspective, there's a gap of one or two, even three years without calls" (Interview 16).

"(...) We constantly include these things in subsequent projects (...) Activities developed within this project have been partially or fully integrated into other workshops implemented through other projects. This essentially means we direct the knowledge forward. This is a standard practice we try to follow" (Interview 17).

"(...) Honestly, as an NGO, we constantly face the challenge of funding direct costs. Our only simple solution is to keep applying for and winning new projects" (Interview 18).

The lack of systematic institutional support for the expansion or **institutionalization of good solutions** is another challenge. Even when projects create effective solutions, ensuring these solutions become part of broader institutional policies or systems can be difficult. **Organizational capacity** is the next factor. Project partners have gained valuable experience and established effective structures for future projects. However, lack of financing after the project end, leads to changes in the employee and skills structure of project partners, leading to a loss of important competencies.

"(...) It's good that the municipality recognized the importance of these activities, which we still implement with municipal funding, so at least the project is extended. These are materials created as part of the project, making this perhaps the closest thing to a systemic solution" (Interview 22).

"(...) An application was established for maintaining a registry of individuals with autism. Clinics conducting diagnostics were supposed to provide data to this application to create the registry. (...) Unfortunately, only a few clinics were willing to do so, while the majority were not. The application was developed, but there was a lack of willingness and readiness from clinics and institutions to provide the data. (...) We also reached out to the ministry, as we believe the state should be the one to encourage the implementation of this process, but without success" (Focus Group 2).

4.1.2 Relevance

4.1.2.1 Alignment with programme expectations and added value of the programme

Generally, the project goals and achieved results were largely aligned with the expectations of the programme. Project promoters and project partners assessed that the projects achieved significant direct impacts and, in many cases, exceeded their basic objectives through broader societal and systemic effects. However, administrative requirements and varying levels of engagement among project partners posed challenges that should be considered when planning future projects.

Their main findings can be summarized as follows. First, the results and impacts are aligned with the requirements of the programme. The projects' effects, such as improved competencies, increased awareness of sustainable practices, and enhanced collaboration between educational institutions and employers (in various industries), were directly aligned with the programme key goals.

"(...) I think this project was so well designed and implemented that it probably wouldn't have won the tender if it didn't meet program expectations" (Interview 1).

"(...) Without this kind of funding, we wouldn't have had another suitable program in Slovenia or beyond to bring such innovations to the market" (Interview 3).

The focus on **education and training** was aligned with the programme goals. The projects **promoted the development of new teaching and training methods and the adaptation** of best practices, such as the "outdoor learning" concept, which was successfully transferred from Norway to local school environments. The projects **enhanced practical skills and provided support** for teachers, mentors, and professionals, aligning with the programme's goal of strengthening human capital.

Support for target groups was directly achieved as well as tangible results. Projects improved **access to education and supported vulnerable groups**, both in terms of developing competencies and mental health. Teachers and professionals gained **new competencies** that directly enhanced work methods, while employees acquired leadership skills and techniques for coping with stress. Projects encouraged **new practices**, such as adaptations in the learning process or the development of local career centers. Some projects not only met but surpassed their initial goals, **addressing additional target groups and producing outcomes beyond expected or facilitated institutional change**. Similarly, projects aimed at improving young people's mental health can also be highlighted. Involving youth in career programs and empowerment projects contributed to increased social and professional inclusion. The **projects delivered tangible outputs as well**, such as new teaching materials and infrastructure (e.g., outdoor classrooms and digital platforms), and trained a significant number of professionals.

Establishing and promoting bilateral cooperation, which is in more details explained in continuing, was also achieved. Collaboration with Norwegian and Icelandic project partners enabled the transfer of professional knowledge and expertise, both from the donor states to Slovenia and vice versa, enriching project implementation. However, challenges related to the adaptability and responsiveness of the donor project partners were noted in some cases.

Participants generally assessed that the programme created **significant added value**. This was most evident in the transfer of knowledge and practices, strengthening institutional capacities, supporting vulnerable groups, and ensuring the sustainability of results. Despite some challenges, such as administrative burdens and partner-related issues, the programme enabled the achievement of long-term positive changes that would not have been possible without it.

The first important value added is the transfer of best practices from the donor states. Participants emphasized that the donor project partners brought innovative practices and expertise, which elevated the quality of projects. For instance, a project aimed at educating or teaching about cultural heritage for primary school teachers so that they could pass this knowledge on to their pupils. Projects facilitated access to

knowledge usually possessed by specialists in the field that would otherwise not have been available and adapted it to school needs.

"(...) The project was set up this way because we noticed deficiencies in this area. (...) We, as a consortium, were actually the driving force because we knew exactly what we were talking about – the teaching profession is quite specific, especially in the field of cultural heritage" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) It was important that we visited Norway at the very beginning, where we gained key insights into their working methods. (...) The study visit allowed us to tailor certain activities (...) the results are now visible and being utilized, which is a great success" (Focus Group 2).

Professional **cooperation and bilateral relations were also strengthened**, as was already mentioned. The added value was recognized in the improved bilateral relations between Slovenia and the donor states (primarily Norway). Although challenges with project partners emerged in some cases, bilateral cooperation brought new perspectives and experiences.

Strengthening institutional capacities was another important contribution. Projects like Children's House, the Career Center Posavje or the PoMP Academy - an online platform for teachers and mentors, which offers a collection of practical tools, methodologies, modules, meetings and workshops for teaching entrepreneurship to young people - contributed to the establishment of lasting institutional solutions that go beyond short-term objectives. Participants regarded these achievements as significant milestones that would not have been possible without this programme.

"(...) It was easier for us because we had already worked on similar projects, which allowed for complementarity. For example, we had previously conducted training for adult educators, and now we transferred that knowledge to teachers and children. As part of the project, we also set up facilities where this will be carried out, and now we have classrooms where we will continue our work. The project was very successful for us and will continue because it aligns with our regular work, which, in my opinion, is crucial – that it's something we already use and will continue to use in the future" (Focus Group 1).

The added value was recognized also in empowering various groups (children in the judicial system, teachers facing the challenges of modern teaching, and young people seeking employment) to address their specific challenges. Trainings improved the **competencies, knowledge and confidence** of target groups. Participants in focus groups emphasized that new knowledge and methods contributed to better task performance and led to improved outcomes in working with children, young people, and other vulnerable groups.

4.1.2.2 *Overlap with other projects from the programme and other EU funded projects*

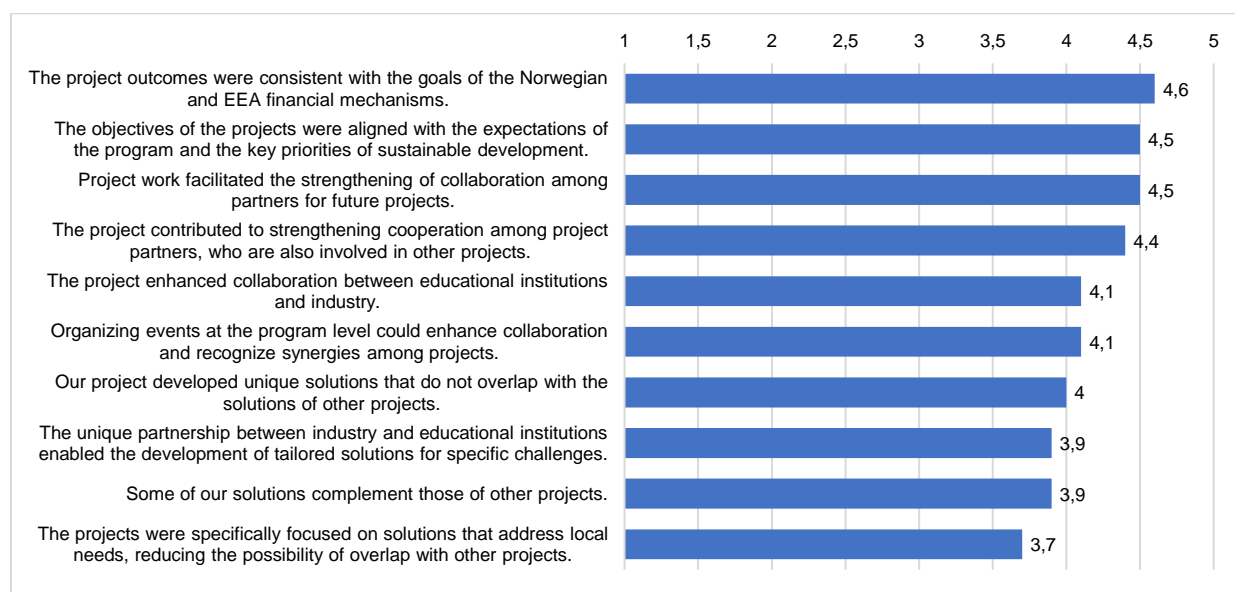
Most respondents were not well familiar with the specifics of other projects within the same programme, so perceptions of overlap may not reflect actual overlaps. Some suggested more events at the programme level to facilitate better networking and understanding of synergies. Projects generally focused on specific solutions within narrower themes, reducing the likelihood of overlap. This focus allowed customization to local needs and industries. Partnerships were designed for the achievement of specific goals. Consequently, collaboration with local industries and educational institutions created unique practices, further reducing overlap with other projects. Some projects created networks for ongoing collaboration, laying the foundation for future work.

"(...) We didn't have any contact with others (...) it would be great to know more about who's doing what and explore opportunities for collaboration" (Interview 20).

"(...) We successfully connected schools, educators, and industries, creating a unique collaboration" (Interview 6).

"(...) We knew of each other but had never worked together. This project helped build a valuable partnership we're still leveraging today" (Interview 15).

Figure 7: Average agreement with statements about relevance and overlap with other projects



Administrative and content overlaps with other programmes and funds. Some beneficiaries reported administrative overlaps, as similar reporting and management requirements were present in other programmes and funds, such as Erasmus+, Interreg, and other EU funds. This increased the administrative burden, as project partners had to manage multiple types of reporting simultaneously. At the content level, some goals and activities were similar to those that participants were already implementing in other programmes.

"(...) Within another project, we conduct similar workshops, but the target groups are different" (Focus Group 4).

According to the qualitative analysis, **complementarity with other programmes** brought specific advantages. Projects under the programme Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship focused on introducing **innovative practices and bilateral cooperation**, while programmes like Erasmus+ enabled **broader dissemination** of these practices at an international level. Similar themes addressed in multiple projects increased the visibility of issues, such as youth mental health, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and sustainable practices. **Projects with partial overlaps allowed best practices** from one programme to be **transferred** to another. For example, methods developed in projects within the programme Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship were also applied in Erasmus+ projects.

Some projects **addressed the same target groups**, such as youth, teachers, or vulnerable populations, but **differed in their specific approaches or methods**. For instance, projects focusing on youth inclusion complemented other initiatives aimed at empowering young people and developing their entrepreneurial skills.

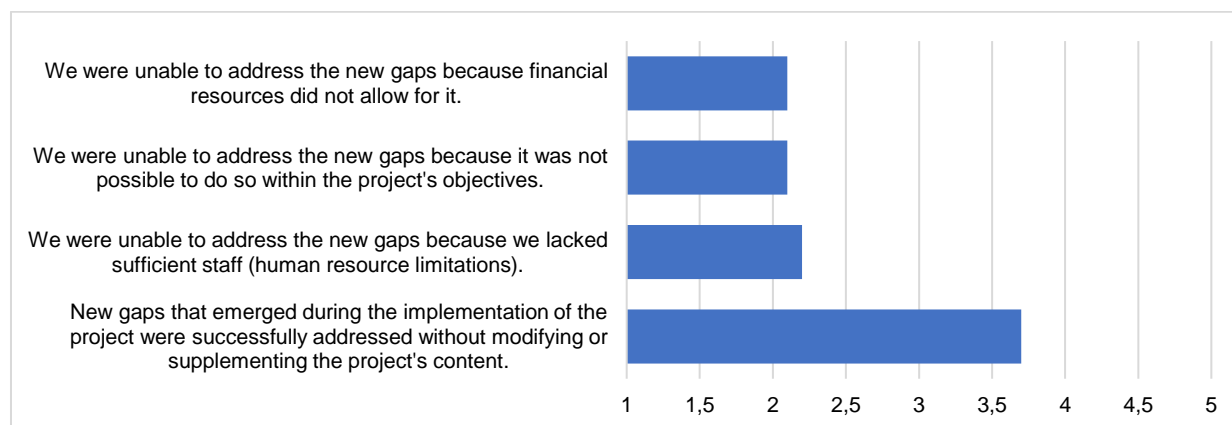
The **challenges resulting from project overlaps** mainly concerned **prioritization difficulties and varying reporting standards**. Overlapping activities across different projects caused some partners to face conflicts in managing their time and resources, as they had to divide their capacity among multiple projects. Focus group participants also pointed out that different programmes often require varying reporting standards, increasing the complexity of project management.

4.1.2.3 Addressing gaps between achieved outcomes and emerging needs

Several gaps between achieved outcomes and remaining/emerging needs during the project implementation were identified, some of which reflect systemic challenges rather than content-based gaps. Key findings show (1) **Time, allotted for project implementation**, also due to delays, was perceived as a challenge. (2) **Lack of digital competencies**. Many projects addressed a significant skills gap in digital competencies through training and educational content. However, more workshops and resources were desired. (3) **Limited systemic support for long-term solutions** is available. Short-term funding cycles hinder the sustainability of systemic solutions, with NGOs often bearing the burden of support. (4) Some projects struggled due to **insufficient willingness to cooperate from public institutions**. (5) **Vulnerability of at-risk groups to project-based funding**, when the projects conclude, was another major challenge, both from the perspective of target groups as well as employees. (see also Figure 8).

"(...) We addressed it well, but there's still so much demand for these workshops" (Focus group 2)
"Support comes only through well-written project proposals. If you don't get funding, there's no support" (Interview 2).
"(...) The largest public institution wouldn't collaborate, even after numerous attempts" (Interview 2).
"(...) Once the project ended, we were back to square one" (Focus group 3).
"(...) 24 months isn't enough for quality implementation. It's only a beginning" (Interview 7).

Figure 8: Average agreement with statements regarding the ability to address emerging gaps



4.1.3 Bilateral cooperation

4.1.3.1 Consideration of general bilateral goals in project planning and implementation

According to the respondents, alignment of projects to program goals in the field of bilateral cooperation was good. One of the overall objectives of the programme is to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor states and the beneficiary states, including knowledge transfer, good practices, and experiences. Projects improved bilateral relations between Slovenia and the Donors, fostering knowledge exchange and establishing lasting partnerships, which participants noted as a foundation for future collaborations (

). Project development often included identifying specific donor states' practices that could be adapted to the local context. Collaboration also contributed to the **implementation of systemic solutions**. Bilateral partnership directly influenced the development of sustainable solutions, such as establishing systemic support for children in the judicial system or innovative teaching methods. For instance, the concept of creating learning environment and various work-life balance practices are two notable examples transferred from Donors. However, ensuring consistent adherence to all principal guidelines was not always feasible due to external constraints or environmental changes.

"(...) The alignment was absolutely there. However, we couldn't fully develop everything. We tried throughout the project to incorporate horizontal principles, as they call them" (Interview 22).

"(...) We had a Norwegian partner, and we learned a lot about the integration of foreigners" (Interview 16).

"(...) What bothered me most was the inflexibility of the program" (Interview 7).

"(...) They contributed as much as they were obligated to, but it would have been nice if they had done more" (Interview 7).

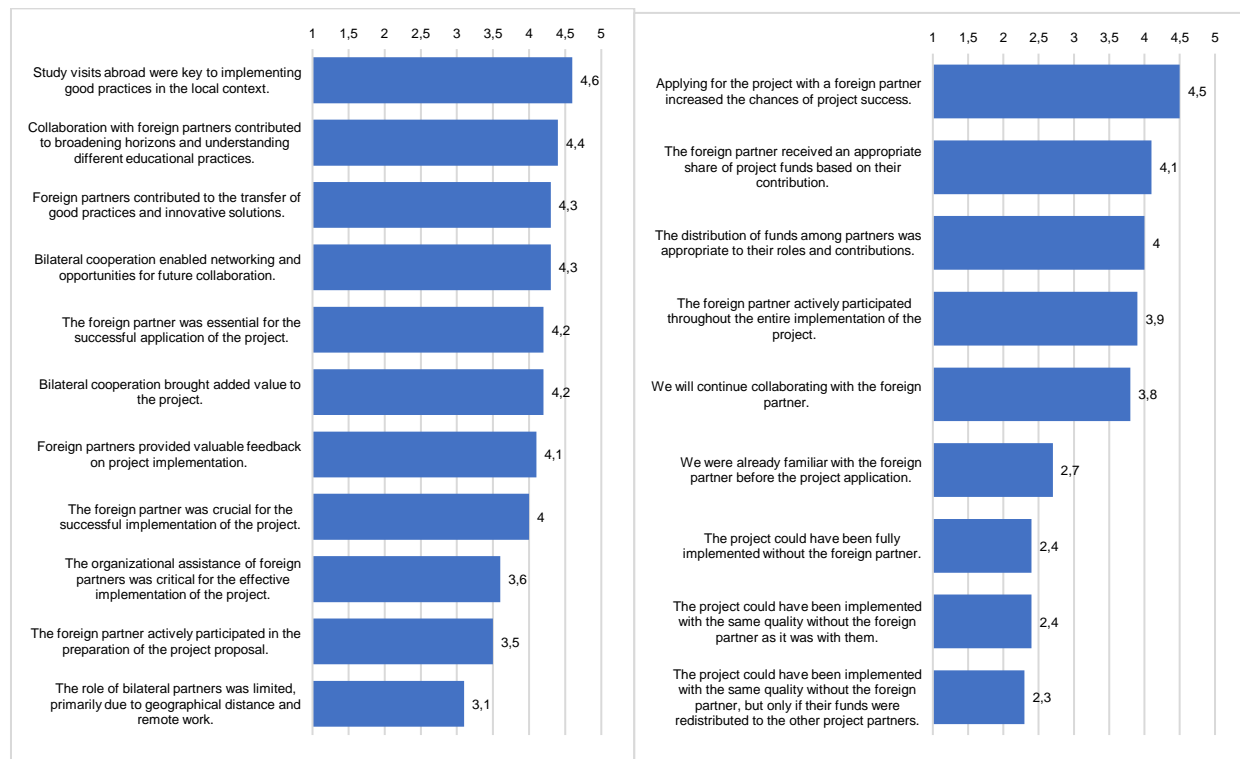
"(...) Choosing Norwegian partners can be challenging because their pool is limited, and they are often involved in too many projects simultaneously" (Focus Group 1).

4.1.3.2 Donor project partners contribution to project implementation and outcomes

Based on interview transcripts, the involvement of the donor project partners in the projects was primarily in the transfer of new practices and broadening of horizons, study visits, they were an important source of feedback, assisted in organization and provided also feedback on the work. In addition, partnership opened opportunities for future collaboration. These results are confirmed both by the survey results as well as qualitative data (interviews and focus groups).

Involvement in the stage of project development. Role of the donor project partners was acknowledged already in the planning process. In most projects, the donor project partners were involved from the project preparation phase, enabling the inclusion of their expertise and experience in the design of activities. This alignment helped synchronize project goals with the overall bilateral objective. However, it was noted that in some cases, the donor project partners were insufficiently involved in the initial stages, affecting later alignment of expectations. However overall, the data confirms the perceived benefits of the donor project partners (Figure 9 and qualitative data).

Figure 9: The importance and role of cooperation with donor project partners (average agreement with the statements, 1= completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*



*Questions were answered by 47 - 51 respondents.

"(...) Major issues with partners from donor states arose in project groups where the partners were not prepared to do their share of the work. Projects where the partners were involved from the beginning showed greater alignment and complementarity (...)" (Focus Group 1).

" (...) A colleague found the Norwegian partner, but we had issues with him from the beginning to the end of the project. He didn't take things seriously and seemed to think that just because he was Norwegian, he was entitled to some funding. The partner was unresponsive, did things his own way, and even when he came to Slovenia, he didn't stick to the agreements. In the end, we were the ones who wrote his report and essentially did everything for him (...)" (Focus Group 3).

"(...) We had quite a few issues with the Norwegian partner. These were not related to communication, which went well, but rather to the implementation of project objectives. While the institution itself did not change during the project application process, the individuals initially planned for collaboration were replaced. Part of the problems can be attributed to the fact that new team members took over the tasks and perhaps did not fully internalize the project (...)" (Focus Group 1).

Involvement in project implementation. Donor project partners played a critical role in **transferring knowledge and good practices**. The donor project partners, in particular, contributed specialized knowledge, innovative solutions, and practices that were not readily available to Slovenian beneficiaries. Without this contribution, projects might have been less effective or required greater effort to source expertise locally. This was especially true for learning specific methods from their experience. Study visits to donor states institutions provided Slovenian project partners with direct insight into educational methods, which proved invaluable for implementation in the local context.

"(...) Our Norwegian partners offered us additional knowledge, and we prepared extensively to gain as much experience from them as possible. Additionally, we sought out other organizations during a study visit and tried to learn as much as we could from those interactions" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) We learned from them, seeing how they do things, as we have quite similar approach, which made them a good example" (Interview 14).

"(...) The partner's role was more about transferring good practices and providing feedback on whether we were doing things right" (Interview 17).

"(...) Study visits to Norway were crucial as we could directly observe how they organize work in educational institutions" (Interview 17).

"(...) Their contribution was significant as they showed us alternative systems" (Interview 17).

Support during the project implementation. The donor project partners were not only a source of good practices but also a **provider of feedback**. They critically **assisted project work and provided feedback** on whether activities were being conducted effectively. The donor project partners often acted as advisors and mentors, enhancing the quality of project execution. Their role was particularly praised in **training teachers and other professionals**. The donor project partner also provided in one case **organizational assistance and helped with coordination**, therefore playing a significant role in organizing and coordinating activities, enhancing project efficiency. In addition, these project partners were mentioned to **strengthen networks and enhance future collaboration opportunities**.

"(...) We were particularly impressed by the Norwegian partner's efforts during the study visit. They introduced us to local organizations, enabling the transfer of good practices and subsequent collaboration during the project" (Interview 20).

"(...) The Norwegian partners were not only a source of motivation, providing fresh insights and new knowledge, but their efforts to connect us as partners, especially post-COVID, were crucial" (Interview 2).

Resource allocation was generally deemed appropriate to the roles. Donor project partners brought expertise, experience, and infrastructure, justifying their share of resources. It was noted that resource distribution is typically aligned at the project's outset based on each partner's role and contribution.

While many projects highlighted the role of the donor project partners, some also faced challenges in cooperation. First, the **involvement of a donor project partner was seen as necessary**, these project partners were perceived as essential for successful project selection. Second, participants mentioned a lack of engagement. In some cases, the **donor project partners did not necessarily fulfil their responsibilities in the projects**. Issues included unresponsiveness, inactivity during project implementation, and limited adaptability to the specific needs of Slovenian project partners. It was also mentioned that **perception of dominance** by the donor project partners was perceived as a challenge. Also, the lack of understanding project in depth, while providing feedback was mentioned. Although many projects achieved positive outcomes, **some lacked the full engagement** of the donor project partners, limiting the potential benefits of collaboration.

"(...) We knew we couldn't apply for the project without a Norwegian partner" (Interview 12).

"(...) Our team, including Slovenian students, wanted direct interaction with Norwegian students, but this was not facilitated. It seemed like they weren't prepared or fully engaged with the project" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) I found it uncomfortable that the Norwegian partner was in a dominant position. We are used to egalitarian collaboration, where all perspectives are equally valued. Here, we had to constantly assert that Slovenian partners also bring valuable contributions" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) Some partners acted like 'consultants'—they come and go without fully grasping the project's depth" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) There is often a misconception that Slovenia lags in teaching methods. This project was an opportunity for mutual learning. On some topics, we found that our approaches were as good or even better" (Focus Group 1).

"(...) We could have executed the project equally well without the Norwegian partner. The insights gained were not groundbreaking or new to us" (Focus Group 1).

Challenges in acquiring donor project partners were frequently highlighted. Administrative rigidity was cited as a significant challenge. Respondents noted the need for greater flexibility in project implementation to better address field needs. While project promoters were generally satisfied with the donor project partners, especially regarding the transfer of knowledge and good practices during study visits, **geographical distance often limited their deeper involvement**. Remote collaboration (e.g., via Zoom) was not perceived as equivalent to in-person interaction. As a result, some felt that the donor project partners' role remained limited to basic collaboration without significant enhancement.

4.1.4 Communication

Best practices in communicating project results included the use of digital platforms, organizing public events, collaborating with the media, and employing creative and visual approaches. Successful projects focused on engaging the broader public through personal stories and interactive activities, which enhanced their impact and visibility. For long-term promotion of the results, a pre-planned, sustainable communication strategy was key.

4.1.4.1 Communication, project visibility and achievement of the communication plan

Generally, the communication and visibility of projects was perceived as good, with some challenges related to limited resources and unresponsiveness of project partners. Projects with a clearly defined communication plan were more successful in achieving visibility, but longer-term strategies, continuous communication throughout the project duration, and greater engagement from all project partners could have further contributed to the lasting impact of the results.

Communication channels. The main communication channels were project webpages, conferences and social media. Also, workshops, other institutions' webpages and local print media as well as online media and press conferences were used (Figure 10). Use of **online platforms, social media, and local media** was deemed effective in reaching target groups, particularly youth as well as development of materials and handbooks, internal communication for companies. Also, involving **decision-makers** in promotional

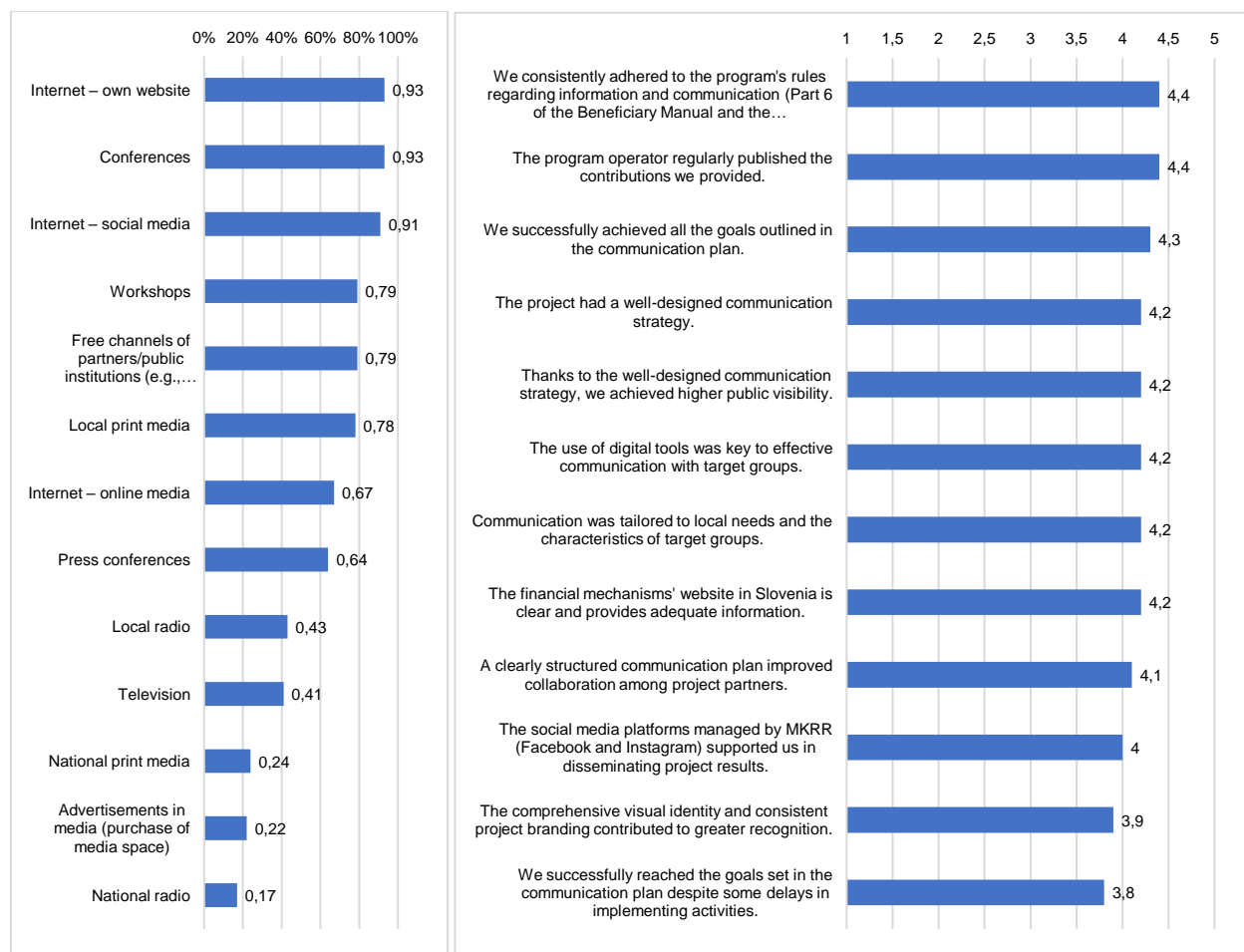
activities helped achieve communication goals and increased project visibility. Some smaller projects failed to achieve broad visibility as their activities were often **limited to the local environment** without sufficient regional or national reach.

“(...) In addition, it’s essential to create events that connect various groups – professionals, users, employers, and the broader public. Digital tools, such as online campaigns, can significantly enhance visibility” (Focus Group 2).

“(...) A handbook we’re preparing as a support tool for professionals will include concrete guidelines and advice for working with students with autism, which is crucial for the long-term impact of the project” (Focus Group 2).

“(...) We invited ministry representatives responsible for this area to the event. This was our way of presenting project results and highlighting necessary changes for the future. Involving decision-makers is essential to ensure our solutions are supported at a systemic level” (Focus Group 2).*

*Figure 10: The importance of selected media (left, % of respondents that used a certain media, multiple answers were possible) and perceptions regarding the communication (right, average agreement with the statements, 1= completely disagree, 5=completely agree)**



*58 respondents answered the question on the type of media used, 57-58 evaluated aspects of communication

Projects with **well-planned and targeted promotional activities** (online campaigns, media coverage, final events) achieved wide visibility among target groups and the general public. For example, the Children’s House project became a “*symbol of systemic solutions for handling children in the justice system*” (Focus

Group 6). **Influential individuals** were used as "**Project Ambassadors**" and their influence helped raise awareness of projects and their goals. Well-designed final conferences and workshops were significant in presenting project results to the general public and stakeholders. **Projects with clear communication plans** generally achieved their goals successfully, as clarity enhanced **coordination and stakeholder alignment and cooperation**. This included the use of social media and public events for promotion. **Unified graphic designs** and consistent branding for all projects contributed to better visibility. **Digital tools** were crucial for effective communication with target groups, enabling real-time progress tracking and information sharing. A potential **area for improvement** is better tailoring of the communication to local needs and specific characteristics of target groups.

"(...) As for the communication plan, of course, we achieved everything we were supposed to do" (Interview 19).

"(...) We communicated in many different ways, from paid promotions on social media to the platform itself functioning as a communication tool, along with press conferences and media presence" (Interview 18).

"(...) We agreed that each week one partner would be responsible for preparing some content for publication on social media or websites" (Interview 24).

"(...) For promotion purposes, we even created billboards, which weren't initially in the communication plan, but we decided would be beneficial" (Interview 15).

"(...) We established a communication plan at the beginning and divided responsibilities among partners. Who does what, where, and how" (Interview 15).

"(...) We strive to spread the message gradually through personal stories, experiences, and professional efforts. Despite being challenging, we've managed to involve some employers, a significant step forward, especially since they rarely encounter issues related to individuals with autism in their daily operation." (Focus Group 6).

Project promoters and partners were, on average, very satisfied with the communication aspects, and the set goals were achieved (Figure 10). Some projects focused their communication locally, while others targeted broader audiences, considering project goals and target groups. The qualitative analysis confirms the findings from the survey. The **communication plan**, which included different activities, such as online communication and live events, promotional materials etc. was **mostly executed successfully**, although some activities experienced **delays**. Projects with **well-designed public communication strategies** achieved **greater visibility and engagement** with target groups. In projects with clearly defined communication plans that included specific activities, participants reported good implementation. Plans often encompassed social media posts, public events, and material distribution.

In some cases, communication plans were not fully implemented due to a lack of time, resources, or a clear understanding of their importance. This occasionally reduced the expected impact of public dissemination. Project partners highlighted the need to focus more on sustainable communication activities to ensure project results remain visible even after funding ends.

"(...) A video would have been an excellent medium. Unfortunately, we didn't have access to a production team, and we may have recognized this potential too late" (Focus Group 3).

Qualitative analysis also highlighted some **good practices in communication**. These include (1) **use of digital tools, online platforms and social media**. Among these (a) projects utilizing **social media platforms** (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) to inform the public about activities and results reached a broader audience. These platforms were often used to share photos, videos, and stories that showcased the projects' impacts on target groups. (b) **Online accessibility** was important. For example, digital platforms made educational materials and other results accessible to a wider audience, increasing the sustainability of the projects' impact. For instance, developed manuals were publicly available on project or organizational websites. (c) **Video content creation and sharing** has also been perceived beneficial to increase visibility. Projects that create short videos presenting key outcomes and individual stories of beneficiaries could be used for promotion at events and online, enhancing visibility.

“(…) All the materials we prepared were uploaded online, so they will remain accessible. (…) A platform for online interactive content was created, which teachers can use. Although we still face some technical challenges, teachers really appreciate the material because it allows them to easily use it in the classroom without needing to search for additional resources on other platforms like YouTube” (Focus Group 3).

“(…) A video would certainly have been an excellent medium as well. Unfortunately, we did not have a production team available, and perhaps we realized this potential too late” (Focus Group 4).

The organization of public events was also important, in particular (a) **final events/conferences**, which were crucial for communicating project outcomes. Key stakeholders, media representatives, and the public attended, enabling broader promotion of results. Engaging recognizable figures (e.g., stand-up comedian) in project result communication garnered significant attention. (b) **Workshops and open days** contributed positively to visibility. Workshops organized for different target groups, such as teachers, parents, or youth, had a direct impact. Participants could test the developed methods and tools, increasing their adoption. **Engagement with media**, in particular (a) articles in **local media** were important. Many projects leveraged local newspapers, radio stations, and television to disseminate information about results. Media coverage included interviews with participants, presentations of key achievements, and updates on follow-up activities. Also, articles in (b) **national media** were used. Discussions with project partners revealed that some had long-standing relationships with national media outlets, facilitating easier access to editors and better communication of project results.

Collaboration with regional stakeholders, partnerships with local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enhanced projects' visibility at the regional level. These stakeholders often shared information about project results through their communication channels. **Creative communication** practices, for example (1) **visual communication** contributed to visibility as well. Projects employed infographics and visual representations to illustrate results and impacts in a simple and engaging manner. These visuals effectively engaged the general public and target groups with less technical expertise. (2) **Sharing individual success stories** (i.e. personal “success stories”) of those who benefitted from projects proved highly effective in increasing public interest. These stories were shared on websites, social media platforms, and media outlets. (3) **Youth involvement in promotion** achieved more authentic and appealing presentations of results, such as through social media and creative workshops.

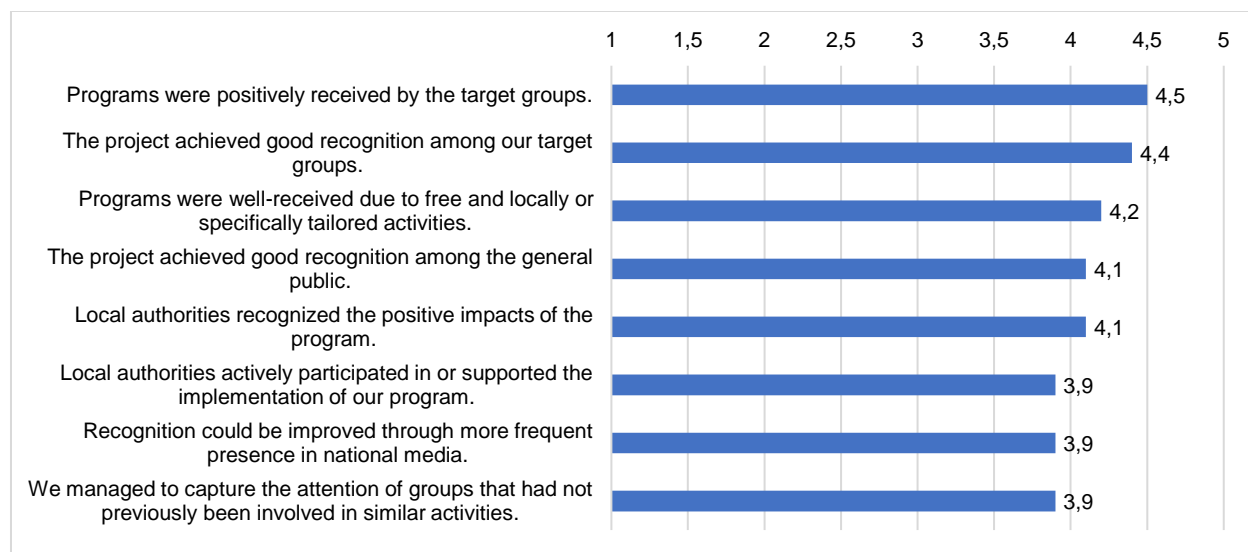
Developing long-term communication plans was also deemed important. Successful projects included strategies for continued promotion of results even after funding ended. This involved maintaining online platforms and informing the media about ongoing activities.

4.1.4.2 Perception of the projects/project results by target groups, stakeholders, and the general public

Qualitative analysis reveals that according to the beliefs of the participants, the target groups generally had a positive perception of the projects, primarily because they benefitted from the (free) results (Figure 11).

The qualitative analysis also shows that: (1) Most target groups and stakeholders appreciated the projects and appreciated the work. Free workshops tailored to local needs were particularly well-received. While activities were well-recognized within target groups, they struggled to establish visibility among the general public, especially in areas where the projects were not directly active. Local authorities recognized the project as a positive contribution and generally cooperated with organizers. Despite local success, challenges remained in achieving broader visibility, as reflected in limited national media coverage (also Figure 10 and Figure 11). Projects also succeeded in engaging and involving individuals who had not previously shown interest in such activities.

Figure 11: Perceived benefits of the projects in the public and target groups as seen by project partners / project promoters (agreement with the statements, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree)*



*59-60 responses

"(...) We only heard positive feedback about our project (...) nothing bad, just good" (Interview 15).
"(...) Of course, they appreciated that the workshops were free and conducted in their hometowns, so they didn't have to travel to Ljubljana" (Interview 7).
"(...) If you stopped someone on the street and asked them about it, I doubt they would know much" (Interview 22).
"(...) We had a segment on local television, but not much more, which highlights room for improvement" (Interview 7).
"(...) Some teachers who had never engaged with this before decided to participate because it was presented in an appealing way" (Interview 1).

5 Policy proposals

Based on discussions with representatives of the Programme Operator and the National Focal Point, project partners and project promoters as well as the survey responses, six key recommendations can be made (other recommendations are available in the analysis).

A lengthy programming period significantly shortened the time period available for actual project implementation and is the main underlying factor for the delays in the case of projects which were dependent on changes in legislation or the public procurement process.

Recommendation #1: Binding timeline for programming period and more time for project selection, evaluation, preparation and implementation. The Donor States should introduce a binding timeframe for negotiations, agreements and drafting, approval of legal bases and other activities in the programming phase. For the period of 2014-2021, both Memoranda of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian and the EEA Financial Mechanism have been signed in April 2018. Subsequently, the Programme Agreement for the financing of the Programme "Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship" was finalized in December 2019. The call for proposals for co-financing of projects under the programme Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship was only published in May 2021, with an application deadline of September 2021, the selection of projects in spring 2022 and the completion of projects no later than 30 April 2024. This timeline is inadequate not only due to the time required to obtain various permits and manage complex public procurement procedures but also

for the overall execution of activities. It is crucial to consider potential unforeseen complications, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included restrictions on in-person gatherings. A structured timeline is essential, allocating approximately one-third of the period for coordination with donors and program preparation, and two-thirds for project selection and implementation, to ensure there is sufficient time for comprehensive project execution. A binding timeline is essential to ensure sufficient time for project implementation.

Discussions with project partners revealed that **effective and competent management is very important**. Projects, where the project promoter had experience from prior projects, legislative procedures and/or public procurement procedures and a clear plan for managing delays, were more successful in addressing challenges related to the project timeline. However, the role of the other project partners is also critical. Their experiences, responsibility for tasks, adherence to deadlines, and timely communication significantly impact the structure of the partnership and the successful execution of the project. Project partners often adjusted their activities and schedules to make up for delays and ensure the timely completion of key tasks. However, it is also important that the administrative procedures allow some flexibility. In cases where the project promoter demonstrated an understanding of setbacks, delays were managed without significant consequences for the outcomes.

In terms of consortium composition, including relevant ministries can be beneficial, especially when their participation is substantively linked to the project's goals. Collaborating with ministries and similar public institutions adds value only if it aligns directly with the project objectives. For example, there have been instances of poor responsiveness from some public institutions regarding collaboration, as noted by project promoters. When engaging such entities, a different strategy is required. A potential solution involves the project promoter initially reaching out to the Programme Operator, who could then issue an official invitation for participation. This approach ensures proactive involvement from the outset, avoiding surprises about non-cooperation during the reporting stage.

Recommendation #2: In the process of evaluating applications, the Programme Operator should put more emphasis on the consortium composition, the project promoter's competencies in project management, knowledge of the relevant legislation, and the management of public procurement processes. In the process of preparing the call for proposals and evaluating the experience of project promoters, it would be advisable to require the submission of references related to managing public procurement procedures and international teams. From the perspective of consortium composition, it makes sense to consider including relevant ministries, particularly when their involvement is substantively relevant to the project.

Regarding bilateral cooperation, greater engagement from the donor project partners in the early or even preparatory stages of the project would be beneficial. Bilateral cooperation brings higher value when sufficient time is allocated both for forming quality partnerships and throughout the project implementation. Some participants noted that collaboration with donor project partners could be more intensive and consistent, especially in cases where their role was limited or unclear. Planning visits during the early phase of the project was suggested to encourage greater involvement from both Slovenian and donor project partners. It should also be emphasized that the pool of donor beneficiaries ready to engage as donor project partners and possessing the necessary competencies is limited, often because these partners are involved in multiple beneficiary countries, working on similar themes, which can spread their resources thin. Additionally, challenges related to administration have been observed, such as a lack of familiarity with reporting rules among donor project partners, who sometimes do not adhere to the program's reporting guidelines but instead report in their own preferred formats. These issues underscore the need to consider different forms of collaboration with project partners from donor countries to ensure smoother integration and compliance with project standards.

Recommendation #3: Maximising project impact through diverse forms of bilateral collaboration. At the programme development stage, Programme Operators and Donor Programme Partners should jointly identify programme outcomes where bilateral cooperation can add significant value. Additionally, it is important to consider promoting other forms of collaboration between Slovenian project partners and donor project partners, as the added value in terms of ensuring results could be even higher if these partners

participated either as external experts or as subcontractors for specific activities (at a certain stage of project implementation only). In the case of additional points being awarded for bilateral partnerships, as was the case in on the existing scoring system, it would be more appropriate to determine the number of points awarded for the inclusion of a donor project partner based on the partner's past experience in participating in international projects and their availability of resources rather than just for their inclusion in the project partnership. Additionally, it would be beneficial to consider implementing restrictions on participation in multiple consortium groups simultaneously as donor project partners, to ensure more focused and effective partnerships. To facilitate the formation of high-quality partnerships, particularly with donor project partners, it is advisable to extend the application period in these calls, allowing project promoters additional time to apply.

Participants suggested **simplifying administrative procedures**, as the extensive reporting and controls sometimes shifted focus away from the substantive work of the projects. They proposed clearer and more consistent support in project management, particularly regarding accounting requirements. The Programme Operator ought to enhance the skills of existing and potential project promoters in creating pertinent and detailed projects, working with partners, and overseeing international projects (where possible). For example, the Programme Operator or possibly the Financial Mechanism Office could coordinate capacity-building activities which ensure projects meet the needs of target groups, fortify partnerships, and facilitate the sharing of project management knowledge.

Recommendation #4: Simplifying administrative procedures and enhancing project promoter skills in project design, partner collaboration, and international project management. It would be beneficial to consider conducting additional workshops for potential project applicants during the call for proposals period. At these workshops, potential applicants could be informed about the content of the call and provided with guidance on how to write a compelling project proposal. To support the organization of additional workshops, a portion of the financial resources could be provided either by the Programme Operator from the management budget or by the donor countries. Additionally, it might be useful to present examples of best practices. Also organising additional project management workshops for first-time participants in the Financial Mechanisms' projects after their approval would be advantageous not only for the current programme but also for building capacity for future applications on various international and national projects.

There is also an evident desire to put greater **focus on long-term funding and planning** for lasting impacts. Participants suggested enabling activities which would preserve and expand achieved results even after the projects conclude. In this context, considering the financing continuity, ensuring a source of financing to avoid the loss of human capital to other projects/jobs and stimulating some overlap with other projects (but different timelines) (consequent knowledge transfer) can be relevant. Projects that included relevant ministries (e.g., the Barnahus project) faced fewer challenges in integrating their results into existing systemic frameworks.

Recommendation #5: Establish a more sustainable financial support from state budget. Achieving sustainability of results and long-term impacts would be significantly greater if a system could be established for continuing funding to ensure that the best outputs with impact on outcomes relevant from a national development perspective can be efficiently incorporated as systemic solutions or widely used practices, alternatively also further upgraded. More systematic integration of project results into national policies and practices would also increase the long-term impact of the programmes financed by the EEA or Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

In terms of communication, several suggestions were made. A key recommendation is the need for better planning of the communication budget to ensure adequate resources are available. Enhanced inclusion and active participation of donor project partners in communication activities are crucial for raising the projects' profiles. Additionally, the responsiveness of these partners in such activities should be improved to maximize visibility. Many project teams have successfully boosted visibility by organizing visits of Norwegian and Icelandic project partners to Slovenia, showcasing the tangible benefits of such engagements. To address the constraints reported by several project partners due to limited financial and human resources for promotional efforts, a more strategic allocation and planning of the communication

budget is essential. Respondents highlighted a good practice in project communication, where one of the project partners was responsible for implementing communication activities from the start of the project. Project partners proposed additional activities aimed at **supporting vulnerable groups**, such as children, at-risk youth, and socially excluded individuals.

Recommendation #6: More focus on promotion and dissemination activities in the process of project development. More promotion and dissemination activities during the project would increase the visibility and impact of projects, especially among the broader public. Stimulating project promoters to begin communication efforts at the beginning of the project, with clearly assigned responsibilities in work packages, would improve visibility. Developing long-term strategies to keep project results in the public's awareness could enhance the impact of activities even after their conclusion.

6 Conclusion

The evaluation of the "Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship, and Youth Entrepreneurship" programme shows that it made an important contribution to improving human resources in Slovenia. The programme focused on improving the relevance of education and training, strengthening cooperation between institutions, supporting disadvantaged groups, improving work-life balance, and building skills in education. These efforts addressed key social challenges in a systematic way.

The projects mostly achieved their goals, and in some cases even exceeded expectations. Collaboration between Slovenian and donor project partners played an important role. This bilateral cooperation helped transfer knowledge and introduced new ideas and methods. The development of digital tools, innovative teaching approaches, and targeted solutions for specific groups had a positive impact. Many projects also tackled broader challenges, such as increasing employability, promoting inclusion, and supporting educators in adapting to new teaching methods.

However, some challenges were identified. Administrative processes were often too complex, and coordination between partners was not always effective. In some cases, project goals were set too high, making them difficult to achieve. These issues suggest the need for simpler reporting requirements, better guidance during project design, and more inclusive planning processes. Bilateral cooperation with the donor states was generally positive but could be further improved to ensure better alignment and engagement.

Overall, the programme provides a strong foundation for future projects. Continued investment in education, targeted support for vulnerable groups, and better collaboration between sectors will be essential to build on these results. By addressing the identified challenges and applying the lessons learned, future programmes can have an even greater impact and further contribute to the development of skills, inclusion, and innovation in Slovenia.

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8 APPENDIX 1: Project descriptions

Project descriptions are prepared on the basis of project applications, project presentations⁷ and final reports in the electronic monitoring system (eMS), summarizing main characteristics and results.

8.1 Outcome 1: “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)”

In total, 11 projects contributed to the outcome “Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)”.

1. Dvig digitalnih kompetenc (acronym: digi.komp, engl. Raising digital competences)

The "digi.komp" project focused on developing and piloting 39 new teaching and learning practices aimed at enhancing digital competencies for work and life, targeting various age groups and educational levels. The project sought to promote the use of digital technology through three contact points designed to integrate and encourage the active use of modern digital technology. Additionally, it aimed to increase the active involvement of vulnerable groups in social life by raising the competencies of teachers, mentors, and other public sector employees. By encouraging innovation and creativity in both formal and non-formal education, the project aimed to develop new learning approaches that were responsive to the needs of a digital society. The Adult Education Centre of Zasavje led the project's development and implementation, coordinating training and workshops with a broad network of participants. The Cultural Institution Delavski dom Trbovlje and the Library of Tone Seliškar Trbovlje contributed their expertise in digital culture, technology, and literacy. The Norwegian project partner, Píksel Produksjoner Ltd., played a key role by providing expertise in digital technologies and facilitating the exchange of good practices and knowledge between Slovenia and Norway. The primary target groups for the project included teachers and educational staff across pre-school, primary, and secondary education, while the secondary target groups encompassed public sector employees, vulnerable groups, adults, and the elderly. Key outputs of the project included the development of new digital competence learning practices for children, adults, and the elderly, training programs involving more than 260 educators, mentors and other knowledge multipliers, and the exchange of knowledge and good practices between Slovenian and Norwegian project partners through study visits and the joint preparation of training programs. The project was expected to significantly enhance digital competencies among educators, public sector employees, and the general population, improve teaching and learning practices through the integration of modern digital technologies, and strengthen bilateral relations and knowledge exchange between Slovenia and Norway. The Norwegian project partner, Píksel Produksjoner Ltd., was instrumental in providing expertise, facilitating study visits, and contributing to the development and implementation of these new digital learning practices.

2. Inovativna metodologija in didaktično digitalno orodje za izkustveno poučevanje in opismenjeje v smeri razogljičenja ter ciljev digitalne in zelene tranzicije (acronym: Zeleni Pingvin, engl. Innovative methodology and didactic digital tool for experiential teaching and literacy in the direction of decarbonisation and the goals of digital and green transition, acronym: Green Penguin)

The "Green Penguin" project focused on developing an innovative methodology and didactic digital tool designed for experiential teaching and literacy centred on decarbonization and the objective of digital and green transition. The project aimed to train teachers and primary school students to understand and actively reduce their carbon footprint while developing and implementing new teaching and learning practices in environmental and digital literacy. Additionally, it sought to establish a sustainable multi-sectoral structure to ensure the dissemination of project outputs even after its completion. The project was led by ISKRAEMECO, which brings technological expertise and is responsible for creating new digital didactic platform for CO₂ monitoring of schools. The Municipality of Kranj and the Municipality of Ljubljana supported

⁷<https://www.norwaygrants.si/en/projects/projects-of-the-programme-education-scholarships-apprenticeship-and-youth-entrepreneurship/>

the initiative by ensuring cooperation and providing necessary equipment for primary schools, while the Association DOVES – FEE Slovenia focused on developing didactic tools and educational content. The Norwegian project partner, FEE Norway, contributed expertise in environmental education and adapted the developed tools to the local context. The project's primary target groups were teachers and students in primary schools, with secondary target groups including local public authorities, NGOs, educational institutions, and the general public. Key outputs of the project included a comprehensive handbook for teachers with lesson plans and methodologies, digital tools and interactive learning materials, training programmes for educational staff, and the establishment of demonstration learning environments. The project also involved public conferences and study visits to facilitate knowledge exchange. The project was expected to lead to a significant reduction in the carbon footprint through innovative educational practices, enhanced environmental awareness, and improved institutional cooperation in environmental education. The Norwegian project partner, FEE Norway, played a critical role in facilitating communication between cities and schools in Norway, participated in the development and adaptation of educational tools, and supported the exchange of knowledge and best practices in environmental education.

3. *Kombiniran učni model za srednje strokovno izobraževanje na področju strojništva in razvoj kompetenc dijakov in učiteljev za digitalno izobraževanje (acronym: Akademija za kombinirano učenje, engl. Combined learning model for vocational education in the field of mechanical engineering and development of competencies of students and teachers for digital education, acronym: Academy for Combined Learning)*

The "Academy for Combined Learning" project aimed to establish a robust digital learning environment specifically designed for vocational education and training (VET) in mechanical engineering. The project focused on developing new teaching and learning practices that enhanced digital education competencies, thereby fostering institutional cooperation at multiple levels within vocational education and the industry. The initiative involved creating a combined learning model for secondary vocational education, training teachers, conducting pilot tests, and implementing the new model. This project was supported by several beneficiaries, including Rokus Klett Publishing House as a project promoter and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia - Institute for Business Education, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, School Centre Novo mesto and the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering as Slovenian project partners. Notably, Gyldendal Education from Norway played a significant role as a donor project partner, contributing expertise in digital learning materials and e-learning platforms. The target groups for this project primarily included VET teachers in mechanical engineering and students who utilized the interactive teaching materials. Secondary target groups involve school centres, principals, industry players, policymakers, the Ministry of Education, and the general public. Key outputs from the project included the development of a digital platform to support the combined learning model, digital tools for more than 300 students, testing, and evaluation, interactive learning materials, and teaching resources. Additionally, the project resulted in more than 75 trained VET teachers with enhanced digital competencies and fostered institutional partnerships for sustainable education practices. The project was designed to significantly advance the quality and sustainability of vocational education through the development and implementation of innovative digital tools and cooperative institutional frameworks. The collaboration with Gyldendal Education was pivotal, particularly through their contributions to the creation of the learning model and the organization of knowledge exchange visits to Norway.

4. *Oblikovanje za povečano kompetentnost skozi aktivno participacijo v visokem šolstvu (acronym: DECAP-HE, engl. Designing for Enhanced Competence through Active Participation in Higher Education)*

The project focused on enhancing the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning in higher education by equipping individuals and institutions with the tools and practices needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This project aimed to identify and implement key pedagogical practices grounded in active learning principles, fostering the development of essential competencies. By developing and disseminating new practices and learning environments, DECAP-HE sought to ensure the sustainability of active learning environments across Slovenia's higher education landscape. Alma Mater Europaea – European Centre, Maribor led the initiative on didactic training and technology-enhanced teaching, supported by project partners such as the Educational Research Institute, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and Student Organization of Slovenia. Kristiania University College from Norway played a crucial role as an international partner, contributing expertise in student-centred and practice-oriented learning

environments. The project's target groups included higher education institutions, educators, trainers, institutional leaders, policymakers, students, and the broader educational community. Key outputs of the project include 7 new teaching models and strategies developed and tested, providing academic staff with appropriate pedagogical resources for actively engaging students, 49 academic staff members involved in developing and testing new teaching models and a digital platform titled "Center for Enhanced Teaching & Innovation" that ensures the systemic dissemination of active learning guidelines and models at both regional and national levels. Additionally, the project promoted increased cooperation among institutions, and foster knowledge sharing. The project aimed to significantly enhance pedagogical practices and innovation across Slovenian higher education institutions, while also strengthening bilateral relations and knowledge exchange between Slovenia and Norway through the collaboration with Kristiania University College.

5. *Opolnomočenje za delo v 21. stoletju z razvojem veščin vseživljenjskega učenja, dobrega počutja zaposlenega ter preprečevanjem in prepoznavanjem duševnih motenj (acronym: EMPOWER FOR 21, engl. Empowering for work in the 21st century through life skills, promotion of wellbeing and prevention of mental disorders)*

The project aimed to develop a comprehensive, free-access curriculum titled EMPOWER FOR 21, which is focused on equipping healthcare practitioners with essential 21st-century competencies. These include communication, leadership, mental health, and critical thinking. The curriculum has been developed through the creation and testing of new teaching units specifically addressing these areas. The initiative was coordinated by the University Medical Centre Maribor with contributions from project partners the University of Maribor, Faculty of Medicine and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology as a donor project partner contributing its expertise in curriculum development and evaluation while facilitating the exchange of best practices between Slovenia and Norway. The project's main target groups included medical students, educators and trainers in healthcare sector. The implementation of learning units was initiated among more than 250 medical students and healthcare workers at regional institutions, ensuring that knowledge transfer occurs both in clinical settings and academic environments. These efforts were expected to enhance the use of innovative teaching practices across the participating institutions. The project enhanced educational outcomes in the healthcare sector through collaboration and shared knowledge between Slovenia and Norway.

6. *Podpora strokovnim delavcem v izobraževanju in zaposlovanju na področju avtizma (acronym: VIS A VIS, engl. Support for professionals in education and employment in the field of autism)*

The VIS A VIS project was designed to develop an effective support model for education and employment stakeholders, with the objective of improving learning and employability conditions for individuals with autism. The project focused on gathering data on the number of people with autism in Slovenia, training multipliers who can develop and implement the new support model, and enhancing the skills and competencies of teachers, employment service staff, and employers in supporting people with autism. The initiative was coordinated by the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations for Autism in Slovenia, with contributions from project partners Šentprima – Institute for Rehabilitation and Education, Alma Mater Europaea – European Centre, Maribor, Elementary School Kozara Nova Gorica, MIK international trading and manufacturing company, Ltd. and Fjæran-Granum's Top Competence Service from Norway. The Norwegian project partner, brought valuable expertise and best practices in supporting individuals with autism. The target groups included educators in both formal and non-formal education, employment service staff, and employers. Indirectly, the project has been designed and executed in a way to benefit people with autism, their families, and broader public institutions. Key results included development of two new models - a model of support for educational staff and a model of support for employers in the employment of persons with autism. 56 persons (employees and external colleagues) were included in the research and development of new models of teaching and employment of persons with autism, which had a significant impact on the knowledge and competences of the participants included in different lectures. Also, an exchange of knowledge and good practices in the field of promoting skills and competences between the Norwegian and the Slovenian project partners took place; an online training took place in which 12 Slovenian experts trained in the field of autism to transfer new knowledge to educational staff and employers. On the practical level, the project also intervened in the field of employment. A young person with autism and a selected employer was prepared for pilot employment of a person with autism for 13

months. The workplace was adapted specifically for this person with autism, and a mentor was assigned to him to provide support and ensure the plan of support services was properly implemented. A person with autism gained new knowledge and work skills and progressed in terms of work efficiency. The Norwegian project partner played a crucial role in sharing expertise, facilitating study visits and online training sessions, and participating in the development and testing of the new support model.

7. Podporna okolja za spodbujanje prečnih kompetenc v vzgoji in izobraževanju (acronym: SETCOM, engl. Supportive Environments to Enhance Transversal Competencies in Education)

The SETCOM project was designed to address the gaps identified in EU strategic documents and research findings concerning teachers' transversal competencies by focusing on the development of social-emotional competencies (SEC) and artificial intelligence (AI) literacy among educators. The project aimed to enhance these critical competencies in teachers, establish a sustainable Competence Centre, and design and implement educational modules for various target groups. The University of Maribor led this initiative, ensuring the integration of outputs across educational verticals and the sustainability of the project's impact, cooperating with Slovenian project partners Municipality of Maribor, Elementary school Drago Kobal Maribor, Secondary School of Economics and Gymnasium Maribor, Elementary school Dušan Flis Hoče (Kindergarten unit), The Friends of Youth Association Maribor and Andragogic Institute Maribor – Adult Education Centre. The project also included a strong bilateral partnership with the Nord University from Norway, which provided expertise in teacher education and AI literacy and played a significant role in facilitating international knowledge exchange. The target groups for the SETCOM project included higher education teachers and students in pedagogical study programmes, pedagogical and administrative staff in partner institutions, and adult learners, with indirect benefits extending to children and students as well as higher education institutions, schools, kindergartens, NGOs, and local authorities. Key results included development of four educational modules focusing on the three identified areas of transversal competencies: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and media/information literacy, and development of innovative practices and models for enhancing teacher competencies in AI literacy and socio-emotional skills. This included the creation of new, high-quality, research-based educational materials in the field of AI literacy. Moreover, the project resulted in the establishment of a sustainable Competence Centre, which aims at fostering ongoing development and dissemination of best practices in teaching AI literacy and SEC, integration of AI literacy with socio-emotional learning, particularly emphasizing the ethical aspects of AI that relate closely to the competencies required for effective teaching. The project was expected to significantly enhance the competencies of teachers and students, foster institutional cooperation and knowledge exchange, and establish a foundation for continued educational innovation.

8. Razvoj kompetenc z ekspertnim sistemom za podporo odločanju v visokošolskem izobraževanju (acronym: RESPO-VI, engl. Development of an Expert Support System for Competency Assessment in Higher Education)

The project aimed to develop an expert support system called RESPO-VI, designed to monitor and enhance the competencies of STEM students (STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) in higher education to align with the needs of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0. This initiative focused on defining the general and specific skills required by STEM students for the labour market, promoting the exchange of best practices in the use of digital tools for skills development, and creating a new educational approach using an innovative online application (RESPO-VI application) that monitors the development of student competencies during formal education and informal training. This application uses artificial intelligence and extensive data analysis to provide tailored training programmes based on students' study programmes, skills and employers' demands. The Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School led the development and implementation of the RESPO-VI application, with significant contributions from other project partners, including Temida computer engineering company, Ltd., the International Institute for the Implementation of Sustainable Development, and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, which provided expertise in interdisciplinary training and modern educational practices. The project's target groups encompassed higher education institutions, research centres, education and training centres, sectoral agencies, national public authorities, NGOs, and both large companies and SMEs. Key outputs included the development of the RESPO-VI web application, training programmes for higher education teachers to enhance their digital competencies, interdisciplinary training programs for students, and guidelines for integrating the RESPO-VI application into educational curricula. The project aimed to significantly improve

the competencies of STEM students and teachers, foster cross-sectoral cooperation, and introduce innovative digital tools for monitoring and developing essential skills. The international partnership played a crucial role in facilitating knowledge exchange and enhancing collaboration between Slovenia and Norway.

9. *SCHOOL21 – gremo ven! (acronym: SCHOOL21, engl. SCHOOL21 – Let's get out!)*

The "SCHOOL21" project aimed to address the challenge of student passivity and the lack of critical thinking and self-initiative in both primary and secondary education in Slovenia, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project created a more dynamic, engaging and effective learning environment that prepares pupils and high school students for the complexities of life and work in the 21st century by developing and implementing a new teaching method and tool. The project focused on outdoor experiential learning, inspired by the Norwegian practice of outdoor learning – an active, experiential approach to learning, that involves being outdoors as a central part of the experience, and involved the creation of outdoor classrooms at two schools, the France Prešeren Gymnasium and Elementary School France Prešeren Kranj. The target groups included pupils, teachers, educational institutions, and the general public. Key outputs of the project included the development of a new teaching method, training for more than 80 teachers and 18 multipliers to disseminate the new approach to other educators, and the creation of a digital didactic aid in Slovenian language to assist teachers in implementing outdoor learning and using the outdoor classrooms effectively. Several workshops, evaluation meetings and other forms of peer learning were organized, to foster collaboration and exchange of knowledge among educators. Beside two schools with newly established outdoor classrooms, the project involved also other partners, including Socialna akademija – Institute for Education, Research and Culture, BSC – Business Support Centre, Ltd, Kranj and the Møre og Romsdal County Council from Norway, which shared its expertise in outdoor learning. The project fostered greater cooperation between different levels of education and between formal and non-formal education. It aimed to bridge the gap between the skills students possess and the needs of the labour market. The project is expected to have long-lasting effects, with the new teaching method being integrated into the schools involved and made available to other schools across Slovenia through a free, downloadable handbook.

10. *Šola prenove za nove generacije in dediščino 21. stoletja: Prepoznavanje in razumevanje lokalne kulturne dediščine in veščin prenove v osnovnošolskem pouku z uporabo novih metod poučevanja za nove generacije 21. stoletja in naprej (acronym: Šola prenove za nove generacije, engl. Heritage school for new generations: Recognition and understanding of local cultural heritage and restoration skills in primary school education using new teaching methods for new generations of the 21st century and beyond, acronym: Heritage School for the New Generations)*

The project aimed to establish an inter-institutional environment and modern teaching practices that promote systematic education of primary school pupils about cultural heritage and restoration skills. The project focused on developing and sharing innovative teaching practices within primary education to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage. The initiative was coordinated by the Association of Historic Towns of Slovenia, which brought the Heritage School initiative and a network of experts to the project. Other project partners were Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Elementary School Ivan Grohar, Municipality of Škofja Loka and School Center Škofja Loka. The Norwegian project partner MAGMA Geopark AS exchanged good practices of promotion of natural and cultural heritage in its area and gathered good practices on how the Norwegian school system integrates and promotes cultural heritage in their school curriculum. The project's target groups include several primary school teachers, practitioners, and many pupils who were directly involved in pilot implementation and training. Additionally, all elementary schools in Slovenia, totalling more than 450, were provided with teaching materials. Key outputs of the project included a handbook for teachers with detailed lesson plans and methodologies, didactic materials for classroom, outdoor, and distance learning, and the creation of two demonstration learning environments: Learning Laboratory in historical centre of Škofja Loka, a space for teaching and learning on cultural heritage dedicated primarily to the professional staff in primary education, and a didactic corner in the support of local cultural heritage established in the partner elementary school. The project also aimed to establish a cooperation platform for stakeholders involved in national-level cultural, educational, and spatial policy planning. The project is expected to significantly improve education about cultural heritage and

restoration skills, enhance cooperation between educational institutions and stakeholders, and established sustainable teaching practices and demonstration environments.

11. Vzpostavljanje novih modulov poučevanja na področju obogatene in navidezne resničnosti (acronym: Think XR, engl. Establishing new education modules in the field of augmented and virtual reality)

The "Think XR" project was focused on bridging the gap between current educational content and the evolving needs of the economy by establishing new educational programmes in the field of virtual or augmented reality (VR and AR). The key focus was on promoting the development of digital competences and training teachers and mentors to develop new learning methods and content in the extended reality (XR) field for formal and non-formal education of young people and their integration into the pedagogical process. The project enabled teachers and students to access the latest AR and VR equipment and operate these technologies and tools in a completely easy and attractive way. Several demonstration environments were set up to test and evaluate new training programmes and digital tools. Many teachers and mentors cooperated in developing and testing of new teaching models. The additional objective of sharing knowledge and good practices was ensured through the development of portable didactic aids or assistive tools and the setting up of a pilot living lab system. The experience gained have enabled the development of a new and innovative strategy and curriculum for the XR Academy, focused on the development of software and the use of future technologies, adapted to the needs of the market in Slovenia and at the EU level. All participating education and training institutions were using new teaching and learning practices and several people were trained to transfer knowledge to other educational staff. The project also sought to create an open and creative learning environment through strong institutional cooperation between academia and industry. School Center Slovenske Konjice – Zreče led the project's implementation, with significant contributions from project partners Technology park Ljubljana Ltd, Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University of Ljubljana, University of Primorska, Hashnet, Distributed technologies Ltd and Unior Forging Industry, Joint Stock Company. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) played a crucial role as an international partner, offering its expertise in XR technologies and education. The project's target groups included educators such as teachers, trainers, and mentors, as well as students, professionals in the education sector, the business community, and the public. The project aimed to significantly enhance digital competencies among educators and students, developed innovative teaching practices, and strengthen cooperation between academia and industry.

Table A 1 summarizes expected main project results and specific outputs to the overall desired outcome 1.

Table A 1: Expected main project results and specific outputs of each project to the overall desired outcome 1 »Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)« based on project descriptions and final reports

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
Dvig digitalnih kompetenc (acronym: digi.komp, Engl. Raising digital competences)	Enhance digital competencies across different age groups	Promote technology use, training, and conduct extensive knowledge exchange activities
Inovativna metodologija in didaktično digitalno orodje za izkustveno poučevanje in opismenjeje v smeri razogljičenja ter ciljev digitalne in zelene tranzicije (acronym: Zeleni Pingvin, Engl. Innovative methodology and didactic digital tool for experiential teaching and literacy in the direction of decarbonisation and the goals of digital and green transition, acronym: Green Penguin)	Develop a methodology and digital tools for teaching about decarbonization	Create and exchange new educational practices focused on environmental literacy and digital competencies
Kombiniran učni model za srednje strokovno izobraževanje na področju strojništva in razvoj kompetenc dijakov in učiteljev za digitalno izobraževanje (acronym: Akademija za kombinirano učenje, engl. Combined learning model for vocational education in the field of mechanical engineering and development of competencies of students and teachers for digital education, acronym: Academy for Combined Learning)	Develop and pilot a combined learning model with new teaching practices to improve digital education competencies	Develop new teaching practices and ensure knowledge exchange through pilot implementations and teacher training sessions
Oblikovanje za povečano kompetentnost skozi aktivno participacijo v visokem šolstvu (acronym: DECAP-HE, engl. Designing for Enhanced Competence through Active Participation in Higher Education)	New teaching and learning practices aimed at enhancing skills and competencies in education, contributing to the transformation of educational environments across Slovenia's higher education system	Create sustainable tools and resources for didactic training, mutual learning, and systemic innovations in active learning. interactive student-centred learning environments
Opolnomočenje za delo v 21. stoletju z razvojem veščin vseživljenjskega učenja, dobrega počutja zaposlenega ter preprečevanjem in prepoznavanjem duševnih motenj (acronym: EMPOWER FOR 21, engl. Empowering for work in the 21st century through life skills, promotion of wellbeing and prevention of mental disorders)	Develop structured teacher training program that integrates innovative teaching and learning practices, particularly in communication, leadership, mental health, and critical thinking	Exchanged knowledge and best practices in enhancing skills and competencies in education.
Podpora strokovnim delavcem v izobraževanju in zaposlovanju na področju avtizma (acronym: VIS A VIS, engl. Support for professionals in education and employment in the field of autism)	Develop a support model for education and employment of people with autism	Develop and share new teaching practices and provide training for educational and employment settings
Podporna okolja za spodbujanje prečnih kompetenc v vzgoji in izobraževanju (acronym:	Enhance teachers' social-emotional competencies (SEC) and AI literacy	Conduct training sessions and facilitate knowledge exchange on SEC and AI literacy

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
SETCOM, engl. Supportive Environments to Enhance Transversal Competencies in Education)		
Razvoj kompetenc z ekspertnim sistemom za podporo odločanju v visokošolskem izobraževanju (acronym: RESPO-VI, engl. Development of an Expert Support System for Competency Assessment in Higher Education)	Enhancing the competencies of STEM students in higher education	RESPO-VI web application, monitoring student progress, application allows cross-sectoral exchanges of best practices in using digital tools
SCHOOL21 – gremo ven! (acronym: SCHOOL21, engl. SCHOOL21 – Let's get out!)	Transforming educational practices in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia by introducing and implementing outdoor experiential learning methods	Adapting the Norwegian UTESKOLE method for the Slovenian context Shift the role of teachers from being the sole source of knowledge to facilitators of learning.
Šola preнове za nove generacije in dediščino 21. stoletja: Prepoznavanje in razumevanje lokalne kulturne dediščine in veščin preнове v osnovnošolskem pouku z uporabo novih metod poučevanja za nove generacije 21. stoletja in naprej (acronym: Šola preнове za nove generacije, engl. Heritage school for new generations: Recognition and understanding of local cultural heritage and restoration skills in primary school education using new teaching methods for new generations of the 21st century and beyond, acronym: Heritage School for the New Generations)	Systematic education about cultural heritage using new teaching practices	Test and implement new practices, facilitate institutional cooperation, and exchange knowledge in cultural heritage education
Vzpostavljanje novih modulov poučevanja na področju obogatene in navidezne resničnosti (acronym: Think XR, engl. Establishing new education modules in the field of augmented and virtual reality)	Establish new educational modules in augmented and virtual reality (XR)	Develop XR-based teaching practices, conduct pilot activities, and facilitate knowledge exchange

8.2 Outcome 2: “Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning”

Kombinirano izobraževanje v poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju (acronym: KIPSI; engl. Blended learning in vocational education and training, acronym: BlendVET)

The project was primarily focused on strengthening the skills of teachers and developing didactic strategies to implement blended learning in vocational education and training (VET). This initiative was a response to the systematic need of vocational and technical schools to incorporate blended learning methods. Digital competencies are key to today's and tomorrow's world of work, and vocational education and training (VET) needs to keep pace with these developments. It is not enough to introduce digital competencies into the curricula, but education itself needs to be redesigned, as education is currently not keeping pace with the potential of digital developments. The project was led by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. Project partners were Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana, Upper-secondary VET school Trbovlje, School center Novo mesto, School center Celje, Upper-secondary VET school Koper and the donor project partners Østfold University College, Åssiden upper secondary school and Viken Higher Vocational College from Norway and University of Akureyri and Akureyri comprehensive college from Iceland. The project had three work sections that were interconnected. First, work with school principals and school managers was done on the preparation of school strategies and methods of introducing combined education. In the second part, focus was on the development of pedagogical and digital competences of teachers and students. The teachers prepared the lesson plans and implemented them in the classroom. The implementation of the lessons was evaluated, and recommendations were prepared for further work. At the end, the school teams developed a set of video and digital learning materials. Main beneficiaries were educational staff and students in vocational schools being trained or involved in blended learning methods. All educational staff and students involved in blended learning demonstrated improved skills and competences. The project had a positive impact on the development of learning and teaching in the participating schools. In Slovenia, beside partner schools, 8 additional vocational schools cooperated in the project. They acquired ICT equipment for the development and use of video and digital materials, while teachers received training. A very positive result of the project was the establishment of cooperation between institutions and schools from Iceland, Norway and Slovenia and all project results were achieved. The cooperation continues even after the completion of the project.

8.3 Outcome 3: “Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved”

Seven projects contributed to the outcome “Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved” within two specific outputs:

- support services for the NEET (not in employment, education or training) established
- support to youth provided

Project descriptions are provided in continuation, while Table A 2 provides a brief overview of all projects.

1. Opolnomočenje in vključitev oseb NEET na trg dela in razvoj celostnega programa podpornih storitev za osebe NEET, vključno s pripravo sistemskih rešitev (acronym: PreseNEETi se; engl. Empowerment and integration of NEETs into the labour market and development of a comprehensive program of support services for NEETs, including the solutions on systemic level)

The project focused on addressing the challenges faced by NEETs (young people not in employment, education, or training) in Slovenia, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project, led by the University of Adult Education Celje, involves multiple partners, including the Employment Service of Slovenia, University of Maribor, National Youth Council of Slovenia, and the Norwegian Organisation for Supervision and Co-Operation. The primary objective was to empower and socially activate NEETs, facilitating their integration into the labour market. Several NEETs were included in the social activation programme and thus empowered, all of them achieved positive outcomes; a manual of training modules

has been written and as such represents a useful tool for effective empowerment of NEETs beyond the project. Some NEETs were also enrolled in a comprehensive career and psychosocial empowerment programme. A two-tier mentoring scheme was set up and several mentors were trained and empowered to work with NEETs; a handbook for working with NEETs was written to help all future workers who will encounter NEETs. Also, project partner members strengthened their skills in working with NEETs during the study visit in Norway and through other project activities. More than 350 service providers and stakeholders at system level were empowered with a new methodology to identify the basic characteristics and needs of the NEET population. Both service providers working with NEETs (counsellors, mentors, educators ...) and government officials can use the new methodology designed in the project and the recommendations for policy makers to improve their services for NEETs and thus enable early intervention were developed. Main target groups were NEETs aged 15 to 29, with a focus on "older youth," single mothers, and individuals with migrant backgrounds, but also mentors and professionals working with NEETs, aiming to equip them with the necessary skills and methodologies to support this vulnerable group. Public authorities and NGOs working with NEETs benefited from improved methodologies and systemic support. The Norwegian project partner played a crucial role in reviewing and analysing existing practices, transferring good practices from Norway, and evaluating the tools, programmes, and schemes developed during the project.

2. *Aktivacija mladih s spodbujanjem njihovega medsebojnega povezovanja, prevzemanja aktivne vloge v lokalnih skupnostih in celostnim opolnomočenjem za življenje brez nasilja (acronym: TRIALOG; engl: Activating youth by encouraging them to form meaningful connections, take an active role in their local communities and empowering them for a violence-free life)*

The project was created as a response to challenges, noticed between youth that already existed before, but escalated after Covid-19 epidemic. This entails worsening of their mental health, especially anxiety and depression rates, lower levels of confidence and independence, emotional distancing, social self-isolation and worsening of relationships, including rise in peer, intimate-partner and family violence. In addition to that, the project wanted to encourage social activation and participation of youth in their local environments to combat loneliness, promote civic cooperation and build a sense of community. The project was led by the Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor, with key project partners Municipality of Ptuj, University of Adult Education Ormož, Center for Free Time Activities Ptuj, Youth Council of the Municipality of Ptuj and Avisensa, Institute for psychology, counselling and education, Kamnica. Specific objectives included reducing violence (both online and in intimate relationships), enhancing mental health, and fostering social inclusion and active participation among youth. The project primarily targeted young people aged 15-29 and professionals working with youth, such as youth workers and educators. A platform for young people was prepared to inform them about mental health, violence and social activation in a youth friendly way and help them either seek help or offer it. Several youth workers were newly qualified over the course. They developed a programme that helped them execute interactive workshops, and targeted youth through said workshops and youth workers through created manuals and informative material on mental health, violence and social activation. Alongside including youth and youth workers, the project was promoted through an interactive platform and media conferences. The project also involved local authorities, NGOs, and educational institutions to create a supportive network. The Norwegian project partner provided expertise in managing similar social challenges and strengthened cross-border cooperation, allowing for the exchange of best practices and innovative approaches to youth empowerment.

3. *Korak naprej za mlade v manj dinamičnih okoljih (acronym: NEKSTEP; engl: A step forward for youth in less dynamic environments)*

The NEKSTEP project was designed to assist young people in the Coastal-Karst region of Slovenia in transitioning from education to employment. The project addressed the challenges faced by youth, particularly in less dynamic environments, where opportunities for education, employment, and social engagement are limited. The primary objective was to facilitate a smooth and independent transition for young people aged 14-29 from education to the labour market. The project aimed to equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies, while also connecting them with the local environment and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the project sought to improve educational offerings and enhance the social environment to better support disadvantaged groups. The project was led by Adult Education Centre Koper, with project partners Adult Education Centre Sežana, Središče Rotunda - Social Centre in the

Littoral Region, Koper, so. e. and International Development Norway. These partners brought regional coverage, expertise in youth education, and international project management experience to the project. The target groups included young people aged 14-29, particularly those in less dynamic environments, young immigrants, and young entrepreneurs. The project also targeted professionals working with youth, such as mentors and counsellors, who were trained to better support these young people. More than 350 young people took part in workshops with different career-oriented topics. Workshops were organised also for more than 180 young people who are considering the entrepreneurial path. Entrepreneurial content was further enriched by content from the field of green entrepreneurship. Several networking events were organised, and more than 100 young people participated in individual counselling, which also remains available even after the end of the project. A special added value of the project was the training workshops for 50 mentors and counsellors who work with young people, since they have a key role in offering supports to young people choosing their career path. The Norwegian project partner, International Development Norway, played a critical role in offering project consulting and management based on their extensive experience with international projects. They monitored and evaluated the project's progress, ensuring high-quality outputs. Their involvement also facilitated the transfer of best practices and knowledge between Slovenia and Norway, enhancing the project's overall impact.

4. *Koroška mreža podpornega okolja za mlade KOR-NET (acronym: KOR-NET; engl. Carinthian Network of Supportive Environment for Youth KOR-NET)*

The KOR-NET project aimed at addressing the challenges faced by young people in the Koroška (Carinthia) region of Slovenia, particularly the issues of brain drain, lack of employment opportunities, and social engagement. The primary objective of KOR-NET was to retain young people in the region by creating a supportive environment that offers equal opportunities, enhances youth participation in democratic processes, and empowers young people to build a better future in the region. The project aimed to reduce the outflow of young, educated individuals by improving the quality of life and employment prospects in the region. The project was led by the Dravit Dravograd Public Institute for Sports, Tourism, Culture, and Youth Activities, with project partners Public Institute for Tourism, Sports, Youth and Social Programs SPOTUR Slovenj Gradec, Kompleks Youth Culture centre, The Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business Ravne na Koroškem, A. L. P. PECA Company for Product Development and Marketing Mežiška dolina, Ltd. and the Norwegian partner Bjerkaker LearningLab. The project's activities primarily involved establishing a supportive environment for youth, where, in addition to new workstations for young people throughout the region, the project fostered intensive collaboration with local organizations and improved communication about youth support activities through the Virtual Youth Incubator Carinthia web portal, social media, and media contributions. The project enhanced youth involvement in democratic processes by connecting them with local decision-makers, particularly through the publication of the "Model of Active Youth Participation," which allows young people to influence decision-making in municipalities and shape their own future. During the project implementation, several educational and support events, workshops, training sessions for mentoring young people were organised, such as youth camp, Active Youth programme - Skills for life and career. Many young people were included in different activities and several staff trained to work with or support young people. Norwegian project partner Bjerkaker LearningLab brought expertise in lifelong learning and active citizenship projects, shared best practices, and contributed to the development of a model for active youth participation.

5. *Podpora mladim v podjetništvu (acronym: PoMP; engl: Fostering entrepreneurship skills in schools)*

The PoMP project addressed the challenge of limited entrepreneurial education and aimed to establish a comprehensive and sustainable support environment to promote entrepreneurship from an early age. The project was led by Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj, with project partners Primorska Technology Park, Development Centre Novo Mesto, Technology Park Ljubljana, SAŠA Incubator, Ltd and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The main target groups benefitting from the project were young people (primary and secondary school students) and their teachers/mentors. Other target groups were also project partner staff who enhanced their competencies throughout the project, support and educational institutions, as well as interested individuals (entrepreneurs, advisors, teachers, etc.) who have joined the support network PoMP, aimed at providing ongoing support to young people. Within the project, a comprehensive and sustainable support environment was created, which encouraged young people to explore entrepreneurial ideas, develop business models, and equipped them with essential entrepreneurial

knowledge and skills. This was achieved by connecting existing support institutions and programmes with the newly established service, the PoMP Academy - a sustainable online platform in Slovenian language for teachers and mentors, which offers a collection of practical tools, methodologies, modules, meetings and workshops for teaching entrepreneurship to young people. It is freely and publicly accessible and includes 20 hours of specialised training for teachers. As part of the project, group workshops were also organised, attended by many teachers from other Slovenian schools. Together with the teachers, several entrepreneurial workshops for students were conducted. Teachers and mentors who participated in the PoMP Academy led pilot startup activities with their students. The workshops were attended by 379 students across Slovenia. The goal of this training was to enhance the employability and self-employability of young people, while also increasing the competitiveness and flexibility of the workforce. By having teachers and mentors conducted these pilot startup activities, the sustainability of the project's impact was insured, as they will be able to continue these activities beyond the project's completion using the materials developed. New interested students and teachers will also have the opportunity to join the startup activities even after the project ends. To ensure the continuation of activities beyond the project's conclusion, the PoMP supporting network was established, complete with governing bodies and a handbook for its operation. A strategic agreement was signed for continued collaboration and action in promoting entrepreneurship among young people. The PoMP support network currently includes a total of 44 organisations from across Slovenia. The Norwegian project partner played a crucial role in transferring best practices from Norway to Slovenia, particularly in the development and implementation of the PoMP Academy. Its involvement ensured the integration of Norwegian expertise into the project, which included organizing study visits, developing training materials, and fostering long-term bilateral cooperation.

6. *Povečanje zaposlitvenih potencialov v Pomurski regiji (acronym: TALENT LAB; engl: Increasing employment potentials in Pomurje region)*

The TALENT LAB project addressed the high youth unemployment and low employment rate in the Pomurje region of Slovenia. This region has the highest youth unemployment rate in the country, with many young people leaving the area for better opportunities elsewhere. The project aimed to increase the employment potential of young people by creating a supportive ecosystem that enhances their skills and connects them with local businesses. The project was led by Pomurje Technology Park, with project partners Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Maribor, School of Economics Murska Sobota, Bilingual Secondary School Lendava, Biotechnological School Rakičan, Secondary School for Catering and Tourism Radenci and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The primary target groups were young people in Pomurje, particularly those who have completed or are nearing the completion of their education, as well as the regional educational institutions and local businesses. The project established a sustainable mentoring scheme of services for young people and developed a proposal for a long-term support for youth through mentoring even after project completion. The proposal analysed the starting point for the preparation of the sustainability plan, presented the results of the implementation of the support scheme so far and proposed a sustainability plan for the implementation of the support services, which is in line with the guidelines and actions set out in the Regional Development Programme. Finally, it proposed potential "follow-up" solutions for the capitalization of knowledge in a new environment or new content area. The project also connected educational high school institutions and the regional economy. 23 entrepreneurial groups involved 61 young (potential) startup entrepreneurs, providing practical work opportunities for them through solving entrepreneurial challenges set by 22 local/regional companies. The project team explored and identified domestic and foreign good practices and designed a handbook of good practices in Slovenian and English language, that outlines 17 successful youth support programmes and practices. Several educational workshops were implemented, and significant number of mentors trained to create a more supporting environment for young people. The Norwegian project partner brought its expertise in addressing similar challenges in rural Norway. It transferred best practices and supported the development of the mentoring scheme, helped to ensure the project's success by providing insights from their experiences in the Horizon 2020 TeRRItoria project, which focused on preventing brain drain from less developed areas.

7. Vzpostavitev inovativnega podpornega okolja »Karierni center Posavje« v regiji Posavje (acronym: Karierni center Posavje; engl. Development of innovative support environment »Career Center Posavje« in the Posavje region, acronym: Career Center Posavje)

The project aimed to address youth unemployment in the Posavje region by establishing an innovative support environment and was particularly important as the region faces high youth unemployment and a significant outflow of young people seeking opportunities elsewhere. The challenge lies in the imbalance between the offer and demand of job opportunities and the lack of information regarding employment needs and the possibilities for networking with employers in Posavje region. The project established a Career Center that offers career counselling, mentoring, and skills development to improve youth employability and encourage them to stay in the region. A 40-hour training programme was prepared and carried out through which several youth career consultants received the title "Competent Professional Worker for Youth Career Guidance." Several events for acquiring informal skills and competencies, as well as networking events for youth, were conducted. More than 300 young users were involved in the activities of individual counselling and events. Additionally, a digital platform was established for connecting youth with employers, along with a database of opportunities, promotional videos for promoting regional professions and employers, educational blog content and numerous informational resources for youth. Also, a network of supportive organisations was created, involving over 20 regional organisations and companies. The project was led by the Regional Development Agency Posavje and project partners are the Center for Youth and Sport Krško, Institute of Adult Education Krško, Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business Krško, Municipality of Krško, and the Norwegian project partner Collective Innovation AS. Main beneficiaries were youth (aged 16 to 26 years) who gained access to improved career guidance, knowledge and expanded opportunities for networking and skill-building, career consultants who received specialized training, increasing their effectiveness and professional skills, local employers and educational institutions who benefitted from a well-organised knowledge base and a more skilled workforce and disadvantaged groups who strengthened social environment through improved digital platform and regional services. The Norwegian project partner, Collective Innovation AS contributed by sharing best practices in innovative education and career counselling and played a crucial role in training youth consultants, developing communication strategies, and evaluating the project's outcomes. It's involvement ensured the integration of innovative approaches and strengthened bilateral relations between Slovenia and Norway.

Table A 2: Outcome 3: The expected main project results and specific outputs to the overall desired outcome »Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved« based on project descriptions and final reports

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
Opolnomočenje in vključitev oseb NEET na trg dela in razvoj celostnega programa podpornih storitev za osebe NEET, vključno s pripravo sistemskih rešitev (acronym: PreseNEETi se; engl. Empowerment and integration of NEETs into the labour market and development of a comprehensive program of support services for NEETs, including the solutions on systemic level)	Establishing a supportive environment that helps NEETs overcome barriers to education, employment, and social inclusion. Empowerment and social activation of NEETs, leading to their integration into the labor market.	Development of a comprehensive program designed to improve their formal and informal skills, enhance their employability, and increase their social participation. Reducing the number of unregistered NEETs, involve them in mentoring and career counselling, and ultimately enable them to enter the workforce or pursue further education. Strengthening the capacity of mentors and professionals working with NEETs, ensuring sustainable support for this vulnerable group.
Aktivacija mladih s spodbujanjem njihovega medsebojnega povezovanja, prevzemanja aktivne vloge v lokalnih skupnostih in celostnim opolnomočenjem za življenje brez nasilja (acronym: TRIALOG; engl: Activating youth by encouraging them to form meaningful connections, take an active role in their local communities and empowering them for a violence-free life)	Empowering and socially activate young people in the Podravska region, particularly those affected by the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing issues such as increased violence (both online and in intimate relationships), lack of social contact, declining self-esteem, and overall mental health.	Establishing long-term support services, enhancing the social and educational environment, and increasing youth participation in their communities.
Korak naprej za mlade v manj dinamičnih okoljih (acronym: NEKSTEP; engl: A step forward for youth in less dynamic environments)	Facilitating a smooth and independent transition for young people aged 14-29 from education to the labor market, particularly in less dynamic environments like the Coastal-Karst region of Slovenia.	Improved ability of young people (aged 14-29) in the Coastal-Karst region to transition smoothly and independently from education to the labour market. Enhanced skills, knowledge, and competencies among young people for successful navigation of the job market. Strengthened connections between young people and local stakeholders, facilitating better integration into the labour market. Enhanced social environment that supports the employment and personal development of young people. Better-trained professionals who work with youth, leading to more effective guidance and support for young people's career transitions.
Koroška mreža podpornega okolja za mlade KOR-NET (acronym: KOR-NET; engl. Carinthian	Retaining young people in the Koroška (Carinthia) region by creating a supportive	Retention of young people in the Koroška region.

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
Network of Supportive Environment for Youth KOR-NET)	environment that offers equal opportunities for work, education, and social engagement. Reducing the outflow of young, educated individuals (often referred to as "brain drain") by improving the quality of life, employment prospects, and social participation in the region.	Reduction of "brain drain" by improving local opportunities. Enhanced employment prospects and quality of life for young people. Increased youth participation in democratic processes. Creation of a more attractive and supportive environment for young people to live, work, and engage in their communities. Strengthened networks and support systems for youth development.
Podpora mladim v podjetništvu (acronym: PoMP; engl: Fostering entrepreneurship skills in schools)	Establishing a comprehensive and sustainable support environment that promotes entrepreneurship among young people, particularly those from less dynamic and rural areas. Encouraging young people to explore business ideas, develop business models, and acquire essential entrepreneurial skills by connecting existing support institutions with the newly created PoMP Academy for Teachers/Mentors.	Enhanced Entrepreneurial Skills Improved Quality of Education More young people encouraged to explore business ideas and consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Establishment of a lasting network of support institutions and educational programs to sustain entrepreneurial education. Improved employability and self-employment potential of young people in underdeveloped regions. Sustainable Impact: to benefit future generations even after the project ends.
Povečanje zaposlitvenih potencialov v Pomurski regiji (acronym: TALENT LAB; engl: Increasing employment potentials in Pomurje region)	Enhancing the employment prospects of young people in the Pomurje region by equipping them with the necessary skills and competencies for the labour market. Creating a sustainable mentoring program that provides ongoing support to young people, helping them navigate their career paths and entrepreneurial endeavours. Strengthening the capacity of the existing support infrastructure by improving the competencies of mentors and support organizations, ensuring they can effectively assist young people in their professional development. Involving young people in solving real-world entrepreneurial challenges presented by local businesses, thereby enhancing their practical experience and fostering innovation within the region.	Improved employment Prospects for young people in the Pomurje region due to enhanced skills and practical experience gained through the project. Establishment of a regional mentoring scheme that provides ongoing support and guidance to youth, increasing their chances of success in the job market. Enhanced competencies of mentors and support organizations, leading to more effective assistance for young people in their career development. More young people actively involved in solving entrepreneurial challenges, boosting their practical skills and encouraging them to pursue innovative business ideas. A decrease in youth unemployment in the Pomurje region due to connecting young people with local employment opportunities.

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
<p>Vzpostavitev inovativnega podpornega okolja »Karierni center Posavje« v regiji Posavje (acronym: Karierni center Posavje; engl. Development of innovative support environment »Career Center Posavje« in the Posavje region, acronym: Career Center Posavje)</p>	<p>Increasing the employment potential of young people in the Posavje region of Slovenia. Establishing an innovative, dynamic, and digitally equipped support environment that connects youth with local employers and educational organizations. Enhancing the employability by providing career counselling, mentoring, and skills development opportunities and encourage them to stay and build their careers in the region.</p>	<p>Enhanced career counselling, mentoring, and training will improve the skills and employability of young people in the Posavje region. Retention of youth in the Region (reducing the outflow of young people seeking jobs outside the region). Establishing a support network will facilitate better communication and collaboration between young people and local employers. Creation of a digitally equipped Career Centre and online platform providing young people easier access to career information and opportunities. Youth consultants trained to provide high-quality career guidance and support services to young people in the region.</p>

8.4 Outcome 4: “Improved work-life balance”

Four projects contributed to the outcome »Improved work-life balance«. In continuing, each of the projects is briefly summarized, while Table A 3 provides a brief overview of expected main projects results and specific outputs for all projects within this outcome.

1. Hospic pristop za razbremenitev delovno aktivnih moških in žensk, ki skrbijo za bolne in umirajoče svojce (acronym: IMRO; engl. A hospice approach to relieve the physical and psychological burden of working men and women caring for terminally ill and dying relatives)

The IMRO project aimed to address the challenges faced by informal caregivers in Slovenia. These caregivers, who are often working men and women, provide care for elderly, chronically ill, or dying family members, significantly relieving the healthcare system but often without access to professional support. The project seeks to offer relief to these caregivers by developing and implementing integrated care models tailored to urban and rural environments. The main objective of the IMRO project was to relieve the physical and psychological burden on informal caregivers by creating integrated care models that balance work and private life. The project established two care models—one for urban and one for rural areas—and developed the "Compassionate Company" certificate, which promotes management training in companies to better support employees who are also caregivers. The project was led by the Slovenian Hospice Society, with project partners the Society for Cultural Relations SPES, the Municipality of Solčava, and the Norwegian project partner Bjerkaker LearningLab. The target groups included working men and women caring for elderly, dying, or chronically ill family members, as well as young informal caregivers, interested experts, NGOs, and small and medium-sized enterprises. The main beneficiaries were informal caregivers who gained access to support services that alleviate their burdens. Companies benefited from the "Compassionate Company" certification, which fosters a supportive work environment for employees who are caregivers. Norwegian project partner, Bjerkaker LearningLab (BLL) played a crucial role in the project by providing educational activities, organizing exchanges of good practices and knowledge from Norway, and creating new opportunities for networking and project development. Their involvement strengthened the project's outcomes and ensured the transfer of successful approaches from Norway to Slovenia.

2. Razvoj celostnega pristopa za lajšanje usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja na podeželju, temelječega na vzpostavitvi večdeležniških regionalnih sistemov in lokalnih partnerstev (acronym: TERA; engl. Development of a Comprehensive Approach for Enhancing Work-Life Balance of Professional and Private Life in Rural Areas, Based on the Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Regional Systems and Local Partnerships)

The TERA project addressed the challenges faced by men and women in rural Slovenia in balancing professional and private life. The project focused on creating multi-stakeholder regional systems and local partnerships in the regions of Pomurje and Posavje to foster work-life balance. The primary objective of the TERA project was to empower men and women in rural areas to effectively manage the challenges of balancing work and private life. This included establishing local systems and partnerships that provide tailored support for work-life balance, with a particular focus on addressing gender stereotypes and improving the economic independence of women in rural areas. The project was led by the Development Centre Murska Sobota, with project partners the Regional Development Agency Posavje, the Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor, the Slovenian Rural Youth Association, the Center for the Development of Sustainable Society, cooperative. And the Norwegian project partner, Eastern Norway Research Institute at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. The main project outputs included 1) implementation of a gender equality survey (including 707 participants living in rural areas) which revealed a gender-differentiated view of the current situation of gender power relations in rural areas; 2) launch of an educational and awareness-raising programme with its dissemination in 20 different locations across Slovenia and more than 1000 participants; 3) establishment of a mentoring scheme to mentor people living in rural areas to facilitate work-life balance. Several mentors were trained to transfer knowledge to more than 300 participants to better understand and provide information on possible solutions to improve their work-life balance in rural areas; 4) establishment of a local project committee in the Pomurje region and the Posavje region - representatives of local authorities, educational institutions, social work centres, employers and economic interest associations, youth centres, cultural institutions and NGOs agreed to the

establishment of a local TERA project committee in both regions. The main target group were women and men living in rural areas. The project addressed also local stakeholders and general public to raise awareness of the role and position of women and men in rural areas (including the state as regards gender equality in rural areas). The Norwegian project partner contributed by sharing knowledge and best practices from Norway, focusing on gender equality and rural development. It also conducted research activities and provided insights into the situation in Norway, helped evaluating the project's outcomes, ensured the effective transfer of knowledge and strengthened bilateral relations.

3. *Ustvarjalno ravnovesje med poklicnim in zasebnim življenjem (acronym: BalanCed; engl. Creative work-life balance)*

The BalanCed project aimed to strengthen work life balance skills and competences, such as coping skills, self-efficacy, life management and problem-solving skills and raised the awareness about the importance of work life balance in the local community. The project idea was based on scientific evidence showing the positive impact of practicing creativity on wellbeing, resilience and stress management, which is why the project tackled the internal factors, such as individual's soft skills and competences, with the innovative use of art and creativity. In addition to strengthening adults' soft skills the project has addressed sustainability by building sustainability skills for children. The project was led by the Centre for the Communication, the Hearing, and the Speech Portorož and project partners NO PROBLEM ZONE - Institute for lifelong learning, creativity and well-being, NOMED - Institute for Independent Media Activity, Koper, Association for Culture and Education PiNA. The Norwegian project partner was Culture Break Borders. The project set up the Creativity center in the Koper old town in the Coastal-Karst region, offering a cozy space for employees to spend quality leisure time and thus take a break away from everyday worries and stress, supported by quality childcare. Activities were implemented for more than one thousand participants. The activities for adults included more than 90 workshops. Children also had workshops with different topics, such as environment, biodiversity, as well as intellectual and handicraft workshops, and more than 200 children attended them. Project also started the initiative to form a local network of organizations to raise awareness of the importance of work life balance. Initial meeting, two public events and additional two educational sessions have been organised for the members of the local network. Several mentors were trained and formed a network to carry out the activities in their organisations. The primary target groups were employees and their families in the local community, with a focus on those balancing professional responsibilities with family life. The project also targeted small and medium-sized enterprises, educational institutions, and local authorities. Culture Break Borders, the Norwegian partner, provided expertise in using art to enhance well-being and work-life balance. They organized intensive training sessions for the project consortium, shared best practices from Norway, and contributed to the development of innovative programmes that combine creativity with psychosocial support.

4. *Prenos in implementacija dobrih praks usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja, preko usposabljanja in izobraževanja zaposlenih in vodij, z namenom vzpostavljanja organizacijske strukture in kulture podjetij, ki temelji na enakosti spolov (acronym: PROMETEJ, engl. Transfer and implementation of good practices for improving work-life balance, through training and education of employees and managers, with the aim of establishing an organizational structure and culture of companies, based on gender equality, acronym: PROMETHEUS)*

The project focused on improving work-life balance through the lens of gender equality within companies. This initiative addressed the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has deepened existing inequalities in the labour market, particularly for women. The project aimed to establish organizational structures and cultures in companies that support gender equality and work-life balance. The project sought to raise awareness of work-life balance solutions, improve competencies within company management to foster gender equality, and reduce gender stereotypes that contribute to an unequal division of care responsibilities. The project was implemented by the American Chamber of Commerce Slovenia and project partners The Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor, University of Maribor, Merkur, Ltd, Riko - industrial, construction engineering and leasing, Ltd, Knauf Insulation, Ltd Škofja Loka, Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, A1 Slovenia - telecommunications services, Joint Stock Company and AMZS - service provider for members of national automobile association and other users of roadside assistance, Joint Stock Company. The Norwegian project partner, The Norwegian Automobile Foundation, also played a significant role. Main

project results were 1) improved employee knowledge and comprehension of the challenges, related to balancing professional and private life; 2) increased awareness among national stakeholders and decision-makers of the issue of balancing the professional and private lives of employees, and the importance of gender equality within companies' organizational structures; 3) empowerment of employees and company managers with regard to enabling the coordination of professional and private life; 4) increased awareness of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, and of the various personal circumstances of an employed person on the possibilities of balancing their professional and private life; 5) scientific correlation between the challenges of balancing employees' professional and private lives and their satisfaction with the workplace and 6) increased awareness of the importance of gender equality in companies among the general public. More than 800 participants took part in awareness-raising and capacity-building activities in organisations. Several measures have been taken in the organisations, such as tools, guidelines, etc. to improve work-life balance and gender equality. Almost 92% of participants now have a better understanding of work-life balance and gender equality policies. The primary target groups were employees and managers in the selected companies, with a focus on improving work-life balance and promoting gender equality. The Norwegian project partner contributed by providing best practices from Norway on improving work-life balance and gender equality. It conducted an analysis of the current situation and organized a study visit to Norway, where consortium members learnt from successful implementations of work-life balance practices. This exchange of knowledge strengthened bilateral relations and supported the project's objectives.

Table A 3: Outcome 4: The expected main project results and specific outputs to the overall desired outcome of »Improved work-life balance« based on project descriptions and final reports

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
Hospic pristop za razbremenitev delovno aktivnih moških in žensk, ki skrbijo za bolne in umirajoče svojce (acronym: IMRO; engl. A hospice approach to relieve the physical and psychological burden of working men and women caring for terminally ill and dying relatives)	Relieving the physical and psychological burden on working men and women who serve as informal caregivers for elderly, chronically ill, or dying family members. Developing and implementing integrated care models tailored to both urban and rural environments Promoting workplace support through the creation of the "compassionate company" certificate.	Relief for informal caregivers, reducing their physical and psychological burden. Development of integrated care models in both urban and rural areas to support caregivers and those they care for. Improved balance between professional and personal life for informal caregivers. Introduction of the "Compassionate Company" certificate to encourage companies to support employees who are caregivers. Greater understanding and awareness among employers and the general public about the challenges faced by informal caregivers. Enhanced collaboration and support networks among local communities, NGOs, and businesses for caregiving families.
Razvoj celostnega pristopa za lajšanje usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja na podeželju, temelječega na vzpostavitvi večdeležniških regionalnih sistemov in lokalnih partnerstev (acronym: TERA; engl. Development of a Comprehensive Approach for Enhancing Work-Life Balance of Professional and Private Life in Rural Areas, Based on the Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Regional Systems and Local Partnerships)	Empowering men and women in rural areas of Slovenia to effectively balance their professional and private lives. Establishing multi-stakeholder regional systems and local partnerships that support work-life balance, challenge traditional gender stereotypes, and enhance the economic independence of women in rural communities.	Enhanced ability for men and women in rural areas to balance professional and private lives. Reduction of traditional gender roles and stereotypes, leading to more equitable roles Increased economic independence of women in rural areas through targeted support and resources. Creation of sustainable local systems and partnerships that provide ongoing support for work-life balance. Enhanced collaboration among local stakeholders, including public institutions, employers, and NGOs. Increased awareness and education on the importance of work-life balance and gender equality in rural areas.
Ustvarjalno ravnovesje med poklicnim in zasebnim življenjem (acronym: BalanCed; engl. Creative work-life balance)	Enhancing work-life balance among employees and their families in the Portorož region by using creative activities, particularly art, to strengthen coping skills, self-efficacy, and problem-solving abilities. Empowering individuals to better manage the challenges of balancing work and private life, ultimately improving their mental health and overall quality of life.	Improved work-life balance for employees through participation in creative activities. Enhanced mental health and well-being among employees, families via art-based programs. Creation of a Creative Centre that serves as a supportive environment Strengthened support systems within local organizations to balance professional / private lives. Increased awareness in the community and among employers about the importance of work-life balance and mental health. Training of mentors who will continue to support employees beyond the project's duration.
Prenos in implementacija dobrih praks usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja, preko usposabljanja in izobraževanja zaposlenih in vodij, z namenom vzpostavljanja organizacijske strukture in kulture podjetij, ki	Improving work-life balance within companies by promoting gender equality. Educating and training employees and managers, raising awareness of effective work-life balance solutions, and fostering organizational cultures that support equal opportunities for men and women.	Improved work-life balance for employees in participating companies. Increased awareness among employees and managers of effective work-life balance solutions. Enhanced competencies of company management to create and maintain organizational structures based on gender equality. Reduction of gender stereotypes in the workplace, leading to a more equitable division of care responsibilities.

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
temelji na enakosti spolov (acronym: PROMETEJ, engl. Transfer and implementation of good practices for improving work-life balance, through training and education of employees and managers, with the aim of establishing an organizational structure and culture of companies, based on gender equality, acronym: PROMETHEUS)	Reducing gender stereotypes and creating more inclusive work environments that enable better management of professional and personal responsibilities.	Creation of more inclusive organizational cultures that support equal opportunities for men and women. Greater employee satisfaction and productivity as a result of improved work-life balance practices.

8.5 Outcome 5: “Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services”

Hiša za otroke (akronim: Barnahus; engl: Children's House)

The project under the Outcome 5 was designed to address the challenges of handling cases of child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, within the judicial system. The current processes are lengthy, rigid, and risk further traumatizing and repeated victimisation of the child, therefore, the general goal was to provide child-friendly justice in accordance with EU directives and to improve interagency cooperation in processes and procedures. The project aimed to implement the Barnahus model, a child-friendly, multidisciplinary, and interagency approach also recognized by the Council of Europe as a best practice, to improve the treatment of abused children in Slovenia and to improve interagency cooperation in cases involving abused children. The project was implemented by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Slovenia and a project partner the Public Institution Children's House. Within the project, the first Children's House in Slovenia was established (the premises were renovated and furnished, considering the children's ideas). 671 members of staff and other external collaborators and experts were trained within 16 training programmes and constant activities for raising awareness of the general and professional public were set up. 20 schools cooperated and 100,000 people were reached through awareness-raising campaigns. Abused children were the main beneficiary of the project.

Table A 4: Pre-defined projects: The expected main project results and specific outputs expected to the overall desired outcome 2 »Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning« and outcome 5 »Improved skills needed for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services« based on project descriptions

Project	Main project results	Specific outputs expected
<p>Kombinirano izobraževanje v poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju” (acronim: KIPSI; engl. Blended learning in vocational education and training, acronym: BlendVET)</p>	<p>Establishing the necessary conditions in vocational education and training (VET) schools in Slovenia for the effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. Developing and implementing school strategies for blended learning, support VET teachers in planning and executing blended lessons, and enhance the digital competences of both teachers and students, ensuring that VET education keeps pace with technological advancements.</p>	<p>Enhanced digital competences among VET teachers and students. Improved teaching and learning practices through the implementation of blended learning strategies. Development and adoption of school strategies that support the integration of digital technologies in VET education. Creation of digital learning materials, such as interactive videos and simulations, to support blended learning. Strengthened collaboration between VET schools, educators, and international partners to share best practices in digital education. Increased engagement and learning outcomes for students through the use of blended learning approaches.</p>
<p>Hiša za otroke (akronim: Barnahus; engl: Children’s House)</p>	<p>Providing child-friendly justice in Slovenia by improving the treatment of abused children through the implementation of the Barnahus model; Ensuring a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach that minimizes trauma and victimization during judicial proceedings; Establishing a pilot location where all relevant services for abused children are integrated into a single, safe environment.</p>	<p>Improved child-friendly justice through the establishment of a safe, integrated environment where abused children receive coordinated care and support. Reduced trauma and victimization for child victims during judicial processes. Enhanced interagency cooperation among social services, police, judiciary, and medical professionals in handling child abuse cases. Increased awareness and training for professionals working with abused children, leading to more effective support for victims. Greater public awareness of child abuse issues and the importance of the Barnahus model, particularly among parents and educators.</p>

9 APPENDIX 2: Project consortia structure

Table A 5 presents the data about the **project promoter, number of project partners in each project and the title of the project partner(s)**. The number of beneficiaries ranges from 2 (one project promoter and one project partner in the »Barnahus« project) to one project promoter and 10 project partners in the BlendVET project. Five out of 10 project partners are from the donor states Norway (3) and Iceland (2). The data about the structure of the consortia is important from the perspective of the evaluation, which on the one hand focuses on the performance of the project, where the structure of the consortia and the variety could present value added from the perspective of experience, while on the other hand a larger number of partners can diminish the efficiency of collaboration due to coordination challenges.

Table A 5: Project promoter and project partners

	Project with their specific overall outcome	Project promoter	Number of project partners	Project partner(s)
Outcome 1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)	Dvig digitalnih kompetenc (acronym: digi.komp, Engl. Raising digital competences)	Adult Education Center of Zasavje	3	Cultural Institution Delavski dom Trbovlje The Library of Tone Seliškar Trbovlje Piksel Produksjoner, Ltd (NOR)
	Inovativna metodologija in didaktično digitalno orodje za izkustveno poučevanje in opismenjevanje v smeri razogljičenja ter ciljev digitalne in zelene tranzicije (acronym: Zeleni Pingvin, Engl. Innovative methodology and didactic digital tool for experiential teaching and literacy in the direction of decarbonisation and the goals of digital and green transition, acronym: Green Penguin)	ISKRAEMECO, measuring and energy management, Joint Stock Company	4	Municipality of Kranj Association DOVES – FEE Slovenia Municipality of Ljubljana Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) Norway (NOR)
	Kombiniran učni model za srednje strokovno izobraževanje na področju strojništva in razvoj kompetenc dijakov in učiteljev za digitalno izobraževanje (acronym: Akademija za kombinirano učenje, engl. Combined learning model for vocational education in the field of mechanical engineering and development of competencies of students and teachers for digital education, acronym: Academy for Combined Learning)	Rokus Klett Publishing House, Ltd	5	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia – Institut for Business Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training School Centre Novo mesto University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS (NOR)
	Oblikovanje za povečano kompetentnost skozi aktivno participacijo v visokem šolstvu (acronym: DECAP-HE, engl. Designing for Enhanced Competence through Active Participation in Higher Education)	ALMA MATER EUROPAEA – European center, Maribor	4	Educational Research Institute Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia Student Organization of Slovenia Kristiania University College (NOR)
	Opolnomočenje za delo v 21. stoletju z razvojem veščin vseživljenjskega učenja, dobrega počutja zaposlenega ter preprečevanjem in prepoznavanjem duševnih motenj (acronym: EMPOWER FOR 21, engl. Empowering for work in the 21st century through life skills, promotion of wellbeing and prevention of mental disorders)	University Medical Centre Maribor	2	University of Maribor, Faculty of Medicine Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NOR)
	Podpora strokovnim delavcem v izobraževanju in zaposlovanju na področju avtizma (acronym: VIS A VIS, engl. Support for professionals in education and employment in the field of autism)	Association of Non-Governmental Organizations for Autism in Slovenia	6	Šentprima – institute for rehabilitation and education Alma Mater Europaea – European center, Maribor

	Project with their specific overall outcome	Project promoter	Number of project partners	Project partner(s)
				Elementary School Kozara Nova Gorica MIK international trading and manufacturing company, Ltd Fjæran-Granum's Top Competence Service (NOR)
	Podporna okolja za spodbujanje prečnih kompetenc v vzgoji in izobraževanju (acronym: SETCOM, engl. Supportive Environments to Enhance Transversal Competencies in Education)	University of Maribor	7	Nord University (NOR) Municipality of Maribor Elementary school Drago Kobal Maribor Secondary School of Economics and Gymnasium Maribor Elementary school Dušan Flis Hoče (Kindergarten unit) The Friends of Youth Association Maribor Andragogic Institute Maribor – Adult Education Centre
	Razvoj kompetenc z ekspertnim sistemom za podporo odločanju v visokošolskem izobraževanju (acronym: RESPO-VI, engl. Development of an Expert Support System for Competency Assessment in Higher Education)	The Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School	3	Temida computer engineering company, Ltd International Institute for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NOR)
	SCHOOL21 – gremo ven! (acronym: SCHOOL21, engl. SCHOOL21 – Let's get out!)	The France Prešeren Gymnasium	4	Elementary School France Prešeren Kranj SOCIALNA AKADEMIJA – Institute for Education, Research and Culture BSC, Business Support Centre, Ltd, Kranj Møre and Romsdal County Council (NOR)
	Šola prenove za nove generacije in dediščino 21. stoletja: Prepoznavanje in razumevanje lokalne kulturne dediščine in veščin prenove v osnovnošolskem pouku z uporabo novih metod poučevanja za nove generacije 21. stoletja in naprej (acronym: Šola prenove za nove generacije, engl. Heritage school for new generations: Recognition and understanding of local cultural heritage and restoration skills in primary school education using new teaching methods for new generations of the 21st century and beyond, acronym: Heritage School for the New Generations)	The Association of Historic Towns of Slovenia	6	University of Primorska Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia Elementary School Ivan Grohar Municipality of Škofja Loka MAGMA Geopark AS (NOR) School Center Škofja Loka
	Vzpostavlanje novih modulov poučevanja na področju obogatene in navidezne resničnosti (acronym: Think XR, engl. Establishing new education modules in the field of augmented and virtual reality)	School Center Slovenske Konjice – Zreče	6	Technology park Ljubljana Ltd University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Electrical Engineering University of Primorska Hashnet, Distributed technologies Ltd Unior Forging Industry, Joint Stock Company Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NOR)

	Project with their specific overall outcome	Project promoter	Number of project partners	Project partner(s)
Outcome 2: Improved skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning	Kombinirano izobraževanje v poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju" (acronym: KIPSI; engl. Blended learning in vocational education and training, acronym: BlendVET)	Institute of the RS for Vocational Education and Training	10	University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts Upper-secondary VET school Trbovlje School center Novo mesto School center Celje Upper-secondary VET school Koper Østfold University College (NOR) Åssiden upper secondary school (NOR) Viken Higher Vocational College (NOR) University of Akureyri (ISL) Akureyri comprehensive college (ISL)
Outcome 3: Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	Opolnomočenje in vključitev oseb NEET na trg dela in razvoj celostnega programa podpornih storitev za osebe NEET, vključno s pripravo sistemskih rešitev (acronym: PreseNEETi se; engl. Empowerment and integration of NEETs into the labour market and development of a comprehensive program of support services for NEETs, including the solutions on systemic level)	University of Adult Education Celje	4	Employment Service of Slovenia University of Maribor National Youth Council of Slovenia Norwegian Organisation for Supervision and Co-Operation (NOR)
	Aktivacija mladih s spodbujanjem njihovega medsebojnega povezovanja, prevzemanja aktivne vloge v lokalnih skupnostih in celostnim opolnomočenjem za življenje brez nasilja (acronym: TRIALOG; engl: Activating youth by encouraging them to form meaningful connections, take an active role in their local communities and empowering them for a violence-free life)	Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor	6	Municipality of Ptuj University of Adult Education Ormož Center for Free Time Activities Ptuj Youth Council of the Municipality of Ptuj Avisensa, Institute for psychology, counselling and education, Kamnica
	Korak naprej za mlade v manj dinamičnih okoljih (acronym: NEKSTEP; engl: A step forward for youth in less dynamic environments)	Adult Education Centre Koper	3	Adult Education Centre Sežana Središče Rotunda, Social Centre in the Littoral Region, Koper, so. e. International Development Norway (NOR)
	Koroška mreža podpornega okolja za mlade KOR-NET (acronym: KOR-NET; engl. Carinthian Network of Supportive Environment for Youth KOR-NET)	Dravit Dravograd Public Institute for Sports, Tourism, Culture and Youth Activities	5	Public Institute for Tourism, Sports, Youth and Social Programs SPOTUR Slovenj Gradec Kompleks Youth Culture centre The Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business Ravne na Koroškem A. L. P. PECA Company for Product Development and Marketing Mežiška dolina, Ltd Bjerkaker LearningLab (NOR)
	Podpora mladim v podjetništvu (acronym: PoMP; engl: Fostering entrepreneurship skills in schools)	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	5	Primorska Technology Park Development Centre Novo mesto Technology Park Ljubljana SAŠA incubator, Ltd Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NOR)

	Project with their specific overall outcome	Project promoter	Number of project partners	Project partner(s)
	Povečanje zaposlitvenih potencialov v Pomurski regiji (acronym: TALENT LAB; engl: Increasing employment potentials in Pomurje region)	Pomurje Technology Park, Ltd	6	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Humanities (NOR) University of Maribor, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering School of Economics Murska Sobota Bilingual Secondary School Lendava Biotechnological School Rakičan Secondary School for Catering and Tourism Radenci
	Vzpostavitev inovativnega podpornega okolja »Karierni center Posavje« v regiji Posavje (acronym: Karierni center Posavje; engl. Development of innovative support environment »Career Center Posavje« in the Posavje region, acronym: Career Center Posavje)	Regional Development Agency Posavje	5	Center for Youth and Sport Krško Institute of Adult Education Krško Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business Krško Municipality of Krško Collective Innovation AS (NOR)
Outcome 4: Improved work-life balance	Hospic pristop za razbremenitev delovno aktivnih moških in žensk, ki skrbijo za bolne in umirajoče svojce (acronym: IMRO; engl. A hospice approach to relieve the physical and psychological burden of working men and women caring for terminally ill and dying relatives)	Slovenian Hospice Society	3	Society for Cultural Relations SPES Municipality of Solčava Bjerkaker LearningLab (NOR)
	Razvoj celostnega pristopa za lajšanje usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja na podeželju, temelječega na vzpostavitvi večdeležniških regionalnih sistemov in lokalnih partnerstev (acronym: TERA; engl. Development of a Comprehensive Approach for Enhancing Work-Life Balance of Professional and Private Life in Rural Areas, Based on the Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Regional Systems and Local Partnerships)	Development Center Murska Sobota	6	Regional Development Agency Posavje Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor Slovenian Rural Youth Association Center for the Development of Sustainable Society, cooperative Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (NOR)
	Ustvarjalno ravnovesje med poklicnim in zasebnim življenjem (acronym: BalanCed; engl. Creative work-life balance)	Centre for the Communication, the Hearing and the Speech Portorož	4	NO PROBLEM ZONE, Institute for lifelong learning, creativity and well being NOMED, Institute for Independent Media Activity, Koper Association for Culture and Education PiNA Culture Break Borders (NOR)
	Prenos in implementacija dobrih praks usklajevanja poklicnega in zasebnega življenja, preko usposabljanja in izobraževanja zaposlenih in vodij, z namenom vzpostavljanja organizacijske strukture in kulture podjetij, ki temelji na enakosti spolov (acronym: PROMETEJ, engl. Transfer and implementation of good practices for improving work-life balance, through training and education of employees and managers, with the aim of establishing an organizational structure and culture of companies, based on gender equality, acronym: PROMETHEUS)	American Chamber of Commerce	9	Gender equality research institute Maribor Mercur, Ltd Riko, industrial, construction engineering and leasing, Ltd University of Maribor Knauf Insulation, Ltd Škofja Loka Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia A1 Slovenia, telecommunications services, Joint Stock Company

	Project with their specific overall outcome	Project promoter	Number of project partners	Project partner(s)
				The Norwegian Automobile Foundation (NOR) AMZS, service provider for members of national automobile association and other users of roadside assistance, Joint Stock Company
Outcome 5: Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of child victim services	Hiša za otroke (akronim: Barnahus; engl: Children's House)	Ministry of Justice	1	Public institution Children's House

10 APPENDIX 3: Description of the methodology

Table A 6: Project methodology overview*

	Evaluation questions	Desk research	Interview	Focus group	Survey
Performance	Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project results and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? (sustainability)				
	What change has been achieved in the programme area in terms of meeting the needs and addressing the challenges of the programme area as identified in the programme design?				
	To what extent has the programme generated (positive or negative) impacts beyond the direct beneficiaries?				
	Which success factors have been key to ensuring success at project level? Can you identify good practices?				
	Were the set indicators achieved? If not, what were the reasons for this?				
	To what extent did thematic and geographical coverage contribute to the success of the programme?				
Relevance	How well are the project objectives, outputs and outcomes aligned with the programme expectations set out in the programme design?				
	Does the programme add value without duplicating/overlapping with similar programmes in the programme area? If so, how?				
	Identify the gap between what has been achieved and the remaining/emerging needs of the field at the time of the evaluation.				
	Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project results and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? (sustainability)				
Bilateral cooperation	To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the financial mechanisms taken into account in programme design and implementation?				
	How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) add value to the implementation and achievements of the programme;				
	How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) add value to programme promoters, programme partners from the donor country, project promoters and project partners from the donor country?				
	How could bilateral cooperation be further strengthened?				
	Given the level of funding allocated to donor country partners, what is the added value of bilateral partnership to project implementation and would the project be feasible without the bilateral partner?				
Communication	What has been achieved in the implementation of the Communication Plan and the achievement of the objectives set? What can be improved?				
	How is the programme perceived by the target groups, in particular relevant stakeholders and the general public?				
Other horizontal aspects	Evaluation of the supports and outcomes regarding special concerns: pilots and models, improved cooperation of stakeholders, measures for easing transition of youth to labour market, measures to improve work-life balance, cooperation with Norwegian and international entities, scholarships and grants				
Colour coding		*limited importance		** very important	

10.1 In-depth interviews with project promoters

10.1.1 Interview guide

Introduction and brief description of the evaluation process.

Performance

- Were the project goals achieved? If not, what were the reasons for this?
- Which success factors have been key to ensuring success at project level? Can you identify good practices?
- To what extent did thematic and geographical coverage contribute to the success of the programme?
- Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project results and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? (sustainability)
- What change has been achieved in the programme area in terms of meeting the needs and addressing the challenges of the programme area as identified in the programme design?
- To what extent has the programme generated (positive or negative) impacts beyond the direct beneficiaries?

Relevance

- How well are the project objectives, outputs and outcomes aligned with the programme expectations set out in the programme design?
- Does the programme add value without duplicating/overlapping with similar programmes in the programme area? If so, how?
- Identify the gap between what has been achieved and the remaining/emerging needs of the field at the time of the evaluation.
- Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project results and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? (sustainability)

Bilateral cooperation

- To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the financial mechanisms considered in programme design and implementation?
- How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) add value to the implementation and achievements of the programme?
- How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships (at programme and project level) add value to programme promoters, programme partners from the donor country, project promoters and project partners from the donor country?
- How could bilateral cooperation be further strengthened?
- Given the level of funding allocated to donor country partners, what is the added value of bilateral partnership to project implementation, and would the project be feasible without the bilateral partner?

Communication

- What has been achieved in the implementation of the communication plan and the achievement of the objectives set? What can be improved?
- How is the programme perceived by the target groups, in particular relevant stakeholders and the general public?

Other horizontal aspects

- How would you evaluate the outcomes and impacts of your project related to (a) the development of pilots and models, (b) improved stakeholder cooperation, (c) measures to ease youth transitions to the labour market, (d) strategies for improving work–life balance, (e) collaboration with Norwegian and other international entities, and (f) the use of scholarships and grants?

10.1.2 Interview timeline

Table A 7: Date and time of interviews

Interview	Date and time (in brackets mode)
Interview 1	10 September 2024, 13:00 (live)
Interview 2	11 September 2024, 11:00 (zoom)
Interview 3	12 September 2024, 8:30 (zoom)
Interview 4	16 September 2024, 8:30 (zoom)
Interview 5	16 September 2024, 1:30 (zoom)
Interview 6	17 September 2024, 8:00 (zoom)
Interview 7	17 September 2024, 9:30 (zoom)
Interview 8	17 September 2024, 10:30 (zoom)
Interview 9	17 September 2024, 12:30 (zoom)
Interview 10	19 September 2024, 11:00 (zoom)
Interview 11	23 September 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 12	23 September 2024, 10:00 (zoom)
Interview 13	25 September 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 14	25 September 2024, 10:00 (zoom)
Interview 15	30 September 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 16	4 October 2024, 8:30 (zoom)
Interview 17	4 October 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 18	4 October 2024, 10:00 (zoom)
Interview 19	7 October 2024, 12:00 (zoom)
Interview 20	8 October 2024, 8:30 (zoom)
Interview 21	8 October 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 22	10 October 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 23	11 October 2024, 9:00 (zoom)
Interview 24	15 October 2024, 15:30 (zoom)
Interview 25	23 January 2025, 15:00 (zoom)

10.2 Focus group guide

10.2.1 Focus group guide

Performance

- Were the project goals achieved? If not, what were the reasons for this?
- What was the role of the project leader in monitoring the achievement of goals?
- Did you set project objectives, outputs and outcomes together with all partners in the project?
- Which success factors have been key to ensuring success at project level? Can you identify good practices?
- To what extent did thematic and geographical coverage contribute to the success of the programme?
- Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions and will the sustainability of the project results and the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? (sustainability)
- What change has been achieved in the programme area in terms of meeting the needs and addressing the challenges of the programme area as identified in the programme design?
- To what extent has the programme generated (positive or negative) impacts beyond the direct beneficiaries? What were other beneficiaries?

Relevance

- How well are the project objectives, outputs and outcomes aligned with the programme expectations set out in the programme design?
- Does the programme add value without duplicating/overlapping with similar programmes in the programme area? If so, how?

- Identify the gap between what has been achieved and the remaining/emerging needs of the field at the time of the evaluation.
- Will the projects contribute to systemic solutions?
- Will the continuation and upgrading of the activities beyond the end of the project be ensured? Why yes / why no?

Bilateral cooperation

- To what extent is the overall bilateral objective of the financial mechanisms considered in programme design and implementation? What was the role of bilateral partner in the design of project objectives, outputs and outcomes?
- How and to what extent do bilateral partnerships at the programme and project levels enhance the implementation and outcomes of the programme?
- How do bilateral partnerships at the programme and project levels create value for stakeholders?
- What opportunities exist to further strengthen bilateral cooperation?
- Considering the funding allocated to donor country partners, what is the added value of bilateral partnerships to project implementation? Would the project be viable without the bilateral partner?

Communication

- What outcomes have been achieved in implementing the communication plan and meeting its objectives? What areas could be enhanced?
- How did you organise communications of project outcomes?
- How do target groups, including key stakeholders and the public, perceive the programme?
- Could you share any good practice regarding communicating outcomes at the national and regional levels?

10.2.2 Focus group timeline

Table A 8: Date and time of interviews

Interview	Date and time (in brackets mode and number of participants)
Focus group 1	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Developed new teaching and learning practices for work and life and exchanged knowledge and best practices in enhancing skills and competencies in education), November 21 st , 8:00-10:00, (zoom, 14 participants)
Focus group 2	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Developed new teaching and learning practices for work and life and exchanged knowledge and best practices in enhancing skills and competencies in education), November 26 th , 8:00-10:00, (zoom, 7 participants)
Focus group 3	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Educational and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved), November 26 th , 8:00-10:00, (zoom, 11 participants)
Focus group 4	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Improved reconciliation of work and private life), November 21 st , 13:00-15:00, (zoom, 3 participants)
Focus group 5	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Improved skills and competences of staff members and students involved in combined education), November 27 th , 8:30-10:00, (zoom, 5 participants)
Focus group 6	Focus group with project partners (Outcome: Improved skills needed for good governance and cooperation in the provisions of services for child victims of crime), December 2 nd , 11:30-13:00, (zoom, 2 participants)
Focus group 7	Focus group with donor project partners, December 19 th , 10:00-11:00, (zoom, 5 participants)
Focus group 8	Focus group with Programme Operator representatives, January 29 th , 10:00-12:00, (zoom, 5 participants)

10.3 Survey

10.3.1 Questionnaire

Q1 - Under which result (Education - Strengthening Human Resources Programme) did your project work?

- Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved
- Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)
- Improved work-life balance
- Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of services to child victims
- Improved skills and competences of staff members and students involved in combined education

Q2 - What was your role in the project?

- Project partner
- Project promoter

Q3 - Which legal form best describes your organisation?

- An organisation wholly financed by public funds and established by the State or a municipality
- Non-governmental organisation, institute or association
- Economic interest association / chamber
- Social enterprise or disability enterprise
- Private company or entrepreneur (e.g. limited company, unlimited company, public limited company or cooperative, sole trader)
- Freelance journalist, self-employed cultural worker or private researcher status
- Other, please specify what:

Q4 - In which region is your organisation located?

- Pomurje region
- Podravska region
- Koroška region
- Savinjska region
- Zasavska region
- Posavska region
- South-eastern Slovenia
- Osrednjeslovenska region
- Gorenjska region
- Primorsko-Notranjska region
- Goriška region
- Obalno-kraška region

Q5 - How important was it for you to obtain funding from the financial mechanisms in order to achieve the objectives you set for yourself within the project?

- Very little important
- A little important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Quite important
- Very important

Q6 - Would you have carried out the project activities even if you had not received funding from the EEA/Norway Mechanism?

- Yes
- Some activities would, but not all
- No
- I don't know

Q7 - What percentage of the FP funds (%) remained unspent against the planned cost plan?

- All the funds were spent
- Up to 5 %
- 6-10 %
- 11-15 %
- 16-20 %
- 21-25 %
- More than 26 %

IF Q7 != [All the funds were spent]

Q8 - *Why haven't you spent the funds?*

Q9: *Where did you get the information about the call? (Multiple answers possible)*

- From public authorities (ministries, municipalities, etc.)
- From associations/societies/NGOs
- From other partners
- By searching on the internet
- Professional organisations and representatives
- Website <http://www.norwaygrants.si>
- I was already familiar with this mechanism

Q10: *At any time during the application or implementation of the project, did you encounter any problems with the following aspects of the project? (Scale: Never, Very rarely, Occasionally, Often, Very often, All the time)*

- Project planning
- Preparation of the project application (content and documentation) for the call for proposals
- Eligibility to apply
- Identification and selection of partners
- Organisation/implementation of project activities
- Financing the project
- Clarity of the application procedure
- Long payment deadlines by the programme promoter
- Preparation of documentation for (interim) reports and for the reimbursement claim
- Compliance with administrative/legal constraints in calls for tenders
- Responsiveness/professionalism/accuracy of the project administrator
- Responsiveness of the foreign partner
- Compliance with the rules of the programme and legal provisions, as these are in some cases unclear
- Compliance with programme rules and legal provisions, as these are in some cases too rigid (inflexibility)
- Responsiveness/professionalism/punctuality of project partners
- Responsiveness/professionalism/accuracy of the project promoter

Q11: *Please indicate your agreement with the statements below. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)*

- The project has fully achieved its objectives.
- The project achieved its objectives for all target groups.
- The project exceeded its objectives.
- The project also achieved externalities, i.e., wider impacts that we had not planned for and that went beyond our target groups.

IF Q11 != [I totally agree]

Q12: *What are the main factors or reasons why you did not achieve all the objectives of the project?*

Q14_2 - *Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)*

- The solutions, materials or methods we have developed are more widely used in the education system than we had planned.
- The results of the project (e.g. use of content, materials, methods, etc.) have also had an impact on groups that were not the original target groups.
- Collaboration with companies and/or organisations from practice has helped to better develop materials, methods, tools.
- The project has raised awareness of the importance of training and competence building among the general public.
- The project (materials, etc.) helped to improve digital competences of pupils, students.
- Knowledge transfer within local communities was successful.
- Due to the cooperation with companies in the development, the materials, tools, etc. are now also used in different companies, organisations.
- The project (materials, etc.) has helped to improve teachers' competences in digital tools.
- The project has improved the skills and competences of staff members and students involved in combined education.
- As a result of the collaboration with other organisations in the development, the materials, tools, etc. are now being used more widely than originally planned.

IF (9) Q1 = [1, 3, 5]

Q13 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)

- We have developed workshops (and/or) materials to facilitate young people's transition to the labour market.
- We have developed solutions to facilitate work-life balance.
- We have raised awareness on youth issues, deprived groups or other socially sensitive topics.
- We have developed successful workshops and materials to support young people in different areas
- We have developed support services for NEETs that successfully increase their chances of success
- We have developed systems that facilitate work-life balance in the local environment.
- We have helped to develop an organisational culture that supports work-life balance and gender equality policies
- We have developed solutions that successfully help different disadvantaged groups, including victims of violence

Q16_2 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements, which refer to gaps/differences between the set objectives and new needs that may have already emerged during the project implementation. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- New gaps that emerged during project implementation could be successfully addressed without changing or adding to the project content.
- New gaps could not be addressed because we could not do so within the project objectives.
- New gaps could not be addressed because financial resources did not allow it.
- New gaps could not be addressed because we did not have enough staff (staff constraints).

Q14 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements on the alignment of the project with programme expectations and possible overlaps and synergies with other projects (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)

- The objectives of the projects were in line with the programme's expectations and key priorities for sustainable development.
- The projects were specifically focused on solutions that meet local needs, reducing the possibility of overlap with other projects.
- The unique partnership between industry and educational institutions allowed the development of tailor-made solutions to specific challenges.
- The project work has enabled the strengthening of cooperation between partners for future projects.

- The project's impacts were in line with the objectives of the Norwegian and EEA Financial Mechanism.
- The project has strengthened cooperation between educational institutions and industry.
- The project has contributed to strengthening cooperation between project partners working in other projects.
- Our project has developed unique solutions that do not overlap with those of other projects.
- Some of our solutions are complementary to those of other projects.
- The organisation of programme-wide events could increase cooperation and the identification of synergies between projects.

Q15 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- The project has achieved good visibility among our target groups.
- The project has achieved good visibility among the general public.
- The programmes have been positively received by the target groups.
- The positive impacts of the programme have been recognised by the local authorities.
- Local authorities have actively participated or supported us in the implementation of our programme.
- Visibility could be improved by a more frequent presence in the national media.
- We were able to gain the attention of groups that had not previously been involved in similar activities.
- The programmes have been well received because of their free and tailor-made activities to local or specific needs.

IF (11) Q2 = [2]

Q16 - Please indicate your agreement with the partners' participation. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- We are satisfied with the work of the project partners.
- The project partners have been responsive in their cooperation.
- Project partners asked for a meeting if they needed one.
- The project partners were kept regularly informed by us (the promoters) on the progress of the project.
- The project partners completed their tasks on time.
- The project partners were properly involved in all phases of the project implementation.
- The project partners also cooperated intensively with each other (not only with the promoter).
- We would have liked to see more meetings and meetings with all partners.
- We worked with a foreign partner.
- The foreign partner was regularly involved in meetings.
- The foreign partner was regularly involved with the project partners.
- The foreign partner was regularly involved with us (the promoter).

IF (12) Q2 = [1]

Q17 - Please indicate your agreement with regard to the partners' cooperation and working with the promoter. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- The project promoter has coordinated the work of the project well.
- The project promoter organised regular meetings.
- The project promoter organised meetings when we needed them.
- The project promoter kept us regularly informed about the progress of the project.
- The project promoter alerted us when deadlines were approaching.
- We were properly involved in all phases of the project.
- The project partners worked intensively together (not only with the promoter).
- We would have liked to have had more meetings with all partners.
- The foreign partner cooperated with us on a regular basis.

Q18 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)

- A well-planned project at the project preparation stage was an important factor in the success of the project.
- A strong partnership at home was crucial for success.
- Collaboration with an international partner was crucial for success.
- Good organisation of the work was key to the success of the project.
- The project's focus on practical solutions increased the success of the project.
- Digitisation and the use of innovative technologies contributed significantly to the success.
- The involvement of local communities increased the success of the project.
- The project was successful because it focused on the specific needs of the target groups.

Q19 - Did you have a foreign partner in the project?

- Yes
- No

IF (15) Q19 = [1]

Q20 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements that refer to the role of a foreign partner. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)

- The foreign partner was very important for the success of the project.
- The foreign partner was very important for the successful application of the project.
- The foreign partner was actively involved in the preparation of the project application.
- The role of the bilateral partners was limited, mainly due to the spatial distance and the remote working.
- Bilateral cooperation added value to the project.
- The foreign partners contributed to the transfer of good practices and innovative solutions.
- Study visits abroad were crucial for the implementation of good practices in the home environment.
- The foreign partners provided valuable feedback on the implementation of the project.
- Bilateral cooperation allowed for enhanced networking and possibilities for future cooperation.
- The organisational support of the foreign partners was crucial for the effective implementation of the project.
- Cooperation with foreign partners contributed to broadening horizons and understanding different educational practices.

IF (15) Q19 = [1]

Q21 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements that refer to the role of the foreign partner. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree, Not relevant for our project)

- The distribution of funds between partners was appropriate in relation to their applications and contributions.
- Applying for a project with a foreign partner increased the chances of success of the project.
- The foreign partner was actively involved throughout the project implementation.
- The foreign partner received an appropriate share of the project funds in relation to its contribution.
- The foreign partner was already known to us before the project application.
- We will continue to work with the foreign partner.
- The project could have been fully implemented without the foreign partner.
- The project could have been implemented with the same quality without the foreign partner, but only if the other project partners had received its funds.
- We could have carried out the project without the foreign partner to the same quality as we did with it.

Q22 - Through which channels did you communicate with the different target groups? There are several possible answers. Multiple answers are possible

- Media advertisements (leasing of media space)
- Press conferences

- National radio
- Local radio
- Television
- Local print media
- National print media
- Internet - own website
- Internet - social networks
- Internet - online media
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Free channels from partners/public institutions (e.g. partners' websites, social networks, etc.)

Q23 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements regarding communication.

(Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- We have successfully achieved all the objectives set out in our communication plan.
- The objectives of the Communication Plan have been successfully achieved despite some delays in the implementation of activities.
- The project had a well-designed communication strategy.
- The well-designed communication strategy resulted in a higher public profile.
- The integrated graphic design and the uniform image of the projects contributed to increased visibility.

- The use of digital tools was key to effective communication with the target groups.
- Communication was tailored to the local needs and characteristics of the target groups.
- A clearly structured communication plan improved cooperation between project partners.
- The programme's rules on information and communication (Part 6 of the Beneficiaries' Guide and the Communication and Design Manual) were strictly followed.
- The website of the financial mechanisms in Slovenia is transparent and provides relevant information.
- The Programme Operator has regularly published our contributions to the Programme.
- The social networks of the financial mechanisms managed by the MKRR (Fb and IG) supported us in disseminating the results of the project.

Q24 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. (Likert scale, 1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree)

- Reporting was easy.
- Reporting rules were clear.
- We were always able to produce the required documentation for reporting as expected.
- Formal aspects of reporting sometimes made it difficult to make projects effective.
- The planned timeframes corresponded to the actual needs.
- We had sufficient time to implement the project.
- We had sufficient resources to implement the project.
- We read and applied the current multi-part Beneficiary Manual.
- We submitted reports within the deadlines.
- We had to update the reports frequently.
- The project administrators were accessible and willing to solve problems.
- The administrators provided technical support which improved the quality of project implementation.
- The cooperation with the administrators allowed adjustments in the implementation of projects where necessary.
- The instructions for the preparation of the joint report were clear.

Q25 - Please indicate your suggestions for process improvements during the project application phase.

Q26 - Please indicate your suggestions for process improvements during the project implementation phase.

Q27 - Please indicate your suggestions for process improvements at the reporting stage.

Q28 - Please list any systemic solutions to which the project has contributed (e.g. possible changes in the school system, legislation, development of possible certifications, etc.).

Q29 – Please, list any outputs that may have a lasting use (e.g. materials, websites, web-based solutions, etc.).

Q30 - Do you have any other recommendations for the Ministry or funders in terms of tenders, rules, reporting, etc. that could help to make future work on similar projects more successful?

10.3.2 Descriptive statistics

Table A 9: Under which outcome (Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme) did your project work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	17	24%	24%	24%
Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal)	25	35%	35%	59%
Improved work-life balance	8	11%	11%	70%
Improved skills for good governance and cooperation in the provision of services to child victims	2	3%	3%	73%
Improved skills and competences of staff members and students involved in combined education	19	26%	27%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 10: Project role

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
Project partner	56	78%	79%	79%
Project promoter	15	21%	21%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 11: Legal form of the organization involved

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
An organisation wholly financed by public funds and established by the State or a municipality	35	49%	49%	49%
Non-governmental organisation, institute or association	19	26%	27%	76%
Economic interest association / chamber	3	4%	4%	80%
Social enterprise or disability enterprise	1	1%	1%	82%
Private company or entrepreneur (e.g. limited company, unlimited company, public limited company or cooperative, sole trader)	4	6%	6%	87%
Freelance journalist, self-employed cultural worker or private researcher status	0	0%	0%	87%
Other, please specify what:	9	13%	13%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 12: Region, where involved organizations, were located

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
Pomurje region	4	6%	6%	6%
Podravska region	19	26%	27%	32%
Koroška region	0	0%	0%	32%
Savinjska region	8	11%	11%	44%
Zasavska region	4	6%	6%	49%
Posavska region	4	6%	6%	55%
South-eastern Slovenia	3	4%	4%	59%
Osrednjeslovenska region	16	22%	23%	82%
Gorenjska region	7	10%	10%	92%
Primorsko-Notranjska region	0	0%	0%	92%
Goriška region	1	1%	1%	93%
Obalno-kraška region	5	7%	7%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 13: Importance of the funding from the financial mechanisms for the achievement of the objectives you set for yourself within the project

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
Very little important	13	18%	18%	18%
A little important	4	6%	6%	24%
Neither important nor unimportant	2	3%	3%	27%
Quite important	14	19%	20%	46%
Very important	38	53%	54%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 14: Would the activities be carried out the project activities even if the organizations had not received funding from the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
Yes	1	1%	1%	1%
Some activities would, but not all	31	43%	44%	45%
No	33	46%	46%	92%
I don't know	6	8%	8%	100%
Total	71	99%	100%	

Table A 15: The percentage of the FP funds (%) that remained unspent against the planned cost plan

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative percent
All the funds were spent	42	58%	63%	63%
Up to 5 %	19	26%	28%	91%
6-10 %	5	7%	7%	99%
11-15 %	1	1%	1%	100%
16-20 %	0	0%	0%	100%
21-25 %	0	0%	0%	100%
More than 26 %	0	0%	0%	100%
Skupaj	67	93%	100%	

Table A 16: Reasons for not spending all funding (answers to open questions)*

Reason, listed as the cause for not spending all funding
Due to changes in the fixed share of employment.
There is a small amount left for the purchase of computer equipment which we did not spend because we would have had too much administrative work.
The item for the payment of salary costs was provided for in the application form at a higher cost than was actually incurred.
Unspent funds remained from the flat-rate part.
Some money was left over in salaries because we were not able to plan more accurately. Many of the partners were also schools where we had to adjust the project staffing every school year. Some money was left over in outsourcing because we were looking at getting the best price. Some things were also done by the project staff and we did not involve outsourcing.
The last possible reallocation of funds was in December. In March, when we had more accurate figures, we could no longer transfer funds from salaries to something else that we could buy/do.
Intentionally, to leave us some finances to continue to operate.
It is very difficult to carry out a project with 100% spending...
Difficult to plan spending on salaries because there were no lump sums. Salaries change in the viz system both by month and over longer periods - and annexes can only be changed within the reporting period.
Change of post - lower salary
Not all planned activities were carried out or to a lesser extent
Financial plan too rigid and procedure too complex for subsequent changes.
Fewer missions than planned.
We spent most of it
Administrative error
About 1% of unspent funds remained, as we obtained some services cheaper than originally planned. All activities were implemented.
All planned project results have been achieved, some even exceeded, representing significant added value. The use of funds was 98,15 % of what was planned.
Less eligible funds for one partner.
Budgetary way of planning the project's spending dynamics (unspent funds could not be carried over to the last year of the project), problems with procurement procedures due to change in the organisation's internal rules, problems with the organisation of activities, implementation of activities at lower costs than foreseen.
Some were unjustified, but in any case, you cannot plan to the euro the exact costing of a project
We were not able to carry out all the activities, it was not possible to plan the resources so precisely
The staff cost, the payroll was not calculated correctly, which we noticed too late
Staff salaries were incorrectly calculated, which we noticed too late
We spent 99,17% of the funds. Most of the funds that were not fully spent were staff costs, where it was very difficult to plan the spending accurately for one partner. The rest of the funds - about 25€ at project level - remained on the equipment and external experts cost lines, which we could not redirect anywhere else in the last month after the final conference. The rest of the funds - about 25€ at project level - were left on the equipment and external experts cost lines, which we were not able to redirect elsewhere in the last month after the final conference. These costs were not fully spent.
One of the staff members changed jobs and it was not possible to redeploy him during the period.

* Translated by DeepL.

Table A 17: Sources of information about the call

	Frequency	Valid	% valid
From public authorities (ministries, municipalities, etc.)	17	67	25%
From associations/societies/NGOs	4	67	6%
From other partners	34	67	51%
By searching on the internet	8	67	12%
Professional organisations and representatives	3	67	4%
Website http://www.norwaygrants.si	9	67	13%
I was already familiar with this mechanism	17	67	25%

Table A 18: How often have you encountered problems in any of the following areas? Frequency and percentage of respondents that chose a specific answer

	Never	Very rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	All the time	Total
Planning the project	17	21	20	2	1	1	62
	27%	34%	32%	3%	2%	2%	100%
Preparation of the project application (content and documentation) for the call	20	22	18	1	0	1	62
	32%	35%	29%	2%	0%	2%	100%
Meeting the conditions for applying to the call	38	13	10	0	1	0	62
	61%	21%	16%	0%	2%	0%	100%
Identification and selection of partners	28	17	13	4	0	0	62
	45%	27%	21%	6%	0%	0%	100%
Organization/implementation of project activities	9	27	21	3	0	2	62
	15%	44%	34%	5%	0%	3%	100%
Project financing	21	15	19	2	2	3	62
	34%	24%	31%	3%	3%	5%	100%
Clarity of the application process	28	18	15	0	0	1	62
	45%	29%	24%	0%	0%	2%	100%
Long payment deadlines from the program operator	13	11	12	11	6	9	62
	21%	18%	19%	18%	10%	15%	100%
Preparation of documentation for (interim) reports and reimbursement claims	9	15	18	11	8	1	62
	15%	24%	29%	18%	13%	2%	100%
Adherence to administrative/legal constraints in the calls	14	20	13	9	5	1	62
	23%	32%	21%	15%	8%	2%	100%
Responsiveness/professionalism/accuracy of the project supervisor	38	19	4	1	0	0	62
	61%	31%	6%	2%	0%	0%	100%
Responsiveness of the foreign partner	26	19	10	4	0	3	62
	42%	31%	16%	6%	0%	5%	100%
Compliance with program rules and legal provisions when they are unclear	15	20	17	8	2	0	62
	24%	32%	27%	13%	3%	0%	100%
Compliance with program rules and legal provisions when they are overly rigid (inflexibility)	13	19	14	9	4	3	62
	21%	31%	23%	15%	6%	5%	100%
Responsiveness/professionalism/accuracy of project partners	23	23	11	2	3	0	62
	37%	37%	18%	3%	5%	0%	100%
Responsiveness/professionalism/accuracy of the project lead	25	16	3	0	1	1	46
	54%	35%	7%	0%	2%	2%	100%

Table A 19: Agreement with the statements about the project success,

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Total No.
The project has fully achieved its objectives.	0%	3%	0%	19%	78%	63
The project achieved its objectives for all target groups.	0	1	0	14	48	63
The project achieved its objectives for all target groups.	0%	2%	0%	22%	76%	63
The project exceeded its objectives.	1	0	10	16	36	63
The project exceeded its objectives.	2%	0%	16%	25%	57%	63
The project also achieved externalities, i.e., wider impacts that we had not planned for and that went beyond our target groups.	1	2	5	23	32	63
The project also achieved externalities, i.e., wider impacts that we had not planned for and that went beyond our target groups.	2%	3%	8%	37%	51%	63

Table A 20: Agreement with the statements about project results

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
Solutions, materials, or methods we developed are being used more broadly in the education system than we had planned.	36	72	4,1	0,96	1	5
The results of the project (e.g., use of content, materials, methods) had an impact on groups not initially targeted.	38	72	4,1	0,96	1	5
Collaboration with companies and/or practical organizations helped improve the development of materials, methods, tools.	35	72	4,1	0,87	1	5
The project raised awareness about the importance of training and strengthening competencies among the wider public.	36	72	4,2	0,89	1	5
The project (materials, etc.) helped improve digital skills among students.	36	72	4,3	1,09	1	5
Knowledge transfer within local communities was successful.	31	72	4,1	0,91	2	5
Due to collaboration with companies during development, materials, tools, etc., are now also used in various companies and organizations.	32	72	3,7	1,04	1	5
The project (materials, etc.) helped improve teachers' digital tool competencies.	36	72	4,5	0,88	1	5
The project improved the skills and competencies of staff and students involved in blended learning.	31	72	4,2	1,19	1	5
Due to collaboration with other organizations during development, materials, tools, etc., are now being used more widely than originally planned.	35	72	4,0	0,92	1	5

Table A 21: Agreement with the statements about project results

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
We developed workshops (and/or) materials that ease young people's transition to the labor market.	30	72	4,4	1,00	1	5
We developed solutions that facilitate balancing professional and private life.	28	72	4,5	0,88	2	5
We increased awareness of issues concerning young people, disadvantaged groups, or other socially sensitive topics.	30	72	4,0	1,35	1	5
Within the project, we developed successful workshops and materials to support young people in various fields.	33	72	4,5	0,87	2	5
We developed support services for NEETs that significantly increase their chances of success.	18	72	3,7	1,33	1	5
We developed systems that facilitate work-life balance in the local community.	23	72	4,2	0,98	2	5
We helped develop an organizational culture that supports work-life balance and gender equality policies.	25	72	4,1	0,86	2	5
We developed solutions that effectively assist various disadvantaged groups, including victims of violence.	19	72	3,8	1,42	1	5

Table A 22: Agreement with the statements about gaps/disparities between set goals and emerging needs identified during the project.

	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
New gaps that emerged during the project were successfully addressed without changing or supplementing the project's content.	62	72	3,7	0,95	1	5
New gaps could not be addressed because they did not fit within the project's goals.	62	72	2,1	0,95	1	4
New gaps could not be addressed due to financial constraints.	61	72	2,1	0,98	1	4
New gaps could not be addressed due to a lack of staff (staffing limitations).	61	72	2,2	0,97	1	4

Table A 23: Agreement with the statements about project alignment with programme expectations and overlaps/synergies with other projects.

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about project alignment with program expectations and overlaps/synergies with other projects.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
The project goals aligned with the program's expectations and key sustainability priorities.	52	72	4,5	0,61	2	5
Projects were specifically focused on solutions tailored to local needs, reducing the likelihood of overlaps with other projects.	50	72	3,7	1,07	2	5
Unique partnerships between industry and educational institutions enabled the development of tailored solutions for specific challenges.	33	72	3,9	1,04	1	5
Project work facilitated strengthened collaboration among partners for future projects.	60	72	4,5	0,83	1	5
The project's impacts aligned with the objectives of the Norwegian and EEA financial mechanisms.	60	72	4,6	0,59	3	5
The project strengthened collaboration between educational institutions and industry.	38	72	4,1	0,96	1	5
The project contributed to enhanced collaboration among project partners involved in other projects.	60	72	4,4	0,85	1	5
Our project developed unique solutions that do not overlap with those of other projects.	59	72	4,0	1,03	1	5
Some of our solutions complement those of other projects.	56	72	3,9	1,02	1	5
Organizing program-wide events could increase collaboration and recognition of synergies among projects.	60	72	4,1	0,85	1	5

Table A 24: Agreement with the statements about project visibility

	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
The project achieved good visibility among our target groups.	60	72	4,4	0,88	1	5
The project achieved good visibility among the general public.	60	72	4,1	0,77	1	5
Programs were positively received by target groups.	60	72	4,5	0,68	1	5
Local authorities recognized the program's positive effects.	60	72	4,1	0,85	1	5
Local authorities actively collaborated or supported us in implementing our program.	60	72	3,9	0,95	1	5
Visibility could be improved with more frequent presence in national media.	60	72	3,9	0,83	1	5
We managed to capture the attention of groups previously not engaged in similar activities.	59	72	3,9	0,88	1	5
Programs were well-received due to free and locally or specifically tailored activities.	60	72	4,2	0,82	1	5

Table A 25: Agreement with the statements regarding partner collaboration.

	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
We were satisfied with the work of project partners.	14	72	4,5	0,52	4	5
Project partners were responsive in collaboration.	14	72	4,4	0,51	4	5
Project partners requested meetings when needed.	14	72	4,3	0,83	2	5
Project partners were regularly informed by us (the lead) about project progress.	14	72	4,7	0,47	4	5
Project partners completed their tasks on time.	14	72	4,1	0,92	2	5
Project partners were adequately involved in all project implementation phases.	14	72	4,5	0,52	4	5
Project partners also collaborated intensively with each other (not just with the lead).	14	72	4,2	0,80	3	5
We would have liked more meetings and gatherings with all partners.	14	72	2,5	1,09	1	5
We collaborated with a foreign partner.	14	72	4,4	1,09	1	5
The foreign partner was regularly included in meetings.	14	72	4,2	1,12	1	5
The foreign partner regularly collaborated with project partners.	14	72	3,9	1,33	1	5
The foreign partner regularly collaborated with us (the lead).	14	72	4,4	1,08	1	5

Table A 26: Agreement with the statements regarding partner collaboration and work with the lead.

	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
The project lead effectively coordinated project activities.	44	72	4,5	0,88	1	5
The project lead regularly organized meetings.	44	72	4,7	0,64	2	5
The project lead organized meetings as needed.	44	72	4,7	0,52	3	5
The project lead kept us regularly informed about project progress.	44	72	4,6	0,76	2	5
The project lead reminded us of approaching deadlines.	44	72	4,7	0,56	3	5
We were adequately involved in all project implementation phases.	44	72	4,5	0,79	2	5
Project partners collaborated intensively with each other (not just with the lead).	44	72	4,6	0,76	2	5
We would have liked more meetings and gatherings with all partners.	44	72	2,5	1,09	1	5
The foreign partner regularly collaborated with us.	44	72	3,8	1,22	1	5

Table A 27: Agreement with the statements regarding project work

	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
A well-planned project during the preparation phase was an important factor in the project's success.	58	72	4,6	0,77	1	5
Strong domestic partnerships were crucial for success.	55	72	4,6	0,65	2	5
Collaboration with an international partner was crucial for success.	54	72	3,7	1,26	1	5
Good work organization was key to successful project implementation.	57	72	4,6	0,61	2	5
Focusing the project on practical solutions increased its success.	56	72	4,6	0,68	1	5
Digitalization and the use of innovative technologies significantly contributed to success.	51	72	4,3	0,89	1	5
Engaging local communities increased the project's success.	51	72	4,0	0,97	2	5
The project succeeded because it focused on the specific needs of target groups.	56	72	4,5	0,79	1	5

Table A 28: Percentage of respondents and number, where projects had a foreign partner

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid	Cummulative
Yes (with foreign partner)	51	71%	88%	88%
No	7	10%	12%	100%
Total	58	81%	100%	

Table A 29: Agreement with the statements regarding the donor project partner

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE FOREIGN PARTNER.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
The foreign partner was very important for the successful implementation of the project.	51	72	4,0	1,12	1	5
The foreign partner was very important for the successful application of the project.	51	72	4,2	0,95	1	5
The foreign partner actively participated in preparing the project application.	50	72	3,5	0,97	1	5
The role of bilateral partners was limited, mainly due to geographic distance and remote work.	51	72	3,1	1,14	1	5
Bilateral collaboration added value to the project.	50	72	4,2	0,89	1	5
Foreign partners contributed to the transfer of good practices and innovative solutions.	50	72	4,3	0,89	1	5
Study visits abroad were crucial for implementing good practices in the local environment.	47	72	4,6	0,83	1	5
Foreign partners provided valuable feedback on project implementation.	50	72	4,1	1,06	1	5
Bilateral collaboration enabled networking and future collaboration opportunities.	50	72	4,3	0,93	1	5

The organizational support of foreign partners was crucial for effective project implementation.	49	72	3,6	1,22	1	5
Collaboration with foreign partners contributed to broadening horizons and understanding various educational practices.	50	72	4,4	0,78	2	5

Table A 30: Agreement with the statements regarding the donor project partner

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE FOREIGN PARTNER.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
The distribution of funds among partners was appropriate based on their roles and contributions.	49	72	4,0	1,14	1	5
Applying for the project with a foreign partner increased the chances of project success.	49	72	4,5	0,82	1	5
The foreign partner actively participated throughout the project's implementation.	50	72	3,9	1,03	1	5
The foreign partner received an appropriate share of project funds based on their contribution.	49	72	4,1	0,92	1	5
We knew the foreign partner before applying for the project.	49	72	2,7	1,43	1	5
We will continue to collaborate with the foreign partner.	50	72	3,8	1,15	1	5
The project could have been fully implemented without the foreign partner.	50	72	2,4	1,21	1	5
The project could have been implemented with the same quality without the foreign partner, but only if the partner's funds were redistributed to other project partners.	50	72	2,3	1,15	1	5
The project could have been implemented with the same quality as it was with the foreign partner.	50	72	2,4	1,22	1	5

Table A 31: Media, used in project promotion, percent of project partners/promoters that reported using a specific media (multiple choices were possible)

	%	Valid N
Internet – own website	93%	58
Conferences	93%	58
Internet – social media	91%	58
Workshops	79%	58
Free channels of partners/public institutions (e.g., websites, social media of partners, etc.)	79%	58
Local print media	78%	58
Internet – online media	67%	58
Press conferences	64%	58
Local radio	43%	58
Television	41%	58
National print media	24%	58
Advertisements in media (purchase of media space)	22%	58
National radio	17%	58

Table A 32: Agreement with the statements regarding the communication

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements regarding communication.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
We successfully achieved all the goals set in the communication plan.	58	72	4,3	0,66	2	5
We successfully achieved the goals from the communication plan despite some delays in activities.	57	72	3,8	1,09	1	5
The project had a well-designed communication strategy.	58	72	4,2	0,70	2	5
Thanks to a well-designed communication strategy, we achieved higher visibility in the public.	58	72	4,2	0,71	2	5
A comprehensive and unified visual identity of projects contributed to greater visibility.	58	72	3,9	1,05	1	5
The use of digital tools was crucial for effective communication with target groups.	58	72	4,2	0,69	2	5
Communication was tailored to local needs and target group characteristics.	58	72	4,2	0,78	2	5
A clearly structured communication plan improved collaboration among project partners.	58	72	4,1	0,84	1	5
We consistently followed program rules regarding information and communication (Part 6 of the Beneficiaries' Manual and the Communication and Design Manual).	58	72	4,4	0,63	2	5
The website of financial mechanisms in Slovenia is clear and provides appropriate information.	57	72	4,2	0,62	3	5
The program operator regularly published our contributions that we submitted to them.	57	72	4,4	0,59	3	5
The social media accounts of financial mechanisms managed by MKRR (Fb and IG) supported us in disseminating project results.	57	72	4,0	0,97	1	5

Table A 33: Agreement with the statements regarding reporting

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.	Valid units	No of units	Average	Std.dev	Min	Max
Reporting was simple.	58	72	2,7	1,20	1	5
Reporting rules were clear.	58	72	3,4	0,92	1	5
We could always prepare the required documentation for reporting as expected.	58	72	3,7	0,89	2	5
Formal aspects of reporting sometimes hindered project effectiveness.	58	72	3,4	1,08	1	5
Planned timelines matched actual needs.	58	72	3,9	0,91	1	5
We had enough time to implement the project.	58	72	3,9	1,00	1	5
We had enough funds to implement the project.	58	72	3,8	0,91	1	5
We read and used the current Beneficiaries' Manual in several parts.	58	72	4,4	0,56	3	5
We submitted reports on time.	58	72	4,6	0,59	3	5
We often had to amend reports.	58	72	3,6	1,10	1	5
Project supervisors were accessible and willing to resolve issues.	14	72	4,8	0,43	4	5
Supervisors provided professional support that improved the quality of project implementation.	14	72	4,8	0,43	4	5
Collaboration with supervisors allowed for adjustments in project implementation where needed.	14	72	4,8	0,43	4	5
Instructions for preparing the overall report were clear.	14	72	4,5	0,52	4	5

Table A 34: Systemic changes resulting from the project

Answers to survey question: "Please describe any systemic solutions to which the project has contributed (e.g., potential changes in the education system, legislation, development of certifications, etc.)."
The project focused on measuring competencies in education and indicated possibilities for progress in this area at universities and companies.
As entrepreneurial competence is being introduced into education, the project contributed to the recognition and acceptance of entrepreneurship as a key competence.
This project highlighted the need to include content in the curriculum at all levels of education.
No comments.
Improving the balance between professional and private life.
Our project addressed the thoughtful use of digital technologies in vocational education. We propose that the concept of teaching, class groups, and student groups, as well as teacher obligations, be redefined in laws governing education (e.g., the Organization and Financing of Education Act, the Vocational and Technical Education Act, the Higher Professional Education Act) to enable the development of blended learning methods, transferring learning activities to online environments, working with larger (e.g., up to 100 students) and smaller groups of students, and adopting different teacher roles (e.g., not only teaching entire classes in a classroom or teaching in predefined groups).
/
Nothing to add – current legislation does not allow the continuation into regular practice! Very unfortunate!
Proposal for a systemic solution – clay therapy as a prescribed treatment, which will be part of a future project and is already a practice for addressing anxiety in other countries.

Answers to survey question: "Please describe any systemic solutions to which the project has contributed (e.g., potential changes in the education system, legislation, development of certifications, etc.)."
Unfortunately, project results contribute too little to necessary systemic solutions due to the rigidity of the system and policymakers.
Proposal to amend legislation to enable blended learning. The pilot implementation revealed shortcomings that need to be addressed to determine if it is more optimal for certain areas and can achieve better goals.
Greater collaboration between employers and schools/youth.
Improved daily teaching practices.
Improvements in measuring, monitoring, and developing competencies.
The project enabled a different way of teaching – students spend more time outdoors, encompassing a broader range of competencies.
These were documented in the final project documents.
Handbook.
We introduced a curriculum in secondary schools and prepared a curriculum for a new university program.
*
The project brought many positive solutions at the systemic level of the school (we intentionally approached the project at the school-wide level), improving professional (understanding and implementing blended learning, introducing new pedagogical solutions through collegial observations across 13 teams) and digital competencies of staff and students (creating H5P interactive videos, VR, improving online etiquette, and enhancing the use of online classrooms).
No suggestions.
Two day centers for informal caregivers and their dependents were established, a "Compassionate Company" certificate introduced, and awareness of informal caregiving issues in Slovenia was raised among professionals.
Result 1: The project contributed to the development and improvement of institutional cooperation with a Norwegian higher education institution and other stakeholders in modernizing teaching and learning in higher education. The focus was on enhancing competencies for work and life in the 21st century through student-centered learning activities. The result is reflected in the number of mutual learning activities conducted, participants involved, and trained professionals, strengthening institutions' capabilities to develop high-quality educational programs.
Result 2: The project developed, tested, and maintained new teaching approaches, models, and strategies that provide pedagogically appropriate resources to academic staff and stakeholders. This enables the development of advanced pedagogical practices that actively involve students in the learning process and cater to the need for key competencies. The result is measurable by the proportion of participating institutions adopting new practices, the number of staff members involved, and the number of trained multipliers using new models.
Result 3: The project increased stakeholder collaboration and contributions in higher education at all levels, enhancing the development and implementation of transformative teaching and key competencies for the 21st century. This is supported by a high level of satisfaction with the quality of institutional cooperation.
No suggestions.
We have no specific proposals.
Proposal to amend the primary school curriculum.
A new service for the treatment of child victims of sexual abuse has been established.
Certainly increased recognition of the importance of balancing work and private life.

Table A 35: Results/impacts that will last beyond the project end

Answers to survey question: "Please list any results that may remain in permanent use (e.g., materials, websites, online solutions, etc.)."
Materials we prepared are available on the website and are very interesting and useful.

Answers to survey question: “Please list any results that may remain in permanent use (e.g., materials, websites, online solutions, etc.).
Interactive tutorial for entrepreneurship teachers.
Manuals, website, brochure, workshop materials...
Materials, solutions for companies, online publications...
Websites, ...
Website: https://kipsi.si/
Webpage: https://kipsi.si/en/
Strategies for developing blended learning in vocational and technical schools: https://kipsi.si/aktivnosti/razvojne-strategije-sol/
Experiences with blended learning in vocational and technical schools and their evaluation: https://kipsi.si/aktivnosti/pedagoske-resitve/
Digital and video learning materials for vocational and technical schools: https://kipsi.si/aktivnosti/resitve-za-e-ucenje/
Materials on the website.
Computer games, VR materials, AR materials, relationships, and connections between partners...
Two online materials written during the project and shared with potential users of the information or workshop facilitators.
Materials, website, teaching and learning methods.
N/A
We developed an e-workbook – an application that connects a smartphone to an e-classroom via a QR code. Integration of VR solutions into the e-classroom and practical use of H5P plugins. The solutions are further developed, refined, and updated within practical lessons.
Competence center.
Website, materials.
Classroom with equipment, materials, methods, and examples of practice.
Everything created in the project.
Application for measuring, monitoring, and developing competencies.
Established competence center, training sessions, and equipment lending.
Outdoor classroom, a handbook on outdoor teaching with practical examples of lesson units, and various teaching aids for lessons in nature.
Printed and electronic materials and a website.
Website, handbook.
Materials for the XR academy, digital tools for using XR solutions in teaching, curriculum for secondary schools and universities.
Results are visible in the continued implementation of workshops and lectures designed in the project, along with execution methodologies.
Materials available on the project website.
Within the project, we first developed materials for 4 modules included in the project. Over time, we expanded (and will continue to expand) the database of interactive materials. Each year, every team prepares one e-material, resulting in 13 new materials annually, creating a database of interactive e-materials for all employees in our school within specific teams. Additionally, good practice transfer will improve, as the creator of the material will present it in a concrete lesson to the management and all members of the same team. We will also continue conducting workshops on online etiquette and critical data searching, initiated within the project, and maintain the established support system for students using online classrooms.
Website and materials.
Materials, pedagogical model for planning and implementing blended learning.
Online good practices handbook, shared online database for mentors and young people in the region...

10.3.3 Proposals for changes (survey)

Table A 36: Suggested changes in the project application phase

Answers to open survey question “Please provide your suggestions for improving the processes during the project application phase.”
Reduction of bureaucratic requirements.
I was not present for all phases of the application process. If it's true that a detailed investment and implementation document (DIIP) needs to be prepared at the end, I think that's absolutely too much.
The project lead prepared everything appropriately.
We designed the project so that the roles and tasks of project partners from Slovenia, Norway, and Iceland were distributed equally. The project was genuinely based on joint development work and implementation in all three partner countries. Therefore, using the Slovenian language for project planning and reporting caused additional work. We suggest that, in such cases, English could be used for project plans and reporting.
More information about the announcement of the call, quicker organization of an info day, more precise answers to questions, and a longer application deadline.
Everything was excellent!
Simplified application form.
Possibility for intensive involvement in project preparation (we participated in a pre-defined project).
The EMS system is very rigid for data entry during applications. Adding additional content boxes contributes to the lack of clarity in the form. Entering some data in one place, similar data in another, and attaching documents in yet another is very distracting. The printouts of applications are not the same as what we entered in the form—on the printout, there are sections/boxes that we didn't have to fill in.
I have no specific suggestions.
The question is how to successfully include a foreign partner.
We did not directly participate in the project application process. We were invited because we had previously collaborated with the project lead.
No suggestions.
Well-prepared procedures.
I have no suggestions.
None.
I think everything was very clear!
A longer application deadline. A less complicated application form.
All partners should already participate in the project preparation phase, not join a practically finished project draft with no input during its preparation, where partners are then sought. The project's start was very confusing, and our role was completely unclear. Additionally, for a long time, we didn't know whether the project would be approved or not. Meanwhile, systematization for collaborators was already implemented (potential shortage of hours for collaborators if the project wasn't implemented), as the new school year had already begun. We suggest the project start should not be planned for November (but by at least September 1, as it was for us). By early August, it should be clear if the project is approved, so work hours for teaching and project activities can be distributed appropriately. Projects should also last three years, so funds could be utilized from September 1 to September 1, meaning no employees would lack hours due to the project. It's not fair that after the project ends, some activities are still conducted for which no payment or hours are allocated for employees.
Everything was in line with expectations; I have no suggestions for improvements.
A more simplified application process (application form).
I have none.
We have no specific suggestions.
Perhaps a less extensive and administratively demanding application process. There's a significant gap between the application submission, results announcement, and project start. Very stringent and rigid rules for partner operations during the project.
Each partner should confirm their participation and understanding of the content with a signature, rather than the project lead "assigning" tasks based on their opinion... There were issues with the workload of already burdened partners. There should be an option for financial compensation for, e.g., overtime work.
Better IT support.
Ok.
We did not encounter significant difficulties during the project application phase; the workshops were very thorough and helpful.

Table A 37: Suggested changes regarding/ during the project implementation

Answers to open survey question “Please provide your suggestions for improving the processes during the project implementation phase.”
Extend the project duration.
A significant part of the project execution was dedicated (in my opinion) to unnecessary administration. The entire process of acquiring external vendors was completely excessive (3 inquiries, 3 offers, official notes, all logos in place, Arial font, maybe even color...).
The project lead prepared everything appropriately and on time.
The execution of the project was entirely in our hands or those of all partners, so we have no suggestions here.
More connections between projects, especially if they are in the same local area.
Maybe more flexibility when realizing that some planned activities cannot be carried out for justified reasons.
Long waiting times for the call results can reduce the time available for the project’s execution, which then needs to be considered.
Everything was excellent!
Advance financing or the possibility of guarantees for banks where organizations borrow money for project implementation. In our case, all the money had to be borrowed from private individuals, which caused significant stress.
The option for direct communication with project managers (not just through the project lead). Flexibility in rules and project managers.
Update the EMS system to be more user-friendly. Publish a template for partner and lead partner interim reports online, which could serve as a basis for preparing these reports. This way, we would know exactly what needs to be included in the report, and the text could then be easily transferred to EMS. Otherwise, we struggled through the application, figuring out what needed to be entered. The PDF printout was very user-unfriendly and hard to read.
Perhaps the approval of reports takes too long.
The question remains on how to successfully involve a foreign partner.
Perhaps the project duration could exceed 24 months.
Excellent support for implementation.
I have no suggestions.
More freedom in visual communication—the limitations from the manual create a very rigid framework that doesn’t allow for creative solutions. More flexibility in reallocating funds during the project’s duration.
Faster payments.
Financial flexibility for individual partners within 10 to 20% is essential! Alternatively, a 40% flat rate for external expenses, as with Interreg programs, is suggested.
The implementation phase should better adapt to individual projects since projects can evolve organically.
After the project was approved, we received many incomplete pieces of information from the lead partner. It wasn’t clear what we needed to do—we felt that even the lead partner wasn’t sure. Fortunately, after a few months, the situation stabilized, the project proceeded smoothly, and we developed a very good partnership. We also appreciated having free rein for each school to manage the project within the common framework.
We have no suggestions; everything was as expected.
I have none.
We have no specific suggestions.
A more flexible design is needed. Given the lack of personnel, it would make sense to adjust the accounting process (not just a fixed part of the employee’s salary) and consider other legal forms (e.g., increased workload).
Financial resources for a specific achievement (e.g., partner A) must be managed by partner A: Partner A, who is responsible for the content, must also manage the financial aspect.
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Ok.

Answers to open survey question “Please provide your suggestions for improving the processes during the project implementation phase.”
Our biggest issue was that we received funds for implementation only after six months or after reporting, with significant delays. This kept us in constant stress regarding the availability of resources. Our suggestion is absolute ongoing financing from the start, even if in installments but paid in advance.
I welcome the possibility of changing the scope or even the set goals if, during the project, it becomes evident that new circumstances have arisen compared to when the project was planned.

Table A 38: Suggested changes regarding reporting

Answers to open survey question “Please provide your suggestions for improving the processes during the reporting phase.”
Reducing reporting requirements.
I propose less bureaucracy in reporting and more trust in the quality of the work of project partners.
Since we planned the budget in detail in advance, I believe this should suffice for a lump sum. However, during reporting, we had to attach all possible evidence, which I can no longer list. This is a total waste of time.
It could be simplified.
We propose that both Slovenian and English languages could be used for reporting.
A more transparent portal for reporting. Partner reports and the joint report should be combined. This was unnecessary double work.
Financial reporting should especially be simplified (seven scanned documents for every month of salary reporting is simply too much). Small partners do not have additional staff, so professionals have to do all this themselves, spending a lot of time on reporting instead of on content. Audits and controls are already planned.
The content part of reporting is also quite extensive and demanding, as all partners report on all activities, not just their own. Let the lead partner report everything.
For some organizations, the review time for financial reports and then transferring the funds is very long. Not everyone has enough resources to pre-finance (especially smaller partners, which is why they don't apply to similar calls).
Simplified reporting.
Simplify reporting (especially financial and repetitive questions in content reporting).
Flexibility in rules and project managers.
A large delay between reporting deadlines and payouts!!! For other aspects, see above – all phases are covered.
Simplifications in cost reimbursement – defining flat rates based on the last six months' salaries – easier planning of funds.
I have no suggestions.
We request simplifications in reporting. The current system takes a lot of time and communicates distrust from the grantors.
Reporting was excellent, we would welcome a new call.
Reduce the amount of attachments; the application is complicated as well.
The process needs simplification. The reporting tool is fine, but sometimes the same attachments needed to be uploaded in multiple places, yet they still appeared in amendment lists. Too much evidence is required; the process is extremely bureaucratic and unpleasant.
Faster payments.
EMS needs to be simplified. Perhaps introduce flat rates.
The lead partner could submit a joint report for the entire partnership as is the practice in most European projects. This would improve the efficiency of communication, evidence collection, amendment preparation, etc., and speed up fund reception compared to now, which was (unfortunately) a disaster. We waited up to 8 months for payments because some partners had many amendments, and then there was still the wait for joint report approval... an extremely inefficient system.
Reporting was our biggest challenge as it was very demanding. We had to attach many things, and the reviewers changed (which is absolutely wrong as we had to explain things already clarified to a previous

Answers to open survey question “Please provide your suggestions for improving the processes during the reporting phase.”
reviewer). They demanded different things (one this way, another that way, a third differently). The reporting system is outdated, and uploads larger than 6 MB are not possible, which is a challenge even for better-quality photos, let alone PowerPoints. The system repeats similar or identical questions, has no automatic calculations for flat rates, etc. What bothered us most was the negative attitude of some reviewers. It was unprofessional, sometimes even rude, and one reviewer even suggested that we could have forged something. Because of this, we are strongly discouraged from participating in such projects in the future, even though we have 14 years of experience working on international projects where CMPIUS has always been correct and friendly. Here, the attitude was abysmal.
Changing reviewers mid-project leads to repeating already reported matters, which is unproductive.
Transition to the JEMS system and simplify reporting, such as avoiding unnecessary monthly reporting on individual work.
Improve the EMS reporting system: the save function occasionally does not work during report preparation, so the "Save" option must be clicked after each individual entry, yet sometimes the content still disappears or is not saved.
Reporting requirements for amendments were not always clear – even when we followed instructions (e.g., explaining the selection process for contracts: the MKRR controller demanded the partner obtain an opinion from the authorship agency, even though this was clearly unnecessary...).
A more simplified reporting form.
I have no suggestions.
We have no specific suggestions.
More time for reporting... for instance, the last month of the project could be dedicated to reporting and also cover work costs for this purpose).

Table A 39: Other suggestions

Answers to open survey question “Do you have any recommendations for the ministry or funders regarding calls, regulations, reporting, etc., that could contribute to more successful work on similar projects in the future?”
Simplification of procedures. If foreign funders simplify, we should do the same. It seems that especially new advisors are overly cautious about their own audits, resulting in unnecessarily complicated requirements.
No.
Thank you for the trust! Thank you for all the support during both the preparation and implementation of the project!
More thoughtful and simplified reporting, use of lump sums. Longer deadlines for project submission and implementation.
/
If so much money is invested in projects, and if we can pilot and prove the educational benefits within the project, there should be a legal basis to continue these initiatives after the project ends. This is essential.
Financing must be resolved, with either pre-financing or assistance in securing loans from banks—unfortunately, the latter inevitably leaves a deficit in the budget at the project's end. Additionally, the fact that the legal representative does not receive 100% of their salary if employed on the project needs addressing. Financial and substantive reporting must be simplified. Assistance with presenting projects in national media would also be welcome.
Yes, as written two pages earlier...
Within the project, we developed good partnerships with both Slovenian and foreign partners. The selection of partners was excellent. We had universities introducing better solutions for education delivery— theoretical models of blended learning—and also trained us in this type of education. A professional institution, the leading partner CPI, guided us on where and how this could be applied—we neatly divided the areas of e-content. Foreign partners presented and convinced us of the usefulness of their solutions. We gained significant confidence in new innovative methods. We would definitely like to continue with the project activities in active learning. We worked extensively on collaborative learning. I

Answers to open survey question “Do you have any recommendations for the ministry or funders regarding calls, regulations, reporting, etc., that could contribute to more successful work on similar projects in the future?”
hope this becomes one of the themes of future projects. This is lacking in the VET education sector—collaborative learning both in schools and in practical workplace training.
We recommend announcing the next projects as soon as possible, without waiting until 2027.
A major issue for small schools is the advance financing of funds for several months.
No.
The proposal is for more such calls for projects.
Unified reporting standards—there were cases where we reported similar things for different NFM projects (in line with regulations). Sometimes this was fine, but other controllers required differently formatted/completed documentation, nearly every time.
We wish for less rigidity, greater friendliness, openness to questions, adaptability, and an absolute improvement in the reporting system. Projects are living entities, and while rules and adherence to project content and finances are necessary, they can be implemented humanely and amicably.
Repeat the call and support similar projects that encourage youth in less-developed regions! :-)
No comment.
Continuity of calls. Gratitude for the opportunity to participate.
Advance or ongoing financing.
More streamlined financing—NGOs face difficulties with funding. Multiple times during the project, we were reminded that by signing the agreement, we committed to managing funding for some time with our own resources. However, it was never specified for how long, which caused issues that we (successfully) resolved by taking loans. Nonetheless, we are sincerely grateful for this opportunity, which allowed us to achieve long-held goals and activities that would have been impossible without these funds. Despite occasional financial difficulties and the extensive work involved in execution and reporting, the project was a very positive experience, one we would gladly repeat.
All projects applying for and being implemented are overly administratively oriented at the national level. There is too much bureaucracy in the application process and especially in reporting. Based on experiences with centralized projects, we note that in these, the project content is what matters, which is correct. In Slovenia, however, bureaucracy takes precedence over content.
Gratitude to the project coordinator, who was available for answers and advice regarding all instructions in the call and related reporting.
I must admit that we had excellent communication with the coordinator during the project, so there were no issues or uncertainties. The only slightly complex matter is using the EMS, as it does not have the best interface, and after 6 months between reports, some things are easy to forget. Permanent access to video instructions would be helpful.
Establish a financing and subsidy system that doesn’t require parallel bookkeeping and meticulous tracking of every cent spent. For travel costs, consider additional funding if a partner is more actively involved in execution and attends all meetings. Flat-rate allocations for travel costs were, in our case, quite unfair—some partners had half leftover, while we were short by half.