Green Horizons:
Leading the Way in Environmental Service Learning
Erasmus+ Small Scale Partnership

Project Number: 2024-1-LU01-KA210-VET-000243985

Focus group report conducted by Luxembourg Creative Lab

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Partner institution: Luxembourg Creative Lab a.s.b.l.

Country: Luxembourg

Date and hour: 16.09.2024

Duration: 90 min

Participants profile (for each participant describe role, expertise, field of experience): As part of the Green Horizons project, a focus group interview was conducted in Luxembourg with VET trainers specializing in the creative industry. The participants were aged between 26 and 34 years old, with an average of 4 years of experience in VET training. These trainers bring diverse perspectives and practical insights from their work in various creative disciplines, contributing valuable input on how sustainability practices can be integrated into the curriculum and training methodologies within the creative sector. Their experience and expertise play a crucial role in shaping the development of the Assessment Tool for sustainability-focused learning.

Summary of the discussion

Introductory Block: Summary of how the facilitated discussion was conducted. Summary of the profile of the participants.

As part of the Erasmus+ co-funded project "Green Horizons", a facilitated discussion was conducted at the LCL's office in Schifflange, Luxembourg as part of Activity 1: Development of an Assessment Tool for Sustainability-Based Learning (SBL) Initiatives. The session was moderated by Mr. Tsvetomir Budakov and focused on gathering insights from participants about the integration of green competencies in various educational contexts. The discussion encouraged active participation among 10 VET educators, allowing educators to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices for promoting sustainability across different subjects. This collaborative session provided crucial input for shaping the Assessment Tool, which aims to measure the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives within educational frameworks.

Block 1. How are green competencies currently being integrated into your high school or VET curriculum? Can you provide specific examples?

Green competencies are being integrated into our VET curriculum in various ways across different subjects. In the creative industry, for example, students learn how sustainability impacts design choices, materials, and production processes. They explore eco-friendly alternatives and sustainable practices in graphic design and product development, helping them understand the environmental footprint of their work.

In natural and social sciences, environmental conservation topics are embedded in our VET curriculum, teaching students the importance of preserving ecosystems and biodiversity.

In entrepreneurship, there is a strong emphasis on Green Creative Entrepreneurship, where students explore how sustainable business models can be developed and applied within creative industries.

These examples show how environmental education and sustainable development are being incorporated into multiple disciplines across the LCL's curriculum, contributing to VET learners' understanding of sustainability and empowering them to make eco-conscious decisions in their future careers.

Block 2. What specific needs do you have in terms of resources or support to effectively teach green competencies in your educational setting?

All VET interviewees agreed that a unified strategy for teaching green competencies is currently missing. They expressed the need for an assessment tool specifically designed to measure how well green competencies are being integrated into their curriculum. Such a tool would help educators evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods and ensure that sustainability topics are being addressed in a way that aligns with their specific needs and educational goals. This kind of structured approach would provide valuable support for more consistent and effective implementation of green competencies across different disciplines.

Block 3. What are the main challenges you face when trying to incorporate green competencies into your teaching practices?

The main challenges faced by the creative VET training not only at LCL, but across Luxembourg in incorporating green competencies into teaching practices are:

(1) Lack of specialized resources and materials: Many educators struggle to find relevant and industry-specific resources that effectively integrate sustainability into the creative sector. Traditional learning materials often do not cover eco-friendly practices related to design, production, and the use of sustainable materials, making it difficult for teachers to provide comprehensive instruction on green competencies.

(2) Adapting the curriculum to include sustainability without compromising creativity: Another challenge is balancing the inclusion of green competencies with maintaining the creative freedom essential in VET training. Educators find it difficult to adapt their curricula to integrate

sustainability concepts in a way that doesn't restrict students' creative expression or impose rigid structures, especially in fields like design, fashion, and media production.

Block 4. How do students typically respond to lessons or activities focused on green competencies? Are there any strategies you have found effective in increasing their engagement?

In the context of **creative VET training**, learners typically respond well to lessons focused on green competencies, especially when interactive or engaging methods are used. Here are some strategies that have proven effective:

1. **Involvement in hands-on activities**: Learners show higher levels of engagement when they work on projects where they can apply sustainability principles creatively and have a personal contribution to the outcome. This hands-on approach allows them to explore green practices in design, production, or art.
2. **Attention-grabbing environmental statistics**: Presenting learners with compelling facts about environmental destruction, such as pollution or deforestation, grabs their attention and encourages them to think critically about sustainability.
3. **Engagement with educational videos**: Learners enjoy watching documentaries that showcase real-world environmental challenges and solutions. This visual approach brings the topic to life and sparks meaningful discussions in class.
4. **Fascination with new green technologies**: Learners are intrigued by the role of new technologies in solving environmental problems. Introducing innovations such as eco-friendly materials or sustainable design tools engages them and aligns with their interest in the creative industry.

These strategies have proven effective in increasing learner engagement with green competencies in creative VET settings.

Block 5. How are you currently assessing students' understanding and application of green competencies? What assessment methods or tools are you using?

In the context of **VET training in the creative industry**, the current methods we use to assess learners' understanding and application of green competencies are:

1. **Creative Projects**: Learners are assessed by developing creative projects that integrate environmental themes, such as designing eco-friendly products or creating sustainable design solutions.
2. **Group Discussions**: We evaluate learners' participation in discussions focused on sustainable practices in the creative sector, such as green design, resource conservation, and eco-conscious production methods.

3. **Practice-led research and Surveys**: Learners conduct surveys or research on sustainability issues within the creative industry, such as the environmental impact of materials, which serve as a tool for assessment.

Block 6. What resources (e.g., materials, training, technology) do you find most lacking when it comes to integrating green competencies into your curriculum?

In the context of VET in the creative industry in Luxembourg, one of the main challenges we face is the lack of collaborative training that unites specialists from different subjects. At present, each educator prepares their lessons in isolation, which limits the cohesive integration of green competencies across the curriculum. This approach hinders the development of a comprehensive strategy for embedding sustainability in various creative disciplines, such as design, production, and media.

Additionally, there is a shortage of specific resources and technology that align with both sustainability goals and the unique needs of the creative sector. More targeted training programs that encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and access to updated materials and technologies would greatly enhance our ability to teach green competencies effectively.

Block 7. What type of professional development or training would be most beneficial for you to better integrate green competencies into your teaching?

From the perspective of **VET in the creative industry at Luxembourg Creative Lab**, the most beneficial professional development would involve a combination of **regular local training sessions** and opportunities for international collaboration.

Local training would allow educators to continuously update their knowledge and skills, ensuring that green competencies are effectively integrated into their creative curricula. Additionally, participating in **instructor mobility programs** such as **Erasmus+** would be invaluable, as it provides opportunities to collaborate with educators from different countries, exchange best practices, and gain fresh insights on incorporating sustainability into teaching. These international experiences would bring new perspectives and innovative approaches to embedding green competencies in the creative industry.

Block 8. Can you share any best practices or successful initiatives related to teaching green competencies that you have implemented or observed?

One successful initiative executed by LCL was part of the Erasmus+ co-funded project "Craft 3D" involved integrating 3D printing with sustainable practices in the wood manufacturing sector. As part of the project, VET learners were taught how to apply eco-friendly materials and techniques in 3D printing, with

a focus on reducing waste and utilizing sustainable resources. This hands-on approach not only engaged learners creatively but also gave them practical skills in Green Manufacturing. The initiative also included a work-based learning phase, where students worked on real-life projects with local artisans, applying sustainable 3D printing methods. This initiative has proven highly effective in enhancing both technical skills and environmental awareness within the creative industry.

Block 9. How supportive is your school's or VET institution's administration in promoting and supporting the integration of green competencies into the curriculum?

At **Luxembourg Creative Lab**, the administration of our **VET program in the creative industry** has been highly supportive in promoting and facilitating the integration of green competencies into the curriculum. They have actively encouraged educators to incorporate sustainability into their teaching practices and have provided resources to support this initiative. Additionally, the administration has fostered a culture of innovation, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and participation in projects such as **Erasmus+ initiatives** that focus on sustainable development. Their commitment to creating a more eco-conscious learning environment has been instrumental in successfully embedding green competencies across various creative disciplines.

Block 10. How would you like an Assessment Tool designed to evaluate and support the integration of green competencies in educational settings to be structured? Suggest a structure.

The **Assessment Tool** for evaluating the integration of green competencies in educational settings must focus on four key aspects: **Relevance**, **Feasibility**, **Community Impact**, and **Behavior Change**. By ensuring **Relevance**, the tool will assess whether the content and practices align with current sustainability challenges and the needs of the creative industry. **Feasibility** will evaluate the practicality of implementing green competencies within existing curricula and institutional structures. **Community Impact** will measure the positive effects on local communities through sustainable projects and initiatives. Finally, **Behavior Change** will focus on how effectively the tool fosters long-term shifts in attitudes and actions towards sustainability among both educators and learners. Together, these aspects ensure a comprehensive and practical approach to integrating green competencies into education. However, the respondents from LCL envisioned the following structure of the Assessment tool:

Section 1: Teaching Strategies and Approaches

Assessment of educators' capabilities in incorporating green competencies within their lesson plans and instructional methods.

Section 2: VET Curriculum Content and Resources

Review of educational resources and course materials, ensuring they cover topics such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, and eco-literacy.

Section 3: Project-based Learning in the Creative VET Sector

Assessment of hands-on, project-based learning initiatives that incorporate sustainability within the creative industry's vocational training.

Section 4: Institutional Sustainability Practices

Examination of the institution's infrastructure and eco-friendly policies, focusing on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable resource management.

Section 5: Collaborative Partnerships and External Engagement

Evaluation of collaborations with local organizations, businesses, and communities that advocate for and support sustainable practices and green initiatives.