



**#ERASMUSDAYS 2021 WITH THE S4TCLF 2030 BLUEPRINT PROJECT**

**DIGITAL LEARNING, A TURNING POINT FOR TEXTILE, CLOTHING, LEATHER, AND FOOTWEAR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVISION IN EUROPE?**

*On the occasion of the 2021 Erasmus Days, the Erasmus+ Skills4Smart TCLF industries 2030 Blueprint project consortium organised a conference dedicated to digital learning in Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear (TCLF) Vocational Education and Training (VET). Gianluca Coppola from the European Digital Learning alliance (Dlearn) kicked off the conference with research findings identifying trends, ideas, and needs concerning digital skills and tools. S4TCLF project partners then offered the audience a glimpse into the newly-developed S4TCLF Academy, an online platform containing more than 50 digital lessons developed by European experts for 8 of the most sought-after TCLF occupations, along with the extremely positive feedback it received from students and teachers who participated in the pilots.*

**Long-term trends challenge the status-quo in VET provision**

Based on DLearn's research, four current trends are changing current education models. The movement toward less linear career trajectories heightened the relevance of lifelong learning and requires education systems to create more agile models to adjust to this evolution and prepare students appropriately. Students' mindsets have also evolved. The new « students-consumers » know what they want and expect more flexible, seamless, and personalised experiences. Big disruptors such as emerging technologies and new technologies are changing the skills that companies look for, and the ways education can be delivered. Finally, the value of traditional degrees is eroding, with professional skills and aptitudes becoming the make-or-break factors in getting hired. M. Coppola framed this evolution as the emergence of a « skills over degrees » model. Although these trends challenge the status quo and question the current delivery of VET, they do not question the central importance of schools: schools remain the best place to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to kickstart a career.

**Online courses developed by S4TCLF consortium receive badge of approval from students and teachers**

The Portuguese textile technology centre (CITEVE) offered a glimpse into the S4TCLF Academy. After two years of preliminary research and lessons development, this online Academy contains a whopping 213 lessons and 51 sets of exercises and assessments for the 8 TCLF profiles most requested by European companies. Even more impressive than these numbers, the feedback from the 2000 students and teachers that participated in the piloting phase all over Europe confirms that the goals and principles – innovation, quality, pedagogy – that guided the development of the training material are fully met. 92% of students gave a positive evaluation of the training utility and recommended the training. Teachers also responded very favourably to the MOCCs. They've been described as a great pool of flexible content and resources to create training opportunities, with one teacher even considering the piloting session an « upskilling opportunity »

With more than 80 participants and countless lively discussions, the S4TCLF Erasmus Days 2021 event can be called a success. Big disruptors require education systems to timely adapt to new industry needs, new students' mindsets, and a new job market. New technologies – AR, VR – should be embraced as opportunities to evolve and become more agile and flexible. The piloting of the S4TCLFs MOOCs as a digital tool is a perfect illustration: they do not replace a school or a teacher, but instead enrich the training curricula and the students' learning experiences. Indeed, blended teaching that make use of digital and technology tools go a step further in making TCLF VET more innovative, flexible, personalised, and attractive.