

Learning2gether

European Comparative report



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Introduction

Learning2gether is an EU co-funded project (Erasmus+ KA205 Strategic Partnership for youth) implemented by a consortium of six partners from five different European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Iceland, Spain and the UK. The main objective of the Learning2gether project is twofold:

- 1) To promote and improve the employability of NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training) at a local, national and European level by increasing their knowledge of the latest digital tools for business and developing skills, sharing opportunities with older employers and employees in SMEs (including entrepreneurs).
- 2) To improve social media knowledge and digital skills of older employers and employees in SMEs/entrepreneurs by developing skills-sharing opportunities with NEETs. This proposed project tackles the problem of youth unemployment and an ageing population by improving the digital toolkit of NEETs and improving their employability skills and awareness of the competences needed when entering a professional setting through skills-swap with older employees or owners of SMEs.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project has foreseen the following results:

- Development of the *Competence Framework* containing an analysis of the position of our two target groups, NEETs and older SME workers/owners, identifying their needs, the barriers they face and areas of opportunity.
- Development of *Training Programme for NEETs*, including training activities and learning path for NEETs to increase their tutoring and employability skills and introduce them to entrepreneurship.
- *Reflective Practice Training* based on Inova's Mentoring Circles™ specifically adapted to support NEETs.
- *Learning2gether eLearning Platform* – an innovative and engaging platform which will act as a learning hub offering the training programme. It, furthermore, forms a place for NEETs and older SME workers to connect with each other across Europe.
- *Policymakers Guide* aimed at job organisations/coaches/intermediaries, NEETs, SMEs, local/regional policymakers and other stakeholders, such as Chambers of Commerce. Through this guide, the project will raise awareness on the potential of NEET in digital marketing teaching and how to make this a skill they can use in a professional context.

This report presents the first output of the project, the research on the position of the NEET's and SME workers in the partners countries. The outcome of the research will provide the basis for the development of training material and the structure of the learning hub offering tools and exercises to achieve direct skills development within the target groups.

The research has been carried out in order to collect data which can reveal the status of NEETs and SME workers in the digital world. The research aimed at analysing the position and challenges for NEETs to adapt their digital media skills to a professional context, and the technical skills gap for older workers in SMEs. The following report summarises the most important data and results of the study.

Research questions and methodology

The competence framework is based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Each partner involved in the project was responsible for carrying out the research activities in its country and reporting the findings into a national report. The research process was divided in two, in each partner country, and included the following activities:

1. Desk research on the existing documents in each country.
2. Individual interviews with older SME workers.
3. Focus group discussion with NEETs.
4. Online survey with both NEETs and SME workers.

The entire research process was based on detailed methodological guidelines that were developed by the project coordinator, including online research, focus groups and interviews with NEET and SME workers. The research topics were determined and structured according to templates that were provided to all partners.

The Quantitative research

The first part of the research, the quantitative research, was based on desk research, focussing on statistics on NEETs and SME workers designed in such a way that it provides both the background and the point of departure for the training programme. The research had four objectives:

- 1) To identify the skills needed by NEETs to increase their confidence, self-awareness and knowledge of employability, business and consultancy opportunities.
- 2) To analyse their skill levels and gaps regarding digital media.
- 3) To identify skills needed in tutoring and consultancy.
- 4) To identify good practices with regard to the pedagogy used in other training programmes which aim to achieve similar objectives as L2G.

To complete the country analysis, one survey for each target group was developed. The main objective of the survey was to provide additional information for the country analyses, the focus group and the interview results.

The Qualitative research

The second part of research, the qualitative research, was based on focus group with NEET representatives and interviews with SME workers, with emphasis on their digital media skills and use of these, for the business they are employed in.

Both the Icelandic and the UK partner needed to divide the focus group in two separate groups. In Iceland, only two attended the session, so another session was held with three participants. In the UK, the first focus group comprised of three NEETs, and four support workers sat in on the discussion to support the participants. The educational background of the focus group participants was very different. Some of them had only finished primary school while others had a bachelor's degree.

Country	Number reached for focus group with NEETs	Number reached for interview with SME workers
Belgium	35	14
Bulgaria	5	5
Iceland	5	4
UK	5	4
Spain	5	24

Table 1 - Participants involved in the focus groups and interviews in partners' countries

Questions for focus group

Questions for the focus group are to be find in Annex 1

Questions for interview

Questions for the interview are to be find in Annex 2

Questions in surveys

Questions for the surveys are to be find in Annex 3 and 4

The context of NEETs in five countries

In 2018, the proportion of young people age 15-29 neither in employment nor in education and training ranged from 5,4% in Iceland to 31,1% in North Macedonia with an average across the 28 European countries of 13,4%. The proportion between the five countries participating in the project ranged from 45,4% in Iceland to 18,1% in Bulgaria (Eurostat, 2019).

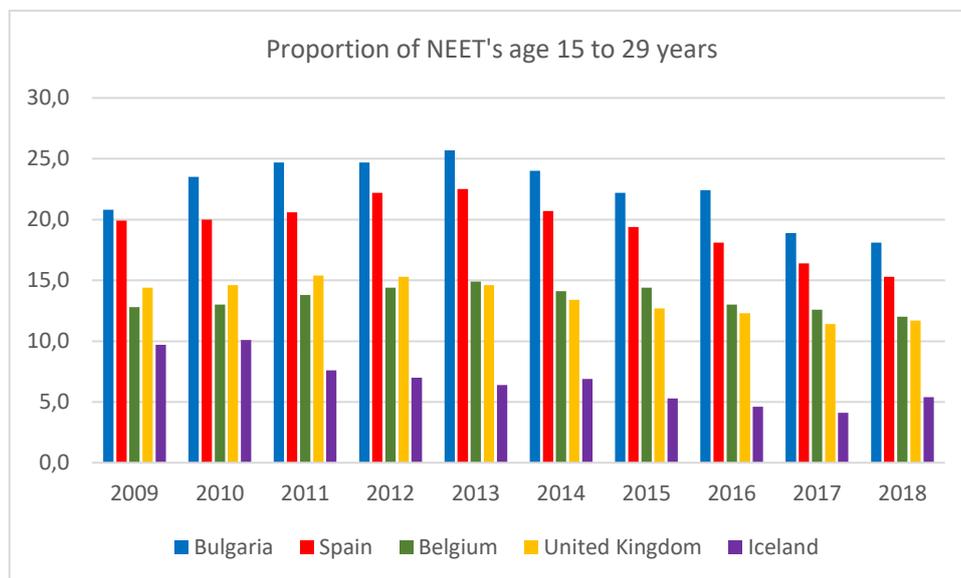


Figure 1 - Youth unemployment rates (15-29 years old) in Bulgaria, Belgium, Iceland, Spain and the UK 2009-2018.

Source: Eurostat

In all partner countries, statistics in Figure 1 show a slow decrease in the number of NEETs between the years 2014 and 2018. Statistics in Belgium, Bulgaria and Spain show a decrease in numbers from the year 2012 and in the United Kingdom from 2011. Iceland had shown a decrease in numbers in 2010 with a little rise in 2012.

According to the **Belgian** statistical office, NEETs represented 9,9% of the total Belgian population in 2016. The numbers have changed over the previous six years, peaking in 2013 at 12,7%. The most significant drop took place between 2015 and 2016, when the percentage of NEETs went down from 12,2% to 9,9%. In Belgium the age of compulsory education is 6-18.

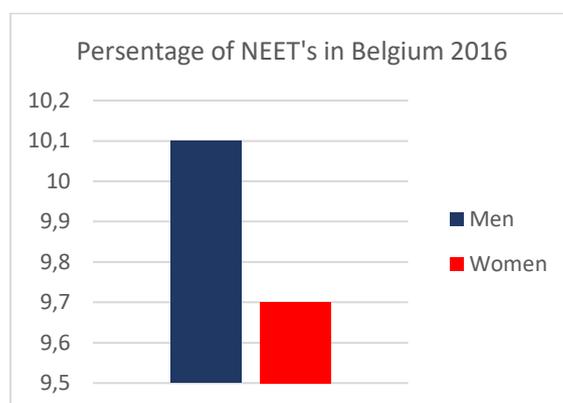


Figure 2- Unemployment with NEETs age 15-26 in Belgium December 2016 (Source: Stabel)

Based on the data provided by the National Statistical Institute, as of 31.12.2018, in **Bulgaria** there were 751.900 persons aged 15 to 24. Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) were the third largest group of the total number of young people – about 24%. The NEET group in Bulgaria is made up of 25,5% due to family responsibilities, followed by 22,5% of long-term unemployed and 21,1% of discouraged people (National Statistical Institute). In Bulgaria, the structure of NEETs differs significantly in comparison to other countries in the European Union. The main reason for a Bulgarian to be declared as a NEET is due to family engagements as more than 25,5% of all NEETs are falling within this group. In comparison, the EU average for this group amounts to 20,3%, which represents a significant difference. The second largest group of NEETs is the Long-term unemployed (22,5%) and third are the Discouraged workers (22,5%). The number of female NEETs in Bulgaria is 51,2 %, as the gender imbalance is observed in all groups of unemployed NEETs. The logical reason for this tendency is related to maternity leave or due to other family-related reasons (42,3%). The largest group of male NEETs are in long-term unemployed (30,8%) and discouraged workers (25,6%). Another important factor influencing the NEET status of young people is related to their residence (i.e. smaller communities or big cities). Numerous researches on the NEET topic suggest that the bigger the city, the lower the chance of staying unemployed for a more extended period, and therefore falling within the group of NEETs.

In **Iceland**, the population of young people aged 16-29 in 2017 was 68.598 individuals or 35.478 men and 33.120 women. In 2017, the total number of NEETs aged 16-29 was 1.192 (Directorate of Labour). In Iceland the age of compulsory education is 6-16.

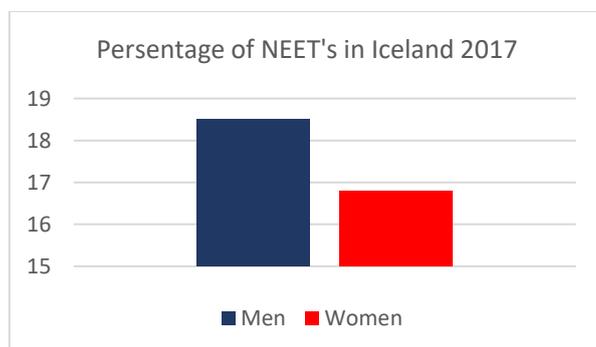


Figure 3 - Unemployment with NEETs age 16-29 in Iceland December 2018
(Source: The Directorate of Labour)

When the level of education for NEETs in Iceland is examined, it turns out that most of them only have primary education, or they drop out of school at 16. Sixty percent of the group were getting an education in secondary school, post-secondary education, university or studying for a PhD (see figure 4). The largest group in secondary school are young people between 16 to 19 years old. The students aged 25-29 are turning back to school, often getting education within the preliminary study programmes provided by the universities.

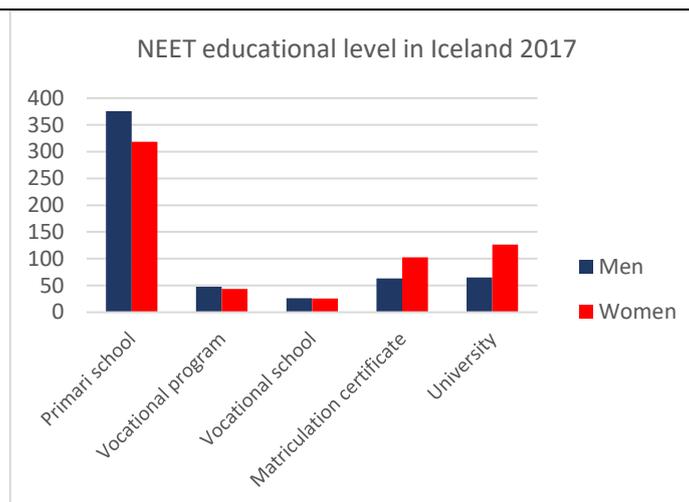


Figure 4 - NEET educational level December 2017.
(Source: The Directorate of Labour)

In **Spain**, unemployment rates among young people under 25 was 32,7% by the end of 2018. The reality of this situation, which is a priori devastating, is palliated by the current era of digitalization that is generating a great demand for new jobs that require skills which are currently not available.

In the **United Kingdom**, studies found that there was a slow decrease in the number of NEETs in the UK, between 2012 and 2018. During the latter half of 2018, around 783.000 people, between the ages of 16 and 24, were classed as NEET (Powell, 2018).

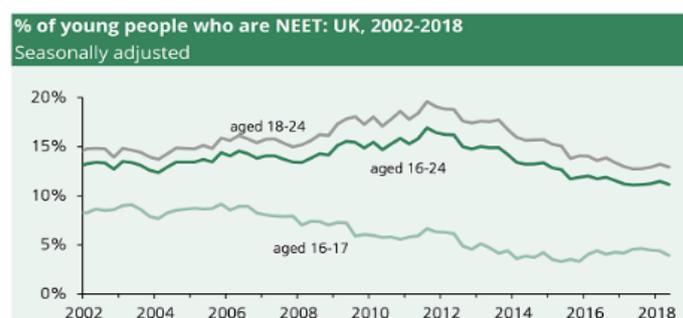


Figure 5 - Percentage of NEETs aged 16-24 in the UK, 2002-2018

According to Parliamentary research, this decrease is thanks to projects and initiatives which help NEETs to secure employment; for example, by raising the participation age in education and training to 18, and therefore increasing the likelihood of their employment (Powell, 2018).

There is a growing concern that the longer time spent as a NEET means a greater degree of impact to physical and mental health. Moreover, an extended period of time as a NEET is predicted to *increase the likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low quality of work later on in life* (Powell, 2018). Despite the slow decrease in the number of NEETs for over four years in the four partner countries and for seven years in the UK, the statistics are still concerning.

Obstacles faced by the NEETs

Education is increasingly considered to be the gateway to adequate adult life. There can be various reasons for why young people only finish compulsory education. The majority of published studies focus on why young people drop out of school. Studies focusing on the impact and the national policies are less common. There are various reasons that can refrain young people from making the right study choices. Cultural values and beliefs on studying are significant factors especially with young women (European Union, 2015).

NEETs are the group who are the most vulnerable and who are believed to be the greatest risk of exclusion from the labour market. In the project *Unga i Norden*, led by the Nordic welfare centre, the focus was on solutions and initiatives that could prevent early retirement among NEETs. The following keywords are indicators or risk factors for labour market exclusion:

Premature elimination from school	Physical disability
Depression	Developmental retardation
Loneliness	Social anxiety
Reading and writing difficulties	Crime behaviour
Lack of work experience	Addicting
Psychiatric disorders	Difficult social conditions

Table 2 - Indicators or risk factors for labour market exclusion

The common factor in the financial situation of NEETs is the lack of financial security. There has been an improvement in establishing systems with financial security for this group in many social and health related issues. Financial security enables them to get education and removes the day to day worries about paying their rent and having money for food (Nordisk Centre for Welfare and Social Issues, 2016 and 2017). In the Icelandic focus group, the financial situation was addressed and the negative cycle it created.

In the focus groups, when discussing the main reason for unemployment among youth, lack of experience was highlighted as a common factor. With not enough skills to prepare their CV and identify their skills, they lacked opportunities and sending out many applications on different jobs without any feedback was depressing.

When asked about the negative part of seeking a job two statements from Table 2 were common with all focus groups:

- Lack of opportunities
- No feedback on applications

Depression was mentioned as a result of unemployment and young people often experience social execution when they cannot find a job or can pay for education.

Skills for employment

The labour market is increasingly demanding general computer skills and knowledge in social media. The current era of digitalisation that is generating a great demand for new jobs that require skills which are currently not available. One of the biggest concerns that the World Economic Forum addressed on the annual meeting in 2018 was how to bridge the gap between rapid social changes and the need for digitalization. The digital media is there but the school system isn't up to date (World Economic Forum, 2018).

The focus groups, in all partner countries, mentioned two key factors as an obstacle when seeking a job:

- Lack of experience
- Language skills

During the discussions in the focus groups, few skills were mentioned that needed to be developed. The skills have been divided into two categories:

Technical skills	Soft Skills
Basic computer skills	Work ethics
Microsoft Office tools	Tutoring skills
Email tools	Communication skills
Search engines	Basic skills of literacy and numeracy
Designing	Writing skills
Programming languages (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP)	Foreign languages
Online portfolio (GitHub)	Project management skill
Data protection Policies	Team management skills
Digital marketing	Critical thinking
Website development	Time management
Copywriting skills	Personal productivity
Social media for business	Personal branding
Digital content generation	Action learning

Table 3 – Focus group discussion: Skills needed to be developed

The context of SME workers

The second main target group involved in the research includes both employers and employees in SME. The group includes people that are aged 50+ and are willing and motivated to improve their digital skills and modernise the overall performance of their businesses. Businesses that have fewer than 250 employees are SMEs.

SMEs are the backbone of the **Belgian** economy. Out of 869.662 companies registered in Belgium in 2015, 863.165 were SMEs, which represents 99.3% of Belgian companies. These companies employ up to 49 people and represent 70% of jobs in Belgium (Trends/LE Vif). In Belgium, SMEs are divided into two categories (ONSS):

- Micro companies (up to 9 staff members)
- Small companies (between 10 and 49 staff members)

Most of the SMEs in Belgium are active in the areas of services (293.262), construction (116.361), industry (100.854), retail (83.634) and other more specific sectors (263.767) in 2017 (UCM, Unizo, Graydon).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent the backbone of **Bulgarian** economy, as they account for 99,8% of all active business entities in Bulgaria. They provide 65,2% of the added value to the economy and account for 75,4% of employment in Bulgaria, which is well above the EU average of 56,8% and 66,4% respectively. SMEs in Bulgaria employ an average of 4,4 people, compared with the EU average of 3,9. In 2019, the number of jobs in SMEs is expected to grow by about 46.500 people. In contrast, in 2017, Bulgaria's performance in terms of entrepreneurial activity and female entrepreneurship declined from 4,8% to 3,7% and from 4% to 3% in comparison to data of 2016 and continued to be one of the lowest in the EU. The percentage of adults who intend to start a business within three years is also below the EU average, reaching 5% of the EU average of 11,2%.

According to the Directorate of Internal Revenue in **Iceland** there are 18.200 individuals operating their own small company. These companies only have one employer, the owner (2019). In Figure 6 from the report *Promotion of SMEs in the capital area* from 2013 shows the numbers of SMEs in Iceland (Viðskiptafræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands). Small and medium-sized enterprises (up to 250 employees) are about 99% of the total operating companies. Of these, micro enterprises (less than 10 employees) are just over 92% of all companies. Small businesses (10-50 employees) are about 7% of all companies. Medium-sized companies (50-250 employees) are almost 2% of all companies.

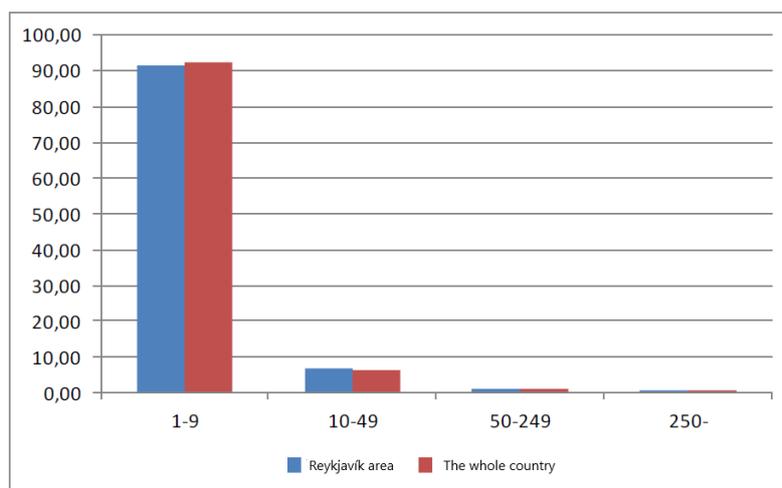


Figure 6- Company by size in the Reykjavík area and the whole country in the year 2012
(Source: Samtök sveitarfélaga á höfuðborgarsvæðinu, 2013)

According to Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2018, regarding digital technology integration by companies, **Spain** is ranked as number 7, much higher than EU average. Spain has aimed to improve and has advanced 3 positions in comparison with last year. Spanish companies get an increased advantage of possibilities offered by electronic commerce: 20% of SMEs sell online (17% above of the EU average), 7% of the total SMEs sell internationally and an average of 10% of its volume of business is online. Moreover, almost a third part of SMEs use electronic invoicing (versus 25% in 2016). 28% of companies use social media (versus 24% in 2016) and 18% use cloud services (versus 13% in 2016).

According to Chris Rhodes (House of Commons Library (2018), Business statistics¹) in 2018, there were a total of approximately 5.7 million SMEs in the **UK**; that is 99% of all the businesses. A micro-business is a type of SMEs that employs fewer than 10 employees. In the UK, a large majority of businesses are micro-businesses (96% of all businesses). Figure 7 shows the number of businesses in the UK based on their size, the number of people employed by them and their turnover.

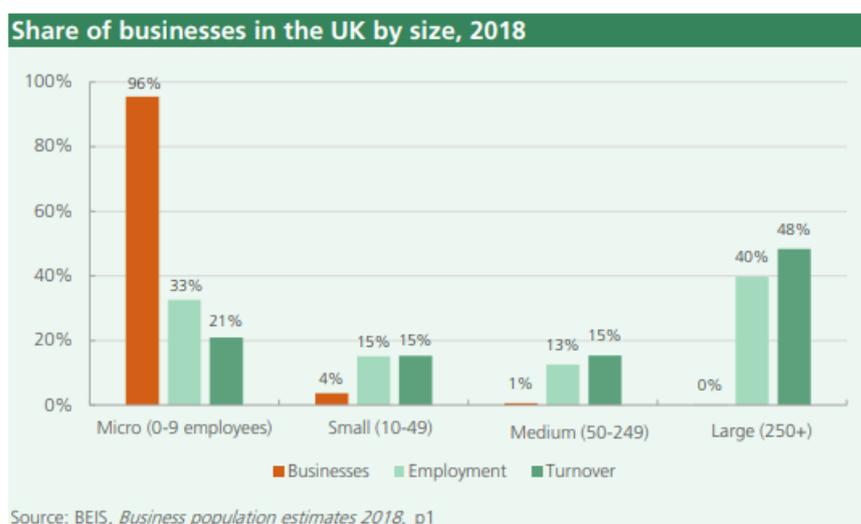


Figure 7 - Share of business in the UK by size, 2018

Obstacles faced by the SME workers

In **Belgium**, in April 2019, the Federal service in charge of Economy launched a national campaign to encourage SMEs to go digital, including videos, social media posts and a website designed to show SMEs what digitalisation can do for them and how to get there. When realising digitalisation can boost their business, SMEs face several barriers and obstacles on their way:

- Lack of digital skills among the workforce, especially older employees.
- Lack of clear information about digitalisation of businesses.

¹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>

- Lack of financial help from the public authorities for allowing SMEs to go digital.
- Shortage of skilled ICT workforce in Belgium.
- Lack of time in SMEs to properly train their workforce.
- Working in a full-time position results in a lack of training.
- Difficult accessibility to available trainings due to age.
- High price of private training centres.
- Lack of teachers/instructors who are able to address a population who weren't born into the digital age.

In terms of human resources, the majority (more than 75%) of employers in **Bulgaria** have difficulty finding qualified staff. The most significant problems are related to the education system in general and the lack of willingness of people to qualify and participate in lifelong learning activities. Also, a pressing concern for many small companies is related to the fact that nearly 70% of people between the ages of 16 and 74 have problems in dealing with new technologies. In terms of raising the qualifications of SME staff, Bulgaria falls way behind other member states of the European Union. Merely 29% of Bulgarian companies have organised training for their employees in the past year. In comparison, the average percentage for the EU, in general, is above 60%. Small businesses very often underestimate the investments in the qualification of their employees and ignore the fact that, in the current dynamic business environment, a business should cope with the growing competition and the constant technological advancements (i.e. products, services, approaches, practices), especially in the area of ICT. Larger companies have designated units and departments which are responsible for raising the qualification of staff and developing integrated systems for career development. SMEs, on the other hand, consider this to be a costly endeavour.

The following main obstacles and issues that Bulgarian SMEs are facing in terms of digital uptake and skills could be summarised:

- Low level of digital literacy of the population compared to the average for the EU.
- Low level usage of the Internet and Internet-based services by the population, 41% of the population have never used the Internet.
- The available digital skills are not used in a professional context.
- Most SMEs cannot afford to employ ICT experts and rely on the skills of their employees and owners/managers.
- SMEs do not have enough financial resources to invest in ICT solutions (both software and hardware).
- Shortage of ICT skills by both the entrepreneur and the employees, which results in an inability to manage and harness data effectively.
- SME managers and staff (especially of older generations) do not understand or acknowledge the role of digital and social media for their business development and marketing.
- There is a direct link between the motivation and understanding of the management body regarding the need for investing in the development of employees and the productivity/creativity of staff.

- The lack of financial resources to invest in human resource development.
- Lack of time, especially in small (micro) companies where the owner is doing most of the work.

Unlike other countries, **Iceland** has not focused on assessing skills and educational needs in the labour market. The need for education and skills are based on the need for labour (Samtök atvinnulífsins, 2018). A report from 2014 (Háskólinn á Bifröst) addressing the needs of education in the North West of Iceland, revealed most of SMEs are well educated within the sector they work in. However, there is a need for education in the technology sector, along with teaching in entrepreneurship and creative thinking. When SMEs were asked about the barriers, they face regarding education the common factors were lack of time, available education and, for SMEs in rural areas, the distance to educational centres can be an obstacle.

According to the **Spanish** Statistical Office, 77% of Spanish companies do not provide any training in digital skills to their employees and only 4% of SME offer training to their employees. 50% of employees invest on their own, with their own financial resources and in their leisure time, in the development of their digital skills as a consequence of training budgets for digital skills training are reduced in more than half of the organisations in Spain (52%). 50% recognise that they talk about the lack of digital skills, but they do not do a lot to reduce it (Capgemini and LinkedIn, 2017). Accenture Strategy for Mobile World Capital Barcelona states that there are, at least, four barriers which curb digital transformation in Spanish companies:

1. The lack of a digital strategy in companies. Only 38% of high-level executives affirm having a digital transformation strategy.
2. Very limited investment in innovation.
3. Insufficient digital talent. This can attribute to the low investment due to the financial crisis of 2008, but also to the high unemployment rate and the low geographic mobility. It is estimated that in 2020 there will be a million job vacancies in Europe due to the lack of digitally qualified professionals.
4. Regulatory framework with regards to technological development, especially in areas such as taxes. Also, it is claimed that the creation of a unique digital market or the adoption of new business models, such as circular economy.

In the **UK**, digital skills are detrimental for accessing the latest range of services; however, *there is a digital divide where up to 12.6 million of the adult UK population lack basic digital skills* (House of Commons, Science and Technology committee). Particularly within smaller business organisations and SMEs, there is a digital skills gap which greatly impacts the success rates of businesses. *49% of SMEs are said 'to continue to suffer skills shortages in their workforce*, which has a costly effect on the UK economy. More so than the larger businesses, SMEs 'benefit from emerging digital technologies such as social media and online selling and payments (360ict- IT support in London and Kent). On a European level, UK firms are 'less likely to digitise their back-office functions than their peers in other countries', according to the UK Digital Strategy, run by the Government. Evidently, this project will have a great impact in the United Kingdom, given the lack of motivation to move with the digital flows in the work environment.

Skills

According to SME United, digitalisation is the biggest challenge for SMEs. Not only does regulatory and financial barriers hinder SMEs growth but also digital skill shortage.

To get a clearer picture of what digital skills are needed for SME workers and how to reduce the digital skills gap, interviews were conducted by all partners. The interview was about how the project can help SMEs obtain the digital skills they need to tackle the day to day tasks within their companies and get them to feel that they are ready for the digital age.

In the interviews, the SMEs agreed on having basic digital literacy. Six digital skills needed were identified in the interviews.

Technical skills
Basic computer skills
Microsoft Office tools
Email tools
General digital media skills
Networking with clients
Understand the benefit of social media

Table 4 – Interview with SME: Skills needed to be developed

While the majority agreed on being able to manage their email and social media, there were SMEs that did not use digital media or email. The common factor for SMEs was lack of marketing skills and skills to promote their business.

Training and methodology

Intergenerational Teaching. Formal intergenerational learning is related to the concept where planned activities between generations results in achieving set objectives for each generation involved. Learning between generations will contribute to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices among generations, increasing understating by recognising the needs of the other generations, fostering the exchange of experiences (both lifestyle and professional). There are many advantages to intergenerational teaching and this can improve a workforce which represents both young and mature generations. Charness and Villeval found that teamwork was enhanced when the team consisted of a mix of younger and older employees (Hasluck, 2012). Mixing generations, in an educational and professional context, can help the development of both parties; intergenerational experience in leadership and technology training provides learning and skill development for both groups, leading to a positive change in attitude towards the other generation. Intergenerational teaching allows the development of skills such as ‘leadership, project management, ability to teach and self-confidence’ for the younger generation, and further experience in digital media skills for the mature generations (The Journal of Extension, 2002). *User’s guide to intergenerational learning* provides valuable insights on the specifics of intergenerational learning, including case studies, good practices and tips on how to organise and implement such training (The Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2011). This mutually beneficial way of learning

will be implemented into the Learning2gether project which has a direct focus on this style of learning.

In the interviews

Innovation

During the focus group sessions and the interviews, the participants discussed the innovative aspect of the project. Opportunities were identified regarding education and employment for NEETs as well as for the SMEs.

Intergenerational tutoring would be beneficial for both target groups, breaking down barriers between generations and the stereotypical labels of each target group. Some of the interviewees mentioned that soft skills, like general manners, should be addressed during training sessions with NEETs, as well as the teaching and tutoring style.

The project received positive feedback on the methodology and for creating new approaches for learning and tutoring opportunities.

Conclusion

Reports, focusing on the outlook for the labour market, reveal that corporate executives believe that within a few years there will be a shortage of educated labour and, in particular, those with technical skills, including engineers and computer scientists.

In all partner countries, Bulgaria, Belgium, Iceland, Spain and the UK, the percentage of NEETs are too high. For some SMEs, computer technology is an obstacle they choose to look past, and by doing so they are not competitive in the market they work within. Bringing these two generations of NEETs and SME workers together will build a bridge between generations both socially and technically. Younger generation are embracing new technology more easily but, in some ways, we intend to overestimate their knowledge. At the same time, the older generation is less likely to adapt to new technology and are falling behind in this new world of digital media.

The qualitative research revealed a positive attitude of SME workers that could see the benefits of digital media tutoring and are open to the option of having young individuals as a tutor. The NEET group are in need of improving their digital skills as well as their soft skills. The focus group sessions and interviews gave a good indication on what aspects of digital technology and soft skills should be focused on. Twenty-six skills, thirteen technical skills and thirteen soft skills, were identified within the NEET groups as skills needed to develop to increase their employability. Work ethics were addressed in some of the focus groups and in some interviews (under time management and personal performance). It can be an interesting skill to work with both in the training sessions as well as under the guidance of the SMEs. Six digital skills were identified within the SME groups. These skills need to be addressed when the training material will be written.

- The aim of the training material is to be develop the digital skills of NEETs according to the identified skills.
- Focus on developing employability skills for NEETs.
- The tutoring skills needs to focus on building a bridge between generations.

- The mentoring program focuses on both groups bringing something in the program as well as receiving.

Training methodology needs to be blended methods with face-to-face sessions, learning-by-doing, webinars and online learning material. Before the training starts all participants should participate in a pre-assessment based on the digital competence self-assessment tool or the iKanostest in order to evaluate their skills and adapt modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of the training, based on the identified needs. A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the programme for comparison.

The developed Learning2gether training methodology aimed at fostering and improving the digital skills of young NEETs and older SME workers should be based and mapped on the DigComp 2.0 Framework for citizens. Since it was launched in 2013, DigComp has been used in several ways that include developing curriculum programmes and part of educational and training programs on digital skills. DigComp identifies five competence areas and 21 specific competencies which outline the key components of digital competence. The following key components of the framework should be taken into account:

- Competence area 1: information and data literacy
- Competence area 2: communication and collaboration
- Competence area 3: digital content creation
- Competence area 4: safety
- Competence area 5: problem-solving.

The implementation of this project will result in improved employability of young people and professional digital skills for SME workers.

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Appendix

Annex 1 – Questions for focus group

Annex 2 – Questions for interview

Annex 3 – Questions for Survey NEETs

Annex 4 - Questions for Survey SME workers