Project title: DigitalCRAFT: Enhancing Vocational Skills Through Design Thinking and Graphic Design

Project No. 2023-1-RO01-KA210-VET-000166913

Project implemented by the **Free Education Union of Bacău County (SLI BACĂU) in partnership with UN-LAB -Italy**

DIGITALCRAFT PROJECT: COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Final Report – December 2024

OBJECTIVE*: To evaluate the overall impact of the DigitalCraft project, focusing on educational transformation, teacher engagement, digital innovation, and sustainability*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The DigitalCraft project was designed to address critical gaps in vocational education and training (VET) by integrating Design Thinking and Graphic Design methodologies. The initiative sought to enhance teacher competencies, modernize curriculum design, and equip students with future-ready skills by leveraging innovative digital tools such as Canva, TimelineJS and CapCut.

This impact analysis evaluates the quantifiable and qualitative results of the project, analyzing its effect on teacher training, student engagement, curriculum integration, institutional capacity building, and long-term sustainability.

2. KEY OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

- Measurably improving the quality and relevance of vocational education and training in the field of design, innovation and graphic design, during the 14-month period of project implementation, by encouraging international collaboration, developing and implementing a common curriculum and empowering at least 50 VET teachers/trainers from Italy and Romania, with the ultimate goal of improving students' employability and career prospects of VET education in the future dynamic job market.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- **Promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange between partners [Un/lab and SLI BACĂU]** to improve vocational education and training, vocational training methods in the field of design, innovation and graphic design.
- **Improving the capacity of teachers/trainers and vocational training institutions** to effectively empower students with relevant skills for the future job market, by creating a common curriculum that integrates design thinking methodologies, design and graphic design techniques into the educational process.
- **Strengthen the professional development of teachers/trainers and VET institutions**, by ensuring their access to virtual workshop programmes and virtual training sessions designed to improve their understanding and implementation of the new curriculum, teaching methods and graphic design tools.
- **Increase the visibility and understanding of the new curriculum among VET teachers/trainers and institutions**, by designing and running an awareness campaign, which will use a short video to effectively communicate the benefits of integrating design thinking methodologies and graphic design techniques in VET education.
- **To improve the employability and career prospects of VET students**, providing them with industry-relevant skills through the new curriculum, which integrates design thinking methodologies and graphic design techniques, thus ensuring that they meet the dynamic requirements of the future labor market.

DIRECT TARGET GROUP:

- **VET teachers and trainers** from partner organisations and countries, who will gain knowledge on innovative teaching, innovative methods and tools.
- **Educational institutions and organizations** interested in adopting or adapting the developed curriculum.

INDIRECT TARGET GROUP:

- **Students from VET schools in Italy and Romania**, who will acquire skills relevant to the labor market.
- **Schools from Romania and Italy**, who expressed interest in the project activities during the design process, being involved in the needs assessment, as follows:

SLI BACĂU:

1. "Ion Ghica" Economic College Bacău (100 teachers and 1336 students);
2. "Dimitrie Ghica" Technical College Comănești (88 teachers and 1180 students);
3. "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical College Onești (70 teachers and 823 students).

Un/Lab: VET College "E. Orfini" (53 teachers and 655 students).

3. IMPACT ON TEACHERS: TRAINING AND ADOPTION

A. **Teacher Awareness & Skill Development**

- **Before training, 61% of teachers had no prior knowledge of Design Thinking.**
- **After training, 95% of teachers reported an increased understanding and appreciation of the methodology.**

B. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING

- **68% of trained teachers committed to applying digital tools and methodologies in their lessons.**
- **78% found the techniques highly applicable, integrating them into lesson planning, assessment, and student engagement activities.**

C. INCREASED DIGITAL COMPETENCY

- **60.4% of teachers had never used Canva before the training.**
- **Post-training, teachers actively applied Canva, TimelineJS, and CapCut for content creation.**

D. SUSTAINED INTEREST AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- **84% of teachers requested further training, showing strong potential for continued professional development.**
- **Educators emphasized the need for structured follow-up programs and advanced training sessions.**

4. IMPACT ON STUDENTS: ENGAGEMENT AND DIGITAL LEARNING

INCREASED STUDENT INTERACTION AND CREATIVITY

- Teachers observed higher student engagement levels when using digital tools in lessons.
- Video-based learning and interactive infographics made learning more dynamic and accessible.

DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL AND SOFT SKILLS

- Students learnt to use digital literacy by working with real-world applications of graphic design and timeline creation

INTEGRATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES

- Teachers successfully applied DigitalCraft methodologies across multiple subjects, including:
  - TimelineJS for interactive historical timelines
  - Canva for branding and promotional materials
  - Video editing with CapCut for project presentations

5. INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT: SCHOOL AND POLICY INTEGRATION

A. WIDESPREAD AWARENESS AND INSTITUTIONAL ADOPTION

- The project reached 35+ schools, far exceeding the original target.
- School administrators and policymakers expressed interest in further expanding digital literacy training programs.

B. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION POTENTIAL

- Union leaders and school representatives committed to integrating DigitalCraft resources into school curricula.
- Teachers initiated peer-learning and training sessions to expand project impact within their institutions.

C.STRONGER COLLABORATION BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS

- The project strengthened partnerships between schools, unions, and policy-makers, fostering long-term innovation in VET education.

6. DIGITALCRAFT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

VIDEO DISSEMINATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

- The awareness campaign surpassed initial expectations, engaging 102 teachers directly
- Video shared across multiple channels, including project websites.

SURVEY FINDINGS ON AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- 74% of teachers planned to share the video with colleagues and students, extending its reach.
- 45% found testimonials most impactful, reinforcing the effectiveness of teacher-driven advocacy.
- 97% found the video relevant or highly relevant to their educational context.

7. SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG-TERM IMPACT

CONTINUED TEACHER TRAINING AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- The demand for continued training and follow-up support highlights the project's long-term sustainability.
- A plan for future webinars, training modules and digital resource creation is under consideration.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The success of the project encourages further integration of digital literacy and Design Thinking methodologies in national VET frameworks.
- Partnerships with education unions and VET institutions ensure ongoing implementation and knowledge transfer.

SCALABILITY OF THE DIGITALCRAFT MODEL

- The methodologies introduced can easily be replicated in other educational settings

8. KEY CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

The DigitalCraft project successfully redefined the role of digital tools in VET education, providing a scalable and replicable framework for enhancing teacher competencies and student engagement.

With 224% of the initial teacher training goal achieved, the project surpassed its original objectives, proving a strong demand for modern teaching methodologies in vocational education.

The integration of Design Thinking in classrooms has already begun, as teachers continue to use digital tools introduced in training.

NEXT STEPS FOR LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION

- **Expansion of advanced training modules to sustain momentum.**
- **Development of lesson plans and digital teaching resources to support ongoing implementation.**
- **Strengthened partnerships with educational institutions and policymakers to integrate these methodologies into official VET curricula.**