

# Information Guide on ICT and Social Media uses – VET LEARNERS, TRAINERS AND STAFF in Construction Sector



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*“You do not always start with the things to be studied,  
but for what can facilitate learning”  
Aristotle*

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## *1. Introduction*

Young people have to be well prepared before going abroad for a mobility process and good preparation is the key point for integration. Obviously, mobility experience will be even more successful and students will be even more easily convinced of its impact and benefits, if a mobility project is well prepared and managed. To that point, it is important to guide them by using new information and communication technologies as well as social media in all phases of VET. Digital and social media as well as mobile devices are omnipresent in daily life of participants who are in initial and further vocational education and training. SoMEx aims at adjusting the mobility processes in the construction sector's VET to future leading ways of including current and prospective mobile devices. The project will develop an extensive tool-kit for preparation, operation and post processing of exchanges of trainees and staff related to up-to-date media, i.e. social media in use. The SoMEx project addresses digital natives, who are the overwhelming majority in training/apprenticeships currently and in the future as well. Methods in the process are linked to social media very selectively, but do not use them in a wide spectrum or channel the informal use into formal use benefits. The number of features to integrate at this point is high. The individuals expect to make use of the same media features like they do within their private life. In doing so, the acceptance (and the image of the construction sector) will be likely to increase significantly. Trainees and staff might be involved in all stages of the processes, since user-generated input in real time is of great advantage to lower the barriers of acceptance and the higher willingness of taking part in exchanges. So the era of coming to classroom and the rule "turn off your devices" has to be rethought.

With this first Research phase, the consortium will try to better understand our target group habits with social media and ICT in order to find the APP that will best suit an increase in future mobility rates.

## *2. Methodology*

### *2.1. Survey*

**Objective:**

The aim of the survey is to understand how and to what extent ICT and social media are used by VET trainees, trainers and staff alike across countries, as a starting point to the android application content and structure. We really need to prepare an end product that would suit the target group, trainees / trainers – staff. Questionnaires are in annex 1.

**Approach:**

Each partner analyses the results of the survey of their countries and afterwards a global report with the integrated results is developed, in order to generate transnational conclusions.

**Technical survey form:**

<b>Universe</b>	Construction VET trainees and trainers/staff.
<b>Sample size</b>	A total of 404 interviews, +/- 60 per country (Italy 145).
<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>	Random sampling from partners' databases, with quotas for trainees (59.2%) and trainers/staff (40.8%).
<b>Field work</b>	January-February 2015.
<b>Duration of the questionnaire</b>	15 minutes.
<b>Questionnaires applied</b>	See Annex.

## **2.2. Good practices**

### **Objective:**

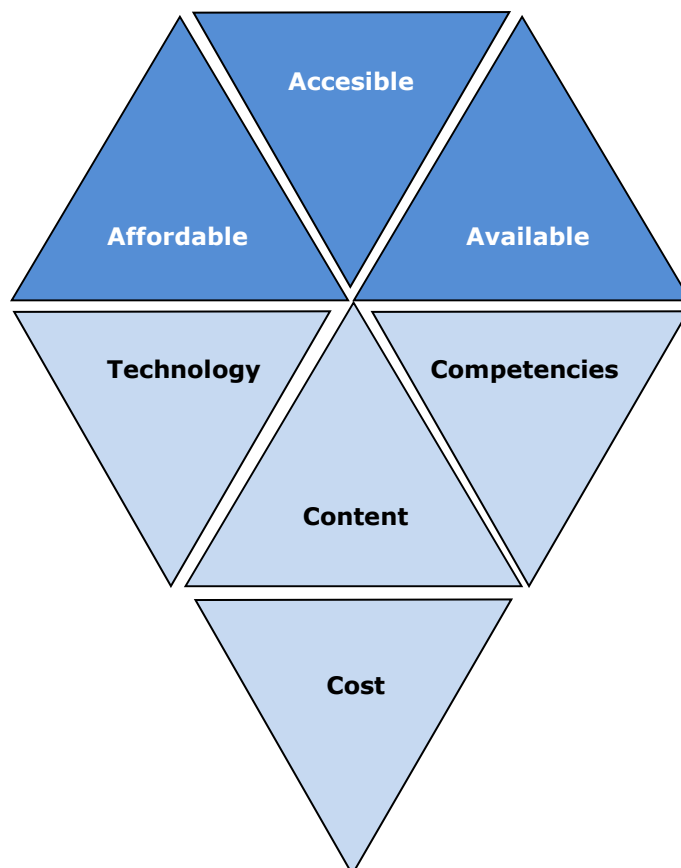
Presentation of the best applications and tools (national and transnational) that could facilitate the mobility placements and that therefore could be integrated in the APP to be developed in the project.

### **Approach:**

Project Partners will agree on common useful tools that could be used (with or without changing) in the android application. This will be done by an analysis - based in the review of national (regional/local) practices done previously- and taking into account the aims to cover to increase quality in mobility processes and, therefore, contribute to the improvement and further development of VET systems in Europe.

This phase will be linked to deeper development of "Linguistic REFORME" project in which every partner participated a few years ago.

### ***Criteria for selecting Good practices for mobility processes***



## *3. Results of research phases*

### *3.1. Analysis of survey data*

The consortium designed the questionnaires' content during partner meeting 1. Then FLC staff did the pilot testing, in order to verify that the questionnaire was correctly understood. All partners validated the final version and once the designed questionnaire was validated by the project's partnership, it was translated into each one of the partner's languages, as it had to be answered by respondents in each country, translation being necessary in order to facilitate the completion of it by the target group of each country.

The survey has been applied online and, for that purpose, it's been operated with specific software for managing online surveys (*SurveyMonkey*). This software facilitates online surveys by sending a link via email enabling the final user to easily answer the questionnaire. Data are automatically compiled in a common database, and classified in different categories.

All partners were in charge of their own national survey.

As a result, a total of 404 responses were obtained.

Breakdown of results

	(n)	%
Belgium	65	16,09
Germany	61	15,10
Italy	148	36,63
Portugal	61	15,10
Spain	69	17,08
Total	404	100,0

As Italy has obtained more questionnaires than the rest countries, joint results could be slightly affected by their answers.

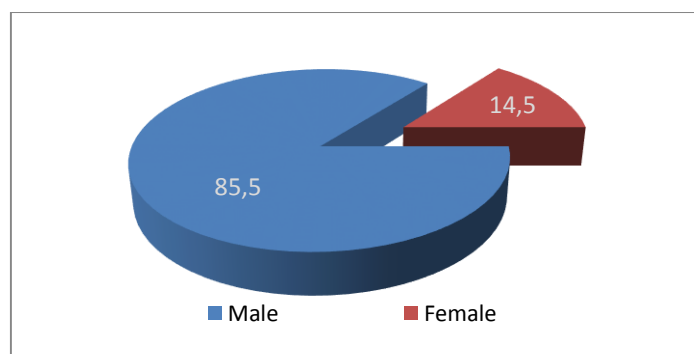
Once the fieldwork had finished, data obtained were exported to SPSS, a software for statistical analysis, in order to analyse the data. Analysis was performed based on descriptive statistics, including: frequency distributions, averages, percentages, crosstabs tables, categorization of open-ended responses, or multiple choice questions. When relevant, specific data analysis was done by segments or categories.

Five reports in five languages with a national overview were developed. The final data analysis of the survey is shown in the **global report** that integrates jointly the results obtained by each of the partners, in order to have a global vision.

### *3.1.1. Socio-Demographic Profiles*

#### **Sample distribution by descriptive variables**

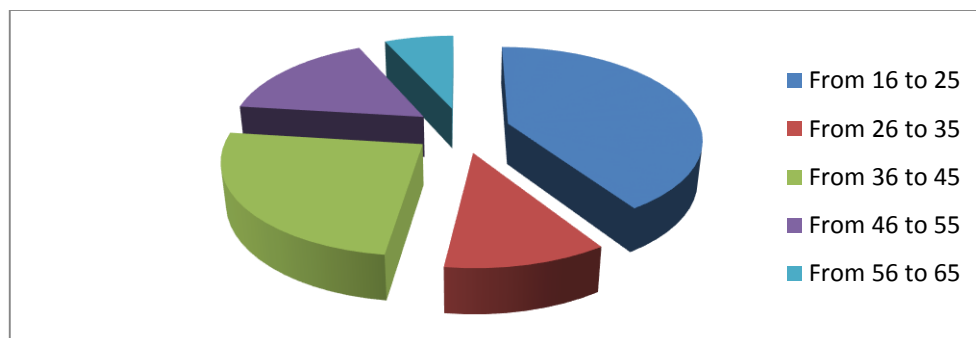
Our sample is mainly composed of males (341 respondents). Only a few women are represented. This can be explained by the fact that the main construction sector's workforce is composed of men. In this case, women are mostly employees working in training centres.



*Sample distribution by sex*

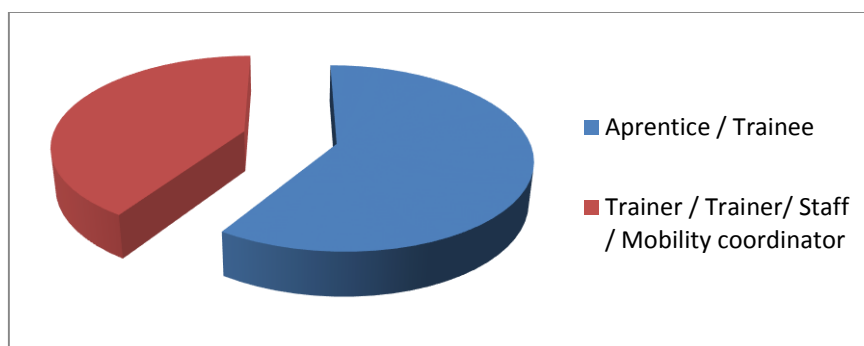


The age of respondents is mainly concentrated on ranges from 16 to 25 (with 40%) and 41.1% of the respondents are aged between 36 and 55. This really shows that our APP should address ALL ages – **youngsters and older people**.



*Sample distribution by age groups*

Regarding the VET profile, about 60% of respondents are still in training and the other 40% are staff members, (means – employees and/or workers).



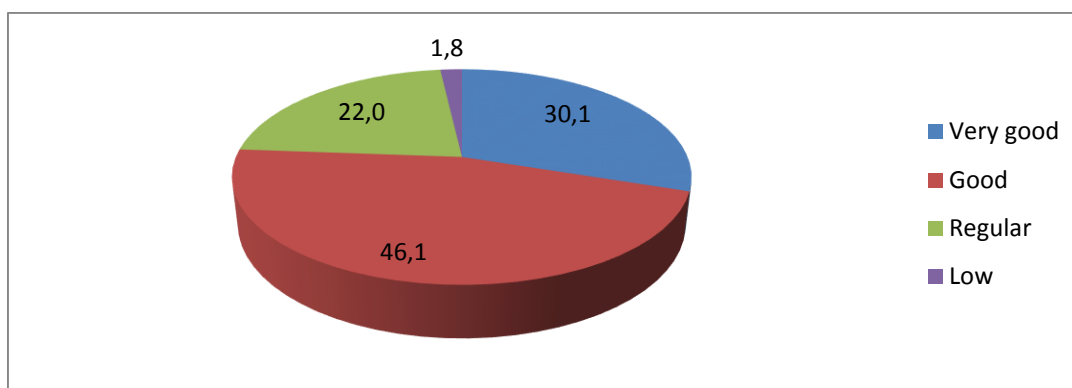
*Sample distribution by VET profile*

### 3.1.2. ICT Knowledge and Use

#### **Digital skills self-perception**

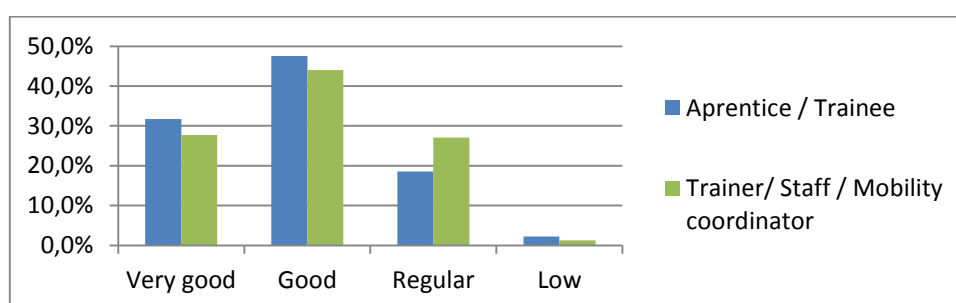
Digital skills are the capacity of a person to use ICT devices and applications in order to access and manage information and solve problems.

Almost half of the surveyed people claim to have GOOD self-perception in digital skills and 30 % declare very good skills. Only a very few declare low skills (1.8%).



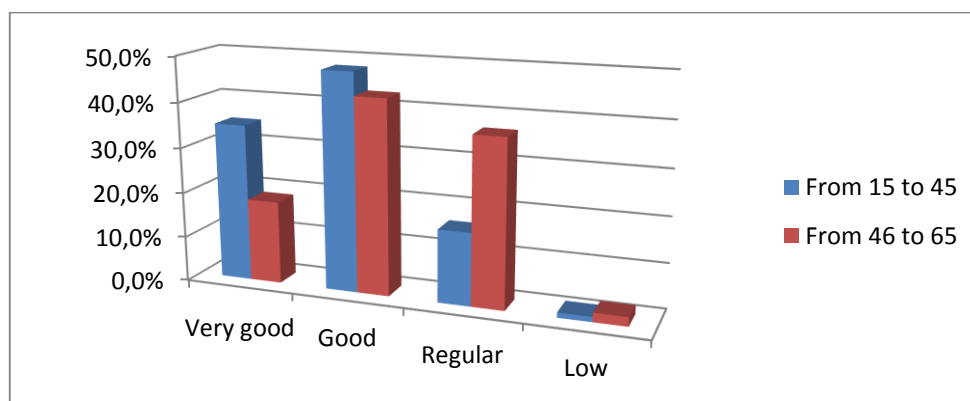
*Digital skills (self-perception)*

The correlation by VET profile shows that trainees and staff have almost the same self-perception regarding digital skills.



*Digital skills by VET profile*

But we can notice that self-perception is influenced by age. Youngsters feel they have very good or good digital skills and people aged between 46 – 65 have good or regular ones.



*Digital skills by age groups*

**Accessibility and use frequency of Internet connected devices:**

It is significant that our sample use connected devices frequently. 95% declare a daily use and only 5% a weekly use. In this case, **monthly** and **never** were two possible but unanswered categories.

Nearly all respondents (95.8%) declare having easy access to social media/networks. The percentage of those who declare having difficult access to social media or networks is residual and the main reason is a deficient Internet connection and limited data plan with the mobile operator. This clearly means that the APP to be developed within the project might have a high scope in all partners' counties.

**Software/applications downloading patterns:**

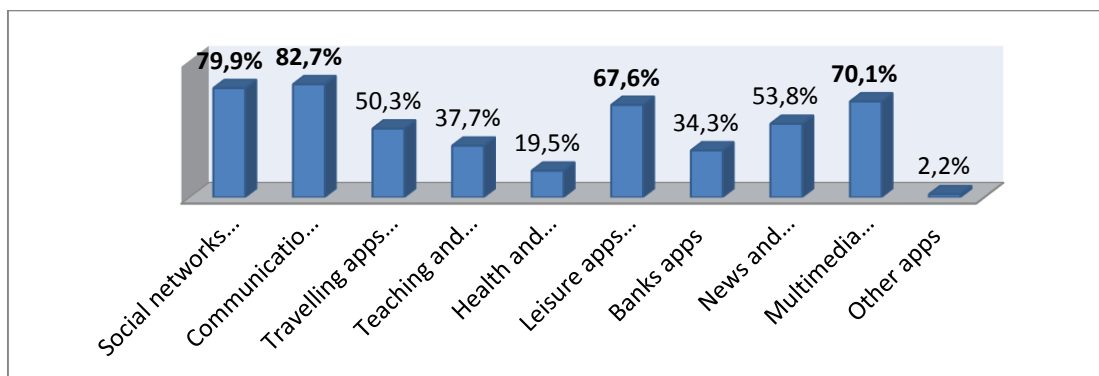
People surveyed were asked about their downloading patterns, in relation to the cost of the application to download. Nearly all respondents download software applications from online markets -such as Google Play or Apple Store- but prefer if they are for free.

	Frequency (n)	Valid percentage %
Yes, even if it is necessary to pay	74	19.2
Yes, but if they are for free	257	66.8
No	54	14.0
Total	385	100.0

*APP Downloading pattern in relation to costs*

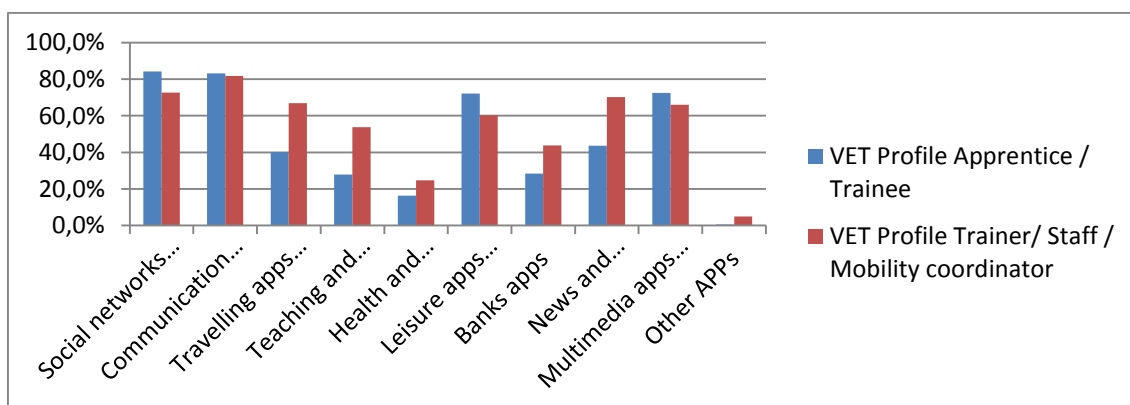
For the analysis of the typology of APPs generally downloaded by trainees and trainers/VET staff in the construction sector, we designed a question with multiple options. Therefore, the sum of the corresponding percentages of cases is bigger than 100, since each respondent may choose more than one option.

The following table shows the frequency distribution of each of the options presented.



*Typology of APPs generally downloaded*

Between those who download software applications (331 people) from online Google Play or Apple Store, 82.7% generally download APPs for communication, such as WhatsApp, or Skype. 79.9% download social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram... and 70.1% download multimedia APPs, e.g. YouTube. Leisure Apps are highly downloaded too with 67.6 %



*Typology of APPs generally downloaded by VET profile*

As far as downloading teaching/learning APPs, by VET profile, data show that trainers, staff and mobility coordinators of VET institutions download more teaching/learning APPs than trainees and apprentices. The same appears for travelling APPs, bank APPs and APPs linked to news and weather.

### 3.1.3. Social media: usage patterns and preferences

#### **Notoriety of social media / APPs**

Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram are the most well-known APPs. That shows that the highest rank APPs are mainly **communication and social** ones. Regarding the VET profile, the percentage is almost exactly the same for trainees and trainers.

	Know	Don't know
Facebook	96,8	3,2
YouTube / Vimeo	95,4	4,6
Skype	89,5	10,5
Twitter	84,6	15,4
WhatsApp	82,5	17,5
Instagram	77,9	22,1
MySpace	44,3	55,7
LinkedIn / Viadeo	43,4	56,6
Badoo	42,9	57,1
Spotify	41,2	58,8
Other APPs *	25,2	74,8
Flickr	23,2	76,8
Skyblog	19,9	80,1
Tuenti	17,0	83,0
Foursquare	10,0	90,0

*Notoriety of social media / APPs*

#### **Frequency of use:**

Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp have clearly a very high frequency of use in comparison to others.

Related to Facebook use, three out of five use this social media **daily** and only a few say they **never** use this APP on their mobile devices.

This data shows that **Facebook is the most frequently used application** among respondents.

Regarding VET profile, trainees use it more often than trainers (71 % vs 52%) but 25.5% of trainers never use it.

**WhatsApp** has a close percentage of daily use but the percentage of those who never use it is a bit higher than in case of Facebook. Among trainers, 31% never use WhatsApp vs. 25% trainees.

**YouTube** is a very frequently used application. As a whole, nine out of ten use this app on mobile devices, which makes it **the most used application**, although not the most frequently used, as 44.5% use it daily vs. 63.6% of Facebook daily users. This APP is also the one with the lowest percentage of people that never use it on Smartphone or tablet. As far as VET profile is concerned, this is also the most frequently (weekly or daily) used by all of our target groups.

Skype and Twitter are mainly used monthly. Foursquare, Badoo, MySpace and Tuenti are the least used APPs on Smartphones or tablets and the ones with a lower frequency of use between those who do use them.

The conclusions we can draw from this information are, that Facebook is most often used APP to communicate with peers and YouTube for sharing information. When taken into consideration, this can explain the frequency of use (daily vs weekly)

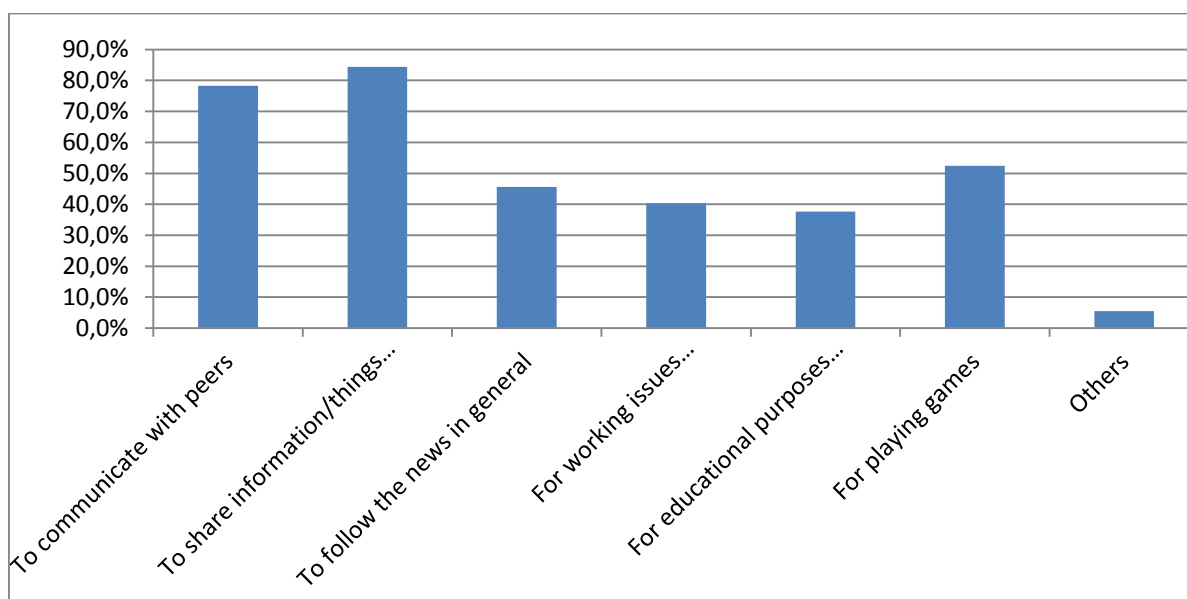
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Badoo	3,2	3,0	2,7	91,1
Facebook	63,6	12,9	5,4	18,1
Flickr	1,1	2,4	4,1	92,4
Foursquare	1,1	0,5	1,6	96,8
Instagram	16,4	13,5	7,3	62,8
LinkedIn / Viadeo	7,3	7,3	9,7	75,7
MySpace	1,1	2,7	5,7	90,6
Other APPs *	20,9	10,0	6,4	62,7
Skyblog	1,3	1,9	3,5	93,3
Skype	14,3	15,4	28,3	42,0
Spotify	8,4	6,2	6,7	78,7
Tuenti	1,4	1,6	2,7	94,3
Twitter	9,5	8,9	12,4	69,2
WhatsApp	63,1	6,5	3,0	27,5
YouTube / Vimeo	44,5	34,0	10,5	11,1

*Frequency of APPs use in mobile devices*

### **Main motivation for use:**

For the analysis of the motivations for the use of APPs by trainees and trainers/VET staff of construction sector, we designed a question with multiple options. A **multiple choice question** is posed so that subjects can choose more than one answer option that is offered, or all. Therefore, the sum of the corresponding percentages of cases is bigger than 100, since each respondent may choose more than one option.

A very important question for our APP is the main motivation for use. Four out of five surveyed (84.3%) use the mobile APPs **to share information**. 78.30% use mobile APPs **to communicate with peers**. This is directly linked with the fact that WhatsApp and Facebook are the applications with the highest frequency of use in mobile devices, with about 63% of respondents that state they use this application daily. Educational purposes obtain a score of 37.60 % and playing games 52.50%.



*Motivation for use of APPs*

	VET Profile	
	Apprentice / Trainee	Trainer/ Staff / Mobility coordinator
Social networks apps (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	84,3%	72,7%
Communication apps (Whatsapp, Line, Skype, etc.)	83,2%	81,8%
Travelling apps (Trip advisor, Google maps, etc.)	40,1%	66,9%
Teaching and learning apps (courses, tutorials, OER, etc.)	27,9%	53,7%
Health and wellness apps (fitness, food, diet, meditation, etc.)	16,2%	24,8%
Leisure apps (sports, music, games, ebooks, etc.)	72,1%	60,3%
Banks apps	28,4%	43,8%
News and weather apps (BBC, Financial Times, etc)	43,7%	70,2%
Multimedia apps (YouTube, etc.)	72,6%	66,1%
Other apps.	0,5%	5,0%

*Type of APPs generally downloaded by VET profile*

Considering the relative weight of the responses we can observe that trainees, trainers and staff reveal preference for downloading **Multimedia APPs** with almost the same percentage.

We can also observe another tendency in **Social networks APPs and Communication APPs**, in this case, is almost the same also among trainees and trainers.

There is also a clear difference observed in News and Weather APPs (BBC, Financial Times, etc.) and Travelling APPs that are downloaded between trainers/ staff / mobility coordinators and apprentices / trainees.

For **teaching APPs**, we can find a significant difference between trainers and trainees: 53.7% of trainers download this type of APPs vs. 27.9% of the trainees.

### ***3.1.4. Impact of social media in education and training***

The question we asked our sample was "Have you ever used educational social media and/or ICT supports specifically for teaching (if you are a teacher) / learning (if you are a trainee)?"

In relation to the use of social media in education and training, about 45% of respondents already use ICT for educational purposes.



In the national analysis, there is a significant difference between countries. Spain and Germany have a high percentage of “no” answers, Portugal have almost the same ratio in this case, Belgium and Italy have a higher percentage of “yes” answers.

However, in most cases, we can observe that there is a strong will to integrate, step by step, this ICT approach (i.e.: offering computers or multimedia equipment (such as interactive blackboards, tablets) to trainees and trainers as a way of learning).

One explanation about the high level of “no” answers could be the fact that social media and ICT are considered as “potential risk methods” by some trainers/managers.

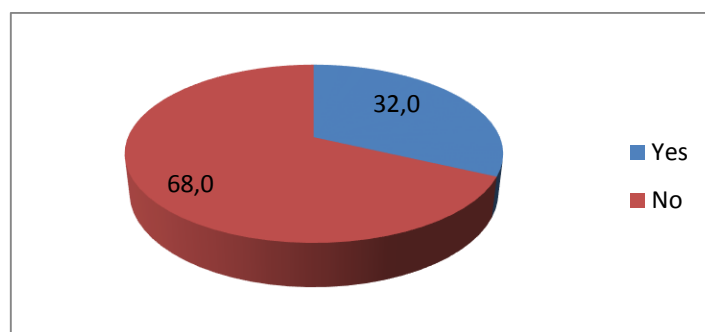
The open answers indicate heterogeneous motivations for using social media in education. Some of them indicate specific use for specific and technical purposes in the building sector (for example construction site waste management, safety software, to find out about building law and rules,...) Some others focus on pedagogical use, like support for evaluations, for assignments, for giving votes, etc. Other minor scattered answers signal other communication specifications (for example to share contents, to work simultaneously, connection among students etc.)

### ***3.1.5. Applicability of social media for mobility experiences***

*The aim of this part of the survey is to understand the main difficulties experienced when undertaking an exchange of students or mobility placement abroad.*

One out of four people surveyed have already experienced mobility. Most of them are trainers/staff/mobility coordinators. 25.8% apprentices / trainees already took part in a mobility experience and 40.9% of staff.

We can consider that the level of trainees/apprentices’ participation is quite high compared to the 2020 EU objectives for mobility of VET students which aim to have “at least 6% of young people between 18 and 34 years old participate in a period of training abroad, for at least two weeks and registered by Europass”. Nevertheless, the partnership really would like to increase this number over the coming years.



Percentage of people that have experienced mobility

### **Main difficulties experienced when undertaking an exchange abroad:**

Concerning the difficulties experienced by those who have undertaken mobility experiences (124 people), we can notice, regarding this statistic, that the communication barriers (incl. language difficulties) pose the greatest difficulties experienced by those that have undertaken a mobility experience, as it has been the criteria most often cited.

### **Regarding the VET profile:**

For apprentices/trainees, the main difficulties experienced are about communication barriers. That could of course be linked to social integration and cultural adaptation and coming next with 81.4% and 78%

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Cumulative percentage
Cultural adaptation (cultural differences)	6,8	20,3	25,4	25,4	78,0
Communication barriers (language difficulties)	18,6	16,9	23,7	23,7	83,1
Economic difficulties	15,3	13,6	23,7	23,7	76,3
Lack of support in hosting country	10,2	10,2	18,6	33,9	72,9
Social integration (making friends)	27,1	18,6	16,9	18,6	81,4

Main difficulties experienced by VET PROFILE: "Apprentice / Trainee"

Communication barriers are the category which poses the greatest difficulty experienced by trainers/staff/mobility coordinators followed by cultural adaptation.

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Cumulative percentage
Cultural adaptation (cultural differences)	9,2	15,4	30,8	27,7	83,1
Communication barriers (language difficulties)	35,4	16,9	23,1	9,2	84,6
Economic difficulties	7,8	23,4	21,9	25,0	78,1
Lack of support in hosting country	9,4	23,4	23,4	12,5	68,8
Social integration (making friends)	9,4	28,1	20,3	12,5	70,3

*Main difficulties experienced by VET PROFILE: "Trainer/ Staff / Mobility coordinator"*

### **Open section about the advantages of social media:**

At the end of the survey, the respondents had the opportunity to answer the following open questions as we wanted to have their opinion on the advantages of social media and using them in a mobility context:

*"What are the main advantages of social media"?*

- Sharing experience / information / knowledge;
- Communication / interaction with peers (could be in real time);
- Fast, easy, available at any time, long-range communication;
- Easy exchange of useful information via discussion forums
- Cultural enrichment;
- Personal and social development;
- Following the news;
- Easy for learning;
- Translation possibilities;
- Visibility / advertisement;
- Access to technical issues;
- Working through mobile devices;
- Job searching;
- Often for free;
- Dissemination of innovations;
- Open new horizons;

*"What are the "main advantages of using social media in exchanges/mobility projects"?"*

This open question reports different sorts of advantages, classifiable in the following categories:

- Facilitate social and cultural involvement and overcoming of language barriers;
- Retrieve information obtained in country of origin and needed abroad to improve the experience on destination;
- Expand the teaching/learning time, not limited to class;
- Development of skills;
  
- Communication and sharing information and dissemination before, during and after the stay:
  - With peers (family / friends)
  - With local people
  - With ex-mobility participants
  - With sending and hosting organisations / staff
  - About cultural differences
  - With the new network established beyond the mobility process
- Translation / facilitate communication and overcoming the language barrier;
- Geolocation;
- Learn foreign languages;
- Being aware of good deals in the hosting country;
- Cheap, efficient and always available

### *3.1.6. Conclusion of the survey “social media and yourself”*

The aim of the survey was to get an overview of the uses of Social Media and ICT for construction VET learners and trainers/staff in each country, as a starting point to the android application content and structure.

We noticed that the idea of an APP is really relevant as nearly all surveyed people declare having good digital skills and being used to this kind of technology, moreover, they use it very often. Three out of four respondents have good or very good digital skills. This is the majority of our target users. However, we should take into consideration those with “poor skills” for our APP development.

Most of our target group regularly download software applications from online Google Play or Apple Store, generally for communication, sharing information, social networks and multimedia APPs, as the main purposes of using APPs are communication with peers and information sharing.

A very relevant piece of data for our APP is that it should address all ages – younger and older people. Many users are aged between thirty-six and fifty-five. We do need to take this group into consideration by designing the APP structure.

As far as Education and Training are concerned, the results show that among partners, there is a strong will to integrate ICT in classrooms and in education pathways as it can be a good way for sharing information/contents together, for communication (students / trainers/ colleagues), for specific and technical purposes in the building sector (technical software / online supports), pedagogical uses, and for promoting the institution.

Among those who have already participated in mobility experiences, it appears that regardless of the VET profile, the obstacles are the same, namely communication barriers, social integration and cultural adaptation. Of course, all these issues are linked to one another.

For the APP – “European APP for VET building sector exchanges”, we really need to focus on those obstacles. By reducing the obstacles, the number of mobilities will substantially increase.

## **3.2. Analysis of good practices**

"A good practice is simply a process or a methodology that represents the most effective way of achieving a specific objective... So another way of defining a good practice is one that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model"<sup>1</sup>.

The essence of identifying and sharing good practices is to learn from others and to reuse knowledge. The biggest benefit consists in well-developed processes based on accumulated experience.

In this section, the partnership analyses the best applications and tools available for the construction sector that could facilitate mobility placements and that, therefore, could be integrated in the APP we will be developing for the project.

This will be done by an analysis based in the review of national (regional/local) practices done previously and taking in count the aims to cover, to increase quality in mobility processes and, therefore, contribute to the improvement and further development of VET systems in Europe. Indeed, we do not really need to reinvent the wheel but start from our own experiences...

### ***3.2.1. Linguistic Reforme Project***

The "Linguistic REFORME" project, in which all core partners were involved, aimed at analysing basic issues in the process of transnationally exchanging people in vocational education and training (VET) between companies, VET-centres and VET-schools in the range of REFORME, the European Construction Sectors VET-network; [www.reforme.org](http://www.reforme.org) .

The main steps were:

- 1) Quantitative and qualitative surveys of the sent and hosted groups in the years 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 on EQF-levels within the REFORME-network.
- 2) Survey, analysis and conclusions along participants, professions, countries, used languages, preparation, most common obstacles for the process coping with:
  - TRAINEES sent abroad (1. work phase) / - TRAINEES "hosting" others trainees (2. work phase) and VET-centres hosting trainees from abroad / - STAFF (VET-managers, VET-trainers, administrators) sent abroad (3. work phase) / - STAFF

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<sup>1</sup> *Identifying and Sharing Good Practices, SDC Knowledge Management Toolkit*

(VET-managers, VET-trainers, administrators) hosting the respective counterparts (4. work phase) / - CONCLUSIONS and paths to improve and optimize the processes in exchanges TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF EXCHANGES as well as the quality (for language cannot be the obstacle to exchanging knowledge, skills and competences), for an even higher satisfaction on all levels, which then will be the starting point of an even more sustainable process (5. work phase) → **SOMEX**

In the case of our project, we will focus on the weaknesses and threats pointed out by partners in the Linguistic Reforme study, that trainer, staff, or trainees have experienced when going abroad for mobility in order to develop our APP content.

### **Weaknesses are:**

- Some of the trainees who participate for the first time in a transnational exchange in a foreign country with customs, traditions and a language different to theirs, sometimes experience fears, a lack of self-confidence, a lack of motivation, homesickness and other **adaptation problems**.
- **Little time** for trainees to dedicate themselves to preparatory measures due to other school schedules
- Trainees hosted from abroad usually have very few **linguistic competences** in foreign languages and a **lack of cultural knowledge** of the hosting country.
- In general, there is **a lack of linguistic skills** in the staff of the **hosting organisations**, especially of the trainers of the VET-centres / -schools and the owners and employees of the hosting construction companies.
- In general, the hosting partners do not have much experience in the application of **ECVET<sup>2</sup> processes** in training mobility contexts, in order to facilitate the assessment, validation and recognition of the training received at European levels.

### **Threats are:**

- Threats related to the **organisational** and **logistical aspects** of the exchange programmes. Welcoming conditions are bad, apprentices do not receive correct support or the necessary attention from hosting organisation during the stay is not appropriate. As far as the sending organisation is concerned, lack of a specific team in charge of preparation, information, guidance or logistics, legal and financial aspects, is a major difficulty.

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<sup>2</sup> **European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training** - ECVET is based on the description of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences), organized into transferable and accumulable learning units to which credit points are attached and registered in a personal transcript of learning outcomes. (source: Cedefop glossary)

- Misunderstandings between the participants due to **language** and **cultural differences**. These barriers can sometimes mean the failure of the entire exchange programme and it could also present a threat to future exchanges between the hosting and sending organisations.
- The lack of **linguistic skills** of all those who actively participate in mobility contexts (i.e. the trainees, owners and employees of the hosting companies, trainers, teachers, tutors, coaches of the participating VET centres / VET schools, etc.

### Conclusions of Linguistic Reforme:

Over the period of two years and with a strong focus on the issue of mutual-cross-border professional exchanges of various groups of people, plenty of details have come up, which might be interpreted in this or that way. The perception of the coordinating unit – BZB Krefeld – and the project partners is presented hereafter and is thus handed out for discussions and considerations; not only within the REFORME-network, but among all interested stakeholders.

When also following the analysis methods, which have been adapted by all project partners during the project life cycle, we will present here a concluding SWOT-, GAP- and also ABC-analysis of perceptions, claims and recommendations for future activities to be regarded as measures and emphatic actions to intensify the engagement for trans-border mobilities in professional contexts.

Considering REFORME as a lasting VET-network there is a strong base of mutual trust. All network partners have numerous and sustainable contacts to a vast number of SMEs in the construction sector throughout Europe. Each partner owns or has access to modern facilities, i.e. workshops, classrooms, guest houses, etc.

At the same time there is a **crucial lack of language skills** at all levels, mainly trainees and trainers, as well as a **scarcity of intercultural skills** due to certain reasons. Often there is a change of staff, which stands as an obstacle for continuity, when it comes to organization of mobilities. The different perceptipons of the (mostly younger) trainees and the (mostly older) trainers focusing on the mobility, including preparation and post-processing, can be an obvious hindrance; as the older ones are more mature, they are the ones to move towards the younger ones.

REFORME partners, but also other third parties, have to be even more aware, that the raising of **motivation at the target groups for mobilities is crucial**. As we address young people in most cases, i.e. digital natives, the VET-centers are to **involve more “modern” techniques** to reach people; a classical approach will



not work anymore. Install anybody with continuous responsibility to benefit from synergies when accompanying the entire administration process; some partners had excellent experiences with “mobility coaches”.

Stakeholders in transnational professional mobilities will definitely lose the game, if they stay on the path of traditional approaches in exchanges. Not taking the opportunity to **certify the foreign internship** and the skills gained with ECVET credits would be another minus in that process. And last but not least: be aware of your companies (often SMEs)! SMEs are fundamental for the recruitment of the target groups for exchanges.

Summarizing the above mentioned selected Strengths and Weaknesses as well as the Opportunities and Threats, the *Linguistic REFORME* project recommends:

- **taking measures to motivate the target groups** (trainees, trainers, VET-centers and companies) on their specific field of action; pick them up from where they are and not from your point of perception!
- **Integrate “new media” and “social media” at all stages of the process**; the traditional way will not work anymore; classical features are present
- Go on with **language and cultural training**, but adapt it to **modern/social media** standards. Eventually this leads to a development which will bridge all these gaps in form of a comprehensive new approach in REFORME, which could be a project like *SoMEx – Social Media in Exchanges*, where all the presented and considered features are involved, and updates the quality of trans-border professional mobilities in the construction sector, and thus a greater number of participants.

### *3.2.2. The m-learning paradigm – experienced by Portugal*

The m-learning takes advantage of the potential of mobile devices allowing the construction of knowledge in any space and the access to just-in-time information.

The advantages of this educational “paradigm” are based on different assumptions:

- Interaction (student-teacher-student);
- Portability, because the mobile phone is lighter than a PC and allows the user to take notes or collect data directly to the device, whether text, image, video or voice;

- Collaboration, by allowing several students to work together on a task even when in remote locations;
- Promotion of the engagement of learners, given the admiration that new generations have for mobile devices, in particular mobile phones;
- Increasing motivation, because the sense of ownership of mobile devices seems to increase commitment to use and learn from it;
- Improving autonomy and flexibility especially in distance learning.

The Portuguese Education and Science Ministry is committed to media education in pre-school education and school education.

Since April 29 (2014), a training framework has been established, which treats various topics throughout schooling.

It is considered that the basic reading and writing skills increase and intersect with new languages and forms of communication.

Universities are also developing several tools:

#### **For personal use**

- APPs (available on Google Play / Apple Store / Android Market) with components for public use and private components to be used by students and teachers. Can be downloaded on smartphones that have the operating system IOS (iPhone) or Android.

#### **For education and industry**

- Educational games. APPs for learning languages, mathematics and other school subjects.
- Technological programs. Software development to be used in industry and in the construction sector.

For the building sector there are different organizations working on research, development and innovation projects, highlighting the Portuguese Construction Technology Platform (PTPC), member of ECTP — European Construction Technological Platform. It is a technological surveillance pole in order to promote the production and dissemination of knowledge.

*More info: <http://www.ptpc.pt/index.php/pt/documentos-associacao>*

### 3.2.3. ABC of Construction

*"The development of an interactive multi-media system for the language education of young trainees in the building sector"*

This tool created by FORMEDIL and its partner on a Leonardo Da Vinci project is a multimedia teaching product for languages in building sector. It's a very useful tool as it covers the main subjects our students could need, on the building site, within the company and for leisure. Available languages are: Italian, French, Polish, German, English and Spanish.

More info: <http://old.formedil.it/abc/abc.swf>

### 3.2.4. Babele APP

*"We speak different languages, but **safety at work has a universal language**"*

The project is driven by Inail, CESF, Formedil and University for Foreigners Perugia and aims to raise awareness of foreign workers employed in building about their own working environment and the risks present, through a tool of immediate consultation "Babel - HHP" (acronym for Health Help Phone). The APP is currently downloadable on smartphones based on the Android platform, which will be made available also in a version for iOS devices (Apple). The APP contains a glossary, fact sheets and a "Help online" feature, which allows you to select from your address book the person to be notified in case of problem during the execution of a risky task. The APP has a "Building Glossary", composed of terms and images, explanations on occupational hazards, most common in the field, on correct behavior to adopt and on the names of tools and safety devices translated into seven languages most prevalent among construction workers who do not speak Italian or Albanian, Romanian, Serbian / Croatian, North African, English, French and Spanish.

More info: <http://www.formedil.it/perugia-progetto-babele-hhp-parliamo-lingue-diverse-ma-la-sicurezza-sul-lavoro-ha-un-linguaggio-universale/>

### 3.2.5. Virtual Mobility

Virtual mobility aims to recreate, through digital communication tools, situations, work and exchanges between network apprentices, which means collaborative work among apprentices from the different partner countries. Through the use of these

new technologies (virtual classrooms, video conferencing, social networking, etc.), the collaborative work between network apprentices is possible by creating activities focusing on formal learning phases (report, presentations), informal (working in mixed sub-groups) and informal (exchanges between network apprentices). This new approach benefits **every** network apprentice (not only those taking part in physical mobility) during their training courses and permits apprentices to overcome the language and cultural barriers that may face them.

*More info: <http://www.cfpast.com/eurodim/experimentation.php>*

### **3.2.6. IncomVET**

The main idea of the Project is to encourage VET trainers and students to develop their **intercultural competence** as a means to increase employment possibilities for the students, encourage social cohesion, eliminate obstacles for international mobility and improve the quality of the trainers' work.

The Project will be based on the theoretical knowledge, practical skills and competences recognized by European scientific research organizations, methodical centres of universities and VET institutions. INCOM-VET seeks to adopt the results achieved by the handbook "Building Intercultural Competences" (edited by M.G.Onorati and F.Bednarz, Acco, Leuven, 2010).

Tangible outcomes will be the development of intercultural competence of VET trainers and students through publishing **Handbooks** with examples of methodological material, practical tasks, videos; creation of the project website for spreading knowledge, developing skills and forming attitudes; conducting living labs. Intangible outcomes will include the establishment of a lively community of practice across a number of European countries that can be further rolled out in the future.

*More info: <http://incom-vet.eu/en/about-project/>*

### 3.2.7. Buildout

BuildOut produced a **multilingual platform** containing:

- An online database with updated comparative information regarding qualifications and skills, learning paths, accreditations and certifications
- **A practical information kit for construction workers/trainees on the move**
- A trans-national advertisement section with positions for jobs/placements/courses for target groups, BuildOut will impact the VET systems improving quantity and quality of mobility among trainees and workers, qualification transparency and contact between labor market and VET in the construction sector.

This project had an impact on the VET systems, improving qualification transparency with an innovative resource to promote contact between the labor market and VET and to enhance mobility.

More info: [http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/10095/project\\_10095\\_en.pdf](http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/10095/project_10095_en.pdf)

### 3.2.8. Facebook

Each partner has a Facebook page and uses Facebook in the mobility process.

This can be a **private** Facebook group regrouping the mobility stakeholders such as teachers and staff involved in the project; former participants (from previous years) and the new participants (taking part in the mobility experience in the coming year).

As every student has Facebook and follows its news every day, this gives the opportunity to inform the group very quickly and at all stages of the process.

- ✓ Before mobility placement: to introduce and promote the project; to inform the group members about practical information / schedule (i.e. flight timetables); to get advice from former participants.
- ✓ During mobility placement: to keep contact with those staying in the home country
- ✓ After mobility placement : to share information about the stay; to keep informed about future mobilities; to promote the profession (competitions, events, meetings); to keep in touch with hosting partners, sending organisation, new friends

- ✓ AT ANY TIME: Find pictures from other groups, ask students who lived through the same situation a few years before questions (breaking fears), ask the organisation team questions, share pictures, keep in touch with others.

Otherwise, all partners are already used to the following APPs for mobilities: WhatsApp / Facebook / Adobe Connect / Skype meetings / E-learning (Moodle platform) / internal portal with access to trainees and trainers / linguistic training through APPs.

### *3.2.9. Conclusion of partners' Good Practices*

The M-learning paradigm shows that we are working in the right direction, allowing students/trainers/trainees to take advantage of the potential of mobile devices allowing the construction of knowledge in any space and the access to just-in-time information.

As mentioned in the Linguistic REFORME conclusions, lack of time devoted to mobility preparation (due to school / work schedule) is a problem but with the APP, as it would always be available, we could give the public the opportunity to learn anywhere and at any time.

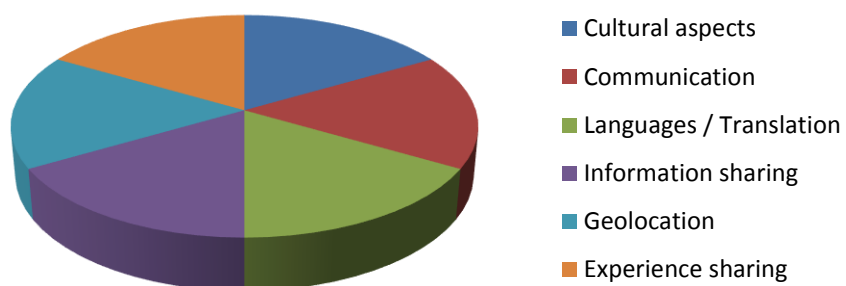
As far as languages are concerned, we could start from Beable APP, ABC of construction and Buildout' as they already contain much relevant vocabulary and information related to our target group, that is to say, VET construction trainees/trainers and staff members. Of course, the APP would not just be a language translator but also a way to learn languages – to be used before going abroad.

Regarding cultural aspects, INCOMVET deals with the topic: "Development of intercultural competencies – Handbook for VET trainers and trainees".

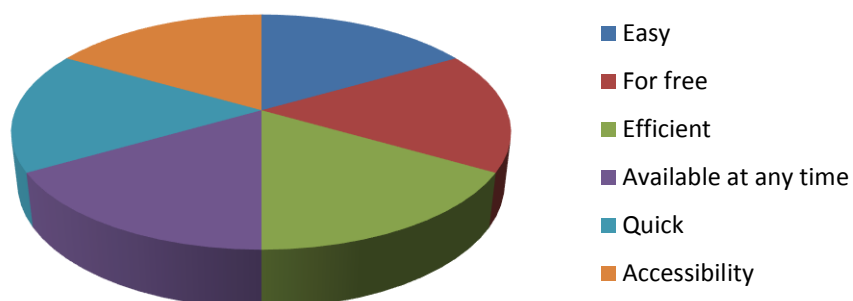
Virtual Mobility using Skype and Video conferences to encourage communication with peers and gives the opportunity to overcome languages and cultural barriers.

As one of the big challenges is to motivate students, by using this kind of new technology, we will adapt our ways of working to their environment and try to bridge the gaps in a totally new approach.

As far as APP content is concerned, the main issues are linked to social integration:



Regarding the APP structure, here are the main issues:



## *4. General Conclusions*

The point is now to put our experiences and ideas together, to use all the already existing materials, in order to go further with the development of our main end product, the “European APP for VET building sector exchanges”.

Taking the results of the survey and of “Linguistic REFORME” into account, we can conclude that there is a significant necessity for breaking the barriers in order to motivate our target groups to go on exchanges throughout Europe. The main obstacles are clearly linked to the lack of language skills and cultural knowledge. We do really need to get around these obstacles in order to foster communication and social integration in the whole mobility process. This report clearly demonstrates that the creation of an APP is relevant as the analysis of survey data shows the interest of our target public in using this kind of new technology in their daily life. Our APP must suit all age groups as the socio-demographic profile covers people aged 16 to 55. But regarding their uses, they are quite similar so this will not be a big impediment. Relevant data is that surveyed people mostly use/download APPs for communication and social networks which are linked to one of the main barriers.

We now intend to turn this use to applicability in mobility exchanges and at all stages of the process; before, during and after.

The next step will be now to **observe a classical mobility process** (without the APP) and prepare the products of this project on the basis of real situations (needs, problems, language barriers...). After this second research phase, we will have enough input to create the APP and test it afterwards on another mobility placement.





**BZB**  
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