

How Can Teachers' Digital Competences Be Developed So That the Results Outlast an Erasmus+ Project?

What remains once an international educational project has ended? The simplest answer is usually its outputs: courses, materials, platforms, reports, and a handful of dissemination articles and videos. For universities, however, something less visible may matter more: what the people involved in the project have genuinely learned – teachers, content authors, instructional designers and those implementing new solutions. Developing digital competences leads to lasting results only when it changes the way teachers work, how teaching and learning processes are organised, and the culture of the institution. This is illustrated by the IIDEMIC project (Inclusive and Innovative Digital Education for Migrant Community), implemented by partners from Poland, Türkiye, Kenya and Somalia, which aims to support teachers working in refugee and migrant communities.

Digital Competences Are More Than Using a Platform

The development of digital competences is often equated with learning to use tools: Moodle, Teams, Google Meet, Kahoot, digital whiteboards, content authoring applications or artificial intelligence tools. Yet an academic teacher may be proficient in using technology and still have no idea how to use it to engage learners, foster their autonomy or create materials that are accessible to people with diverse learning needs. Digital competences are, above all, the ability to select technology purposefully, design learning experiences, and evaluate and adapt solutions to learners' needs. This is the approach adopted in the international IIDEMIC project (Inclusive and Innovative Digital Education for Migrant Community). The ten online courses developed in the project cover not only digital and assistive tools, but also social competences, entrepreneurship and inclusive education. Making courses available, however, is not the same as developing competences – that requires supportive organisational conditions, ongoing support and time to put new skills into practice gradually.

Same Course, Different Experiences: Lessons from the Pilot

Publishing a course is only the beginning of its use. The first phase of the pilot of the Digital and Assistive Technology Educational Tools course involved 73 teachers (13 women and 60 men) from Bosaso in Somalia and from Dadaab and Kakuma in Kenya. In Bosaso, 75% of participants



completed the course, and in Dadaab 73%, while in Kakuma no one did – owing to serious problems with distributing login credentials and accessing the platform. The barrier, then, was neither the content nor teachers’ motivation, but the way access was organised. The results are best read alongside participants’ experiences. In Dadaab, 91% of respondents gained access to the platform, yet more than half reported difficulties with navigation, limited mobile data and balancing learning with work. In Bosaso, the materials were rated as clear and useful, although participants wanted more interactivity and more examples drawn from the local context. A high completion rate does not, therefore, automatically mean that the learning environment is convenient and intuitive. The pilot was limited in scale, and data from the different sites are not fully comparable, so it does not allow the programme’s long-term impact to be assessed. It does show, however, that systematically collecting feedback improves both the content and the way it is delivered.

An important conclusion concerns scaling. An online course can be made available to many people at low cost, but operating at a larger scale requires infrastructure, procedures, a support system and progress monitoring. The pilot’s recommendations include, among others, streamlining the distribution of login credentials, simplifying navigation, reducing data usage, introducing flexible deadlines, accommodating teachers who combine professional and family responsibilities, and increasing the participation of women.

Support Must Not End with Training

Teachers differ in their experience, confidence with technology, access to devices and time available for learning, so the same training does not produce the same results. In the IIDEMIC project, preparation for working with Moodle was delivered both remotely and face-to-face, and in the Dadaab camp hands-on workshops were held for 50 teachers and 11 school leaders. The pilot revealed the need for ongoing support: simple guides and tutorials, technical help via messaging apps or phone, and opportunities for consultation. For universities, this means that one-off webinars are not enough. What is needed is a system that combines training, consultations, self-study materials, technical support and peer exchange, gradually building staff autonomy.

Reusable Resources

The courses developed in the IIDEMIC project share a standardised structure based on common templates and are being prepared in English, Swahili and Somali, which widens their reach.

Modular content is easier to update and transfer to other contexts. Reusability, however, does not guarantee sustainability: materials become outdated and tools change. It is therefore essential to decide at the design stage who will be responsible for maintaining and updating the resources, and to settle questions of licensing and modification rights. Technological infrastructure alone does not improve the quality of education. The IIDEMIC experience points to five elements of a long-term strategy for developing staff digital competences:

1. Support at different levels – a teacher starting to work with a platform, a course author and a person designing an entire programme each have different needs.
2. Combining training with practice – creating real materials and analysing feedback builds competence more effectively than a demonstration of a tool's features.
3. A support system that remains available after formal training ends.
4. Designing resources with reuse in mind – modularity and clear rules for updating.
5. Regular evaluation – data on activity, completion and user experience as a basis for decision-making.

Such a strategy does not require extensive infrastructure or a large team, but rather the gradual development of competences, responsibilities and procedures that do not depend on any single project.

What Should Remain After the Project Ends?

A functioning platform is not in itself evidence of sustainability – it may be little used, and its materials may become outdated. Sustainability encompasses three interconnected areas: people's competences; resources that can be updated and reused; and institutional capacity, that is, established ways of collaborating, procedures and relationships. IIDEMIC has contributed to each of these, and the pilot results show that sustaining them will require further work on accessibility, support and the adaptation of materials. Whether the project translates into a lasting change in teaching practice will only become clear through observation extending beyond the pilot phase.

The most valuable outcome of an educational innovation need not be the tool itself, but the capacity of people and institutions to keep learning and to develop new solutions independently. Sustainability understood in this way should be one of the main goals of universities investing in teachers' digital competences.

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