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improving transitions
enabling results

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ITER Multiplier Event Belfast 15th March 2022



Keynote Speaker, Professor Robin Simmons, University of Huddersfield



Roisin Sloan, Department for Communities, presenting on the impact of the JobStart Scheme on NEET Experienced Young People



Martin Magennis, Time Associates,
Multiplier Event Host



Professor Simmons provided a background to the research to develop the Transitions Management Handbook and set out the key findings from the project and the implications for policy makers and practitioners

- 🕒 NEET rates vary significantly across Europe (and further afield) – not only between different nations, but between and within different regions, towns, and cities.
- 🕒 NEET rates also differ substantially for different groups and subgroups within any given location.
- 🕒 Being NEET can be experienced differently by different individuals - depending partly on their background and the support systems available to them. Generally, however, being NEET for extended periods of time has serious negative effects for:
 - a) The individual young person (and their families and significant others)
 - b) The economy and society more generally
- 🕒 Policymakers and practitioners therefore (quite rightly) expend much effort and resources trying to engage NEET-experienced young people in education and work
- 🕒 This often entails some form of employability training to help prepare the young person for the transition into mainstream education and training
- 🕒 But evidence suggests negotiating this transition can often be challenging for young people.

The Research

- 🕒 Conducted by project partners in England, Hungary, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal and Romania
- 🕒 A programme of focus group interviews in each location with:
 - a) Policymakers and decision makers
 - b) Mentors working with NEET-experienced young people
 - c) NEET-experienced young people

Implications for policy makers and practitioners

- 🕒 Partnership working can help - both formal and informal partnerships

- 🕒 Formal partnerships – sharing resources, sharing expertise, fostering collaboration
- 🕒 Informal partnerships – practitioners sharing local knowledge, information and ‘making connections on the ground’. Preventing duplication and repetition
- 🕒 Making sure we also see young people as partners!
- 🕒 Finances – money can make a difference in encouraging young people to access and remain on mainstream education and training. In numerous ways.
- 🕒 The role of the mentor is vital in terms of:
- 🕒 Carefully ‘matching’ provision with young people’s skills, abilities, interests and ambitions
- 🕒 Providing a ‘bridge’ between young people, training providers, benefits agencies (and other organisations) and potentially parents and significant others.
- 🕒 Ongoing support – continuing once a young person had moved into mainstream provision – was seen as vital. In terms of care and nurture, and practical support

ITER Partnership Meeting and Multiplier Event Guimarães, Portugal 27th – 29th April 2022

The ITER project partnership were delighted to be able to meet face-to-face for the first time since February 2020. Whilst our work programme was undertaken remotely with an extensive programme of video-conference meetings to get the business done, it was so good to be in the same room and in the beautiful surroundings of Guimaraes.

The Multiplier Event showcased the ITER project with a focus on the outcomes from the Pilot Study and evaluation.





IO4 ITER Pilot Study and Evaluation Report



Key Findings

- 🕒 The ITER platform has proved to be a key tool in supporting mentors/mentees through this pilot mentoring programme. However, it is an additional tool not a replacement to the tried and tested methods of traditional approaches to mentoring.
- 🕒 The ITER approach to mentoring has made a difference - improving engagement levels, lifting confidence and self-esteem as well as providing structure, routine and a more disciplined approach to mentoring for many of those involved. Some participants wanted to move quickly through the mentoring process – this approach created more of a discipline around self-reflection, in particular in areas like decision making, problem solving and key learning.

“The ITER approach has helped to fill a void in some Partner countries. Following the pandemic, a vacuum or void exists and there is a lack of support for NEET Young People.”

- 🕒 The ITER approach helped to accelerate learning for some NEET Young People. Many felt more able to express themselves, set realistic goals and build longer lasting relationships.
- 🕒 The platform, for most users, was fun and easy to use. It could be improved significantly with addition of more engaging music and graphics.
- 🕒 It is recognised that current and future users of the platform would benefit from guidelines, including demonstrations, on (1) the purpose of the platform and (2) how to use the platform to include registration, navigation and developing reports.

“Early indications suggest that the ITER approach has both retained high levels of engagement with participants as well as keeping drop out levels to a minimum”



- 🕒 Mentors were unanimous in reiterating the importance of letting the Young Person clearly see the progress they were making and how this is linked to both motivational and participation levels. The current data reporting process and outputs could be extended to enable 'real-time' reporting to be more visible including the use of graphics to measure and highlight the participant's journey progression.
- 🕒 The ITER approach may be more suitable if pitched at younger people aged between 13-15 years of age. This is a key period of transition for some NEET Young People in certain Partner countries – moving from Primary to Secondary education.
- 🕒 It may help mentors to achieve even more significant/improved results when working with NEET Young People possessing challenges with literacy, verbal communication, and comprehension, as well as younger people who are identified at risk of becoming NEET.

"The ITER mentoring approach has provided interesting results from a behavioural change perspective. This is an area which should be investigated further in the future"

- 🕒 Our Partners in Portugal found that the ITER approach to mentoring helped NEET Young People to make behavioural changes. This is highly significant in that mentors observed changes in NEET Young People at first hand – improved attendance levels, improved comprehension of key tasks, improved interpersonal relationships etc.,
- 🕒 The platform, from a mentor's perspective, can add real value as an innovative mentoring resource.

"The key role that a mentor plays in the Practitioner/mentee relationship is crucial. This project has confirmed that, no matter what tools, techniques or new innovative approaches used, the depth of this relationship is shaped by the mentor and his/her ability to build rapport and high levels of trust with the mentee"

- 🕒 The ITER approach helped mentors to set and agree actions with mentees as well as to better assess the ongoing, changing needs of their NEET Young People.
- 🕒 Barriers and constraints like getting access to ICT resources, travelling long distances in rural areas and funding the mentoring approach, were proved to be real and challenging issues for both Practitioners and mentees participating in this pilot project.



“The ITER approach, without doubt, helped mentors to work at a ‘deeper’ level with mentees – bringing mentors and mentees closer together”

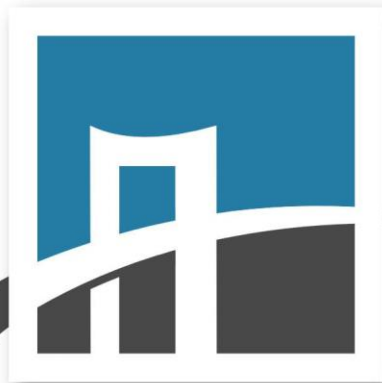
- 🕒 The platform would be an ideal vehicle to store resources that could be used to support Young People with specific challenges, these could include motivational videos, blogs, practical tasks, professional materials, and recognised models/templates

Next Steps....



The ITER partnership will conclude its final meeting and multiplier event in the University of Huddersfield UK on 29th June – 1st July 2022. We look forward to sharing the final project journey in the next ITER newsletter.

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