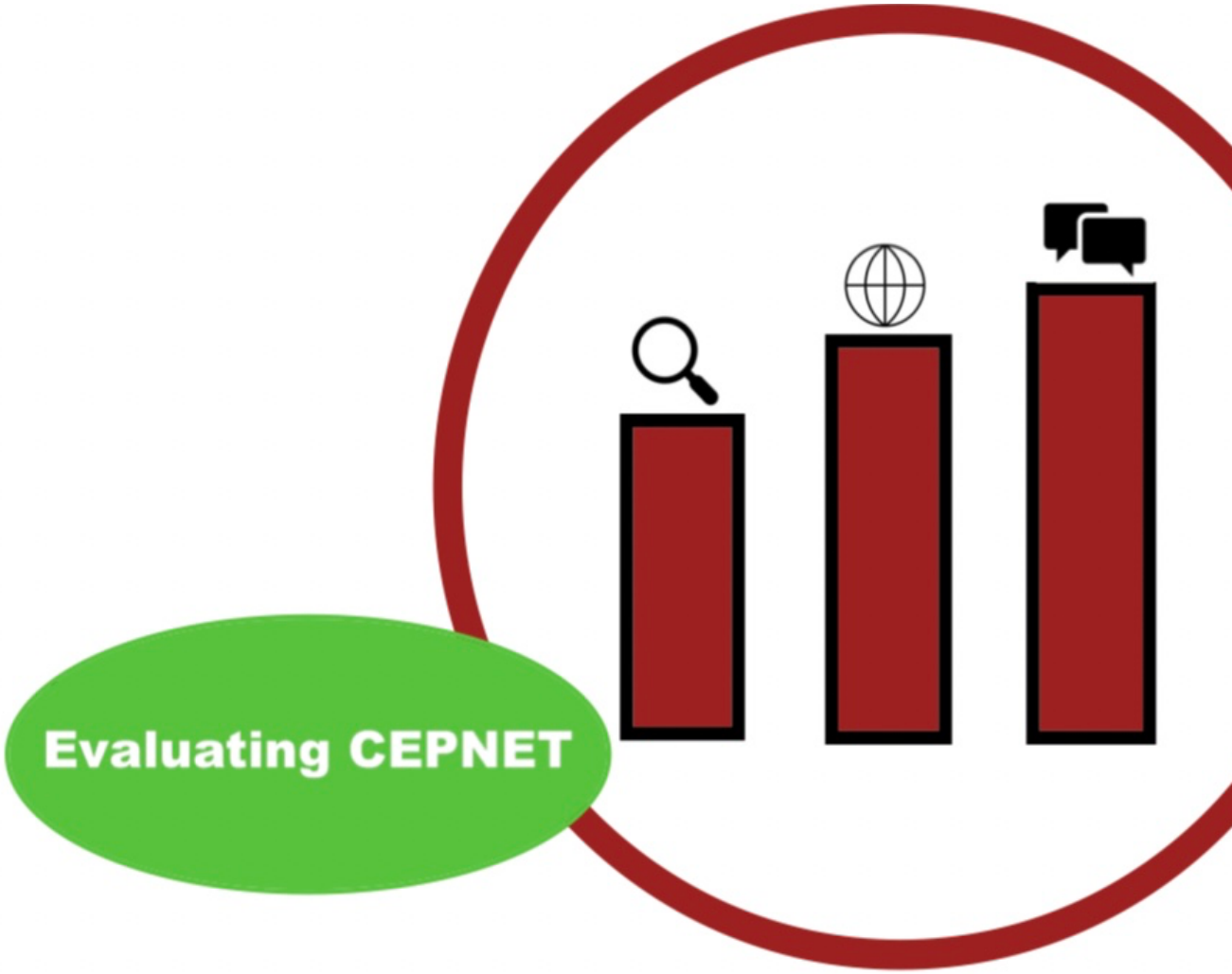
CEPNET IN FIGURES

Evaluation Report 3



What Students, Teachers and Parents think about the “Children Empowerment in Primary School Networks” Project.

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Childrens Empowerment in Primary Schools Network

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CEPNET IN SHORT

The CEPNET project works with children and teachers in primary school settings with the aim of introducing them to new approaches in relation to promoting empowerment and self-activation within the classroom.

As part of this project, the students get a chance to carry out self-directed project-based activities, looking at issues in their lives that connect them to the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Dialogues in Class
Researching Topics
Online Dialogues
Presentations

They discuss and debate these issues and then carry out research projects on topics that motivate them. They exchange their ideas with students from other countries. The students, then present their findings to a wide range of different audiences. In CEPNET this process was done in two separate cycles.

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PARTICIPANTS

WHO TOOK PART?

423 STUDENTS

43 TEACHERS

78 PARENTS

FROM WHERE ARE THEY?

AUSTRIA

IRELAND

ITALY

NORTHERN IRELAND

AGE – ALL PRIMARY

6-12.... **68 %** | 13-16.... **32 %**

In Italy and Northern Ireland elementary school lasts up to eleven years, in Ireland up to 12 years. In Austria it is usually 10 years, but because we worked with a special needs school, the Austrian students are older but still belong to the primary level.

GENDER

58% male students **37%** female students **3%** gave no answer **2%** missing data

This surplus of boys can be explained again by the fact that we were working with the special needs school, in two other countries there was as well a surplus if boys, which can be explained by the composition of the classes in this year.

STUDENTS' VOICES

The students are very interested in what is happening in their local and wider environment. It is not only that they are interested but all of them took actions in CEPNET. The children were particularly involved in SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 15 (Life on Land) issues or SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy. Climate Action (SDG 13) as well was an important topic for the students, they creatively dealt with to for example produce and proudly present the "Climate Rap", telling that is it time to act now. In all other SDGs at least one – several times many more – projects were developed. It is really hard to select some of the children's projects to be presented here but have a look - several further projects can also be found on the project's website cepnet.eu.

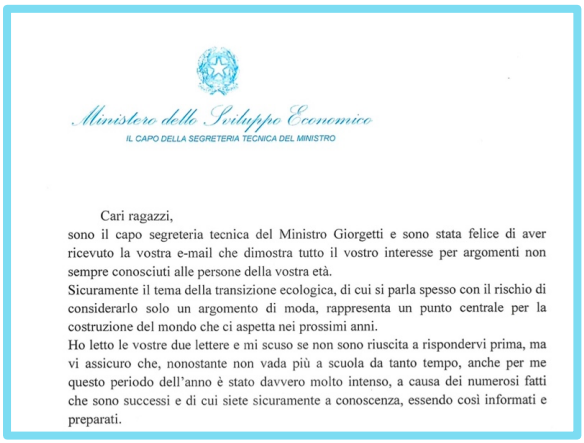
PROJECT EXAMPLES

In the Green House project, the children dealt with alternative energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy and energy generated from water.

In the Safety of Earth project, the children focused on climate-friendly mobility behavior, like avoiding flights and cars and using bikes or walking instead.

"If we don't do something now, by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our ocean", led the children to clean up local beaches. Loads of trash were removed.

The idea of the Pancakes for Pan Rights Project, was to raise money by selling pancakes to help fighting homophobia and to raise awareness for LGBTQ+ rights.



Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico

IL CAPO DELLA SEGRETERIA TECNICA DEL MINISTRO

Cari ragazzi,
sono il capo segreteria tecnica del Ministro Giorgetti e sono stata felice di aver ricevuto la vostra e-mail che dimostra tutto il vostro interesse per argomenti non sempre conosciuti alle persone della vostra età.
Sicuramente il tema della transizione ecologica, di cui si parla spesso con il rischio di considerarlo solo un argomento di moda, rappresenta un punto centrale per la costruzione del mondo che ci aspetta nei prossimi anni.
Ho letto le vostre due lettere e mi scuso se non sono riuscita a rispondervi prima, ma vi assicuro che, nonostante non vada più a scuola da tanto tempo, anche per me questo periodo dell'anno è stato davvero molto intenso, a causa dei numerosi fatti che sono successi e di cui siete sicuramente a conoscenza, essendo così informati e preparati.

EXCELLENT RESULTS

The Minister for Economic Development of Italy has responded to one of the emails from the children. The Minister is explaining how the Italian government is working to reach some of its sustainable development targets such as cutting CO2 emissions as suggested by Poppis' children.

Meeting with government minister Ossiam Smyth and regional representative Neasa Hourigan, member of the Irish parliament: The visit came about due to one of the CEPNET projects. Ciara, Freya and Siún had emailed a series of questions to Government departments asking about how environmental targets were going to be met and how young people were to be more included in these processes.

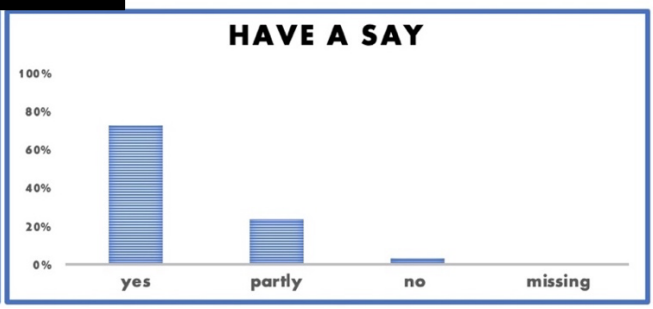
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

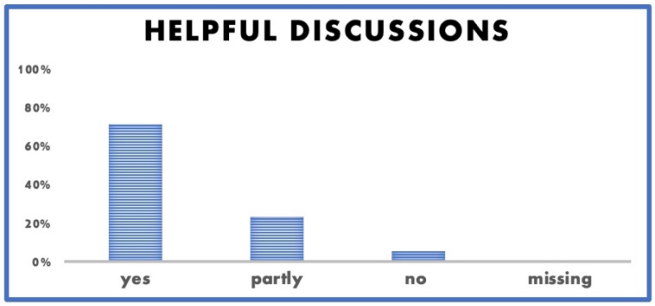
NUMBERS OF PROJECTS

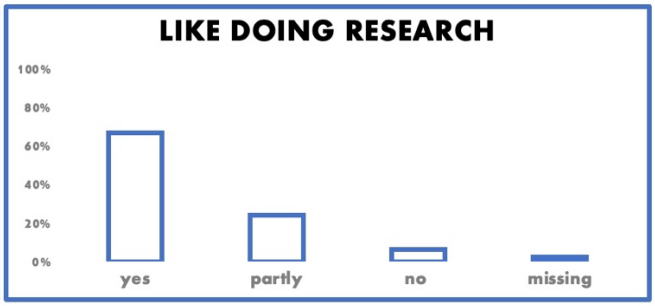
	Dublin	Omagh	Poppi	Vienna	Total
C1	20	4	13	9	46
C2	16	8	15	14	53
Total	**36**	**12**	**28**	**23**	**99**

99 Projects: 46 in Cycle 1 and 53 in Cycle 2! The students invested enormously much of motivation , creativity, and time into their research and what they wanted to tell others.

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES



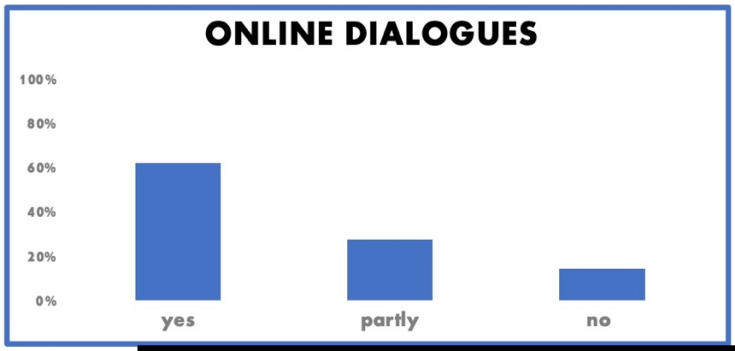




The 355 students' evaluation of the CEPNET model shows that consistently about three quarters felt included in their groups, found the dialogues in the classes helpful, had a say and enjoyed doing the research work. About one quarter stated that this partly was true for them. There were very few statements from the students that answered the question in the negative. In the open questions they told us, that they had a lot of fun learning new things in a different way. They loved working on the projects together with their friends, discussing with them and exchanging ideas online with students who were working on the same or similar projects, and are very proud of what they have achieved. The 26 online dialogues (C1: 4 | C2: 22) were repeatedly accompanied by technical difficulties at the schools, accordingly they were evaluated somewhat worse than the other parts of the model. Still there are found several positive answers in the open questions.

ONLINE DIALOGUES PARTICIPANTS

	AT	IRE	IT	NI	Total
Cycle1	34	32	25	9	100
Cycle2	70	59	28	38	195
Total	**104**	**91**	**55**	**47**	**295**



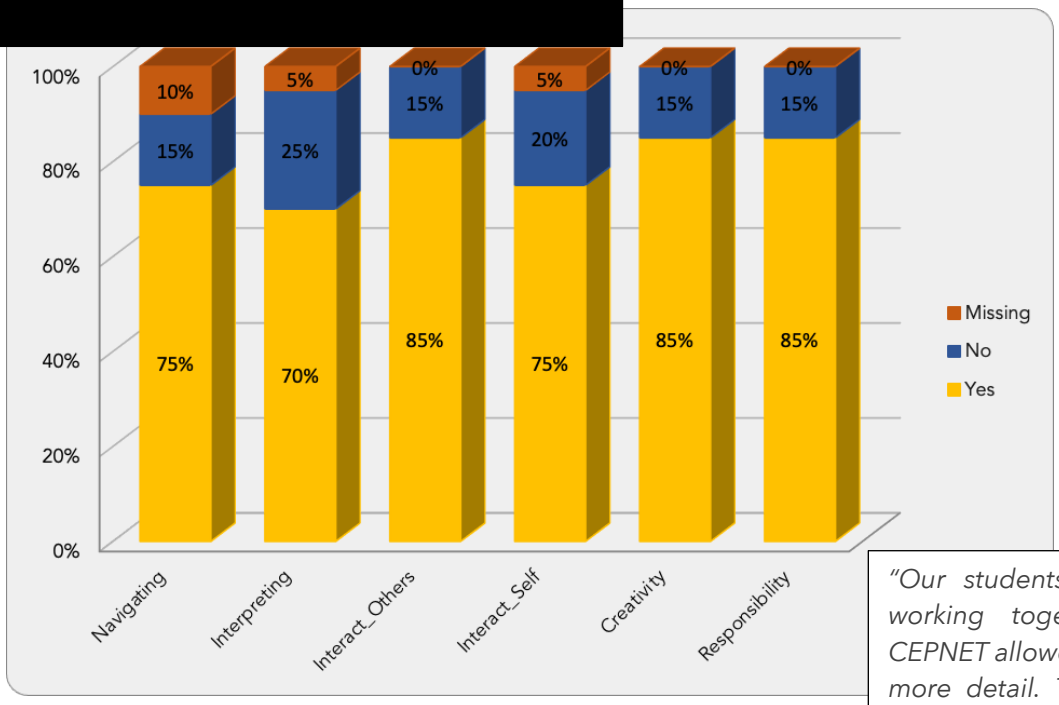
LIKE OF ONLINE DIALOGUES

"It was totally cool and different". Student AT
"It was fun, but some people had bad WIFI, so it was hard to understand." Student IRE
"It was nice to make friends with children from other countries". Student IT
"I loved the online dialogues because some were very funny, and we got to see their presentations of the other groups". Student NI

STUDENTS' COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

The CEPNET competence model was developed on the basis of international models such as the UNESCO competence framework and adapted for practical use in the classroom in a joint coordination process with the models used at the four participating schools. Already in the first cycle, many teachers have noticed an increase in the competences of their students, much more clearly than in the first cycle, the teachers found that the students have increased their competences to a very high extent.

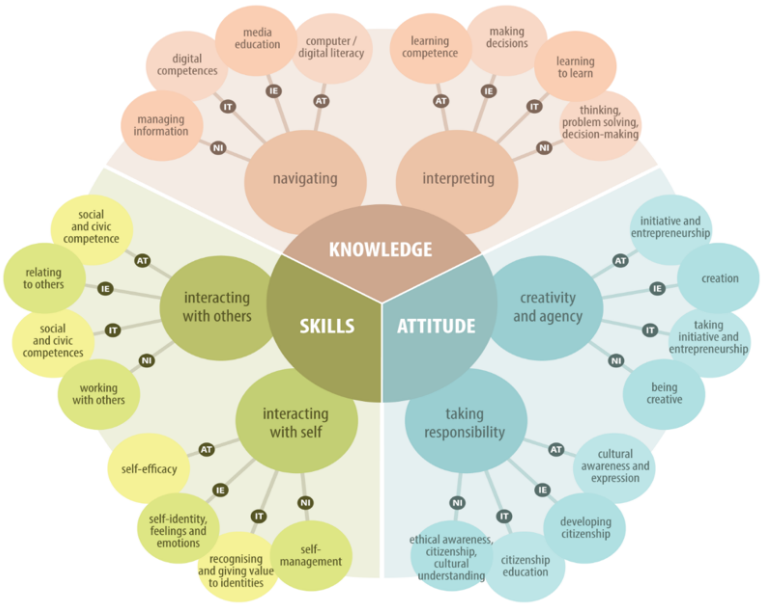
CYCLE 2



"Our students are generally used to working together on projects, but CEPNET allowed them to really do this in more detail. These interpersonal skills definitely developed." Teacher, IRE

A change in **attitudes** is agreed to by 85% of the teachers. They consider their students to be proactive and creative and that they take responsibility, such as cultural awareness and developing citizenship. Changes in **skills** like interacting with others and developing social and civic competences are also noted by many teachers. The highest increase compared to cycle 1 is in interacting with self - self-identity, self-efficacy, or self-management. In cycle 1, 38% of the teachers agree with an increase, in cycle 2 it is 75%. Similarly, in the competence area **knowledge**, 70% of the teachers in cycle 2 versus 50% of the teachers in cycle 1 estimate that the students' learning competence, decision-making competence and problem solving have increased. A slightly higher rate of increase, from 50% to 75%, is also seen in the area of navigating, which includes digital competences.

CEPNET COMPETENCE MODEL



INTELLECTUAL OUTPUTS

IO1 CEPNET HANDBOOK

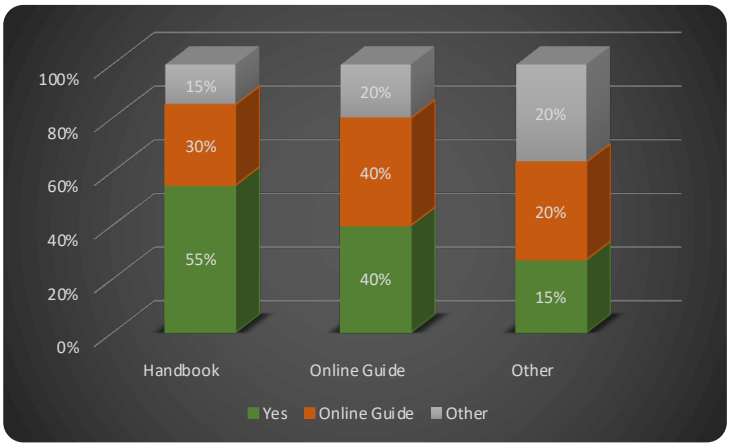
The CEPNET Handbook acts as a guide for teachers and other facilitators intending to use of CEPNET approach within their schools. The guidebook act as a resource whereby the approach can be delivered as a 12-week series of linked classroom-based sessions or otherwise where the guide can also be used to dip in and out of, as a "lucky bag" of materials, where as a teacher or facilitator, tips and resources can be used to fit within any specific classroom environment.

IO2 ONLINE DIALOGUE GUIDE

This Online Dialogue Guide is a practical tool to support teachers and educators in facilitating meaningful online exchanges between their students and peers. It aims to address the challenge of ensuring lasting, active, and collaborative online interaction and participation between students over time despite availability of many online tools. Further, it provides guidance on how to plan and facilitate online exchanges and use tools most effectively to achieve rich interaction and dialogue between children and young people online, especially within an international dimension.

USE OF IO1 AND IO2 IN THE CYCLES

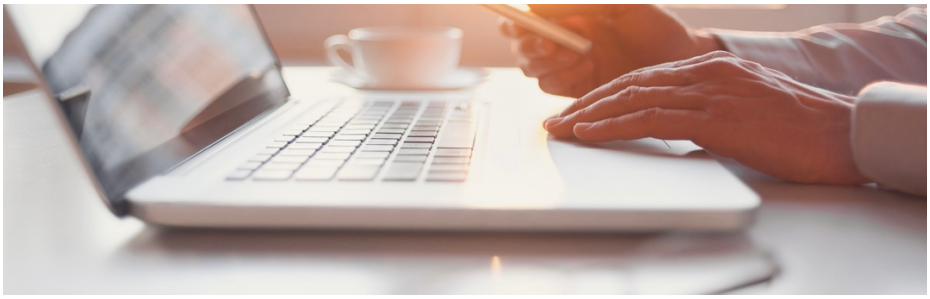
In Cycle 2 the Intellectual Outputs were used to a much higher than in Cycle 1, as they were no longer first drafts. In the end of the project at the schools already 55% of the teachers used IO1, the CEPNET Handbook, IO2, the Online Guide, was used by 40 % of the teachers. This lower rate of IO2 can be explained by the fact, that not all teachers and students took part in the online dialogues. Both Outputs were developed by the teachers and the research team in parallel to the two cycles, which speaks for the respectability of values.



IO3 &TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

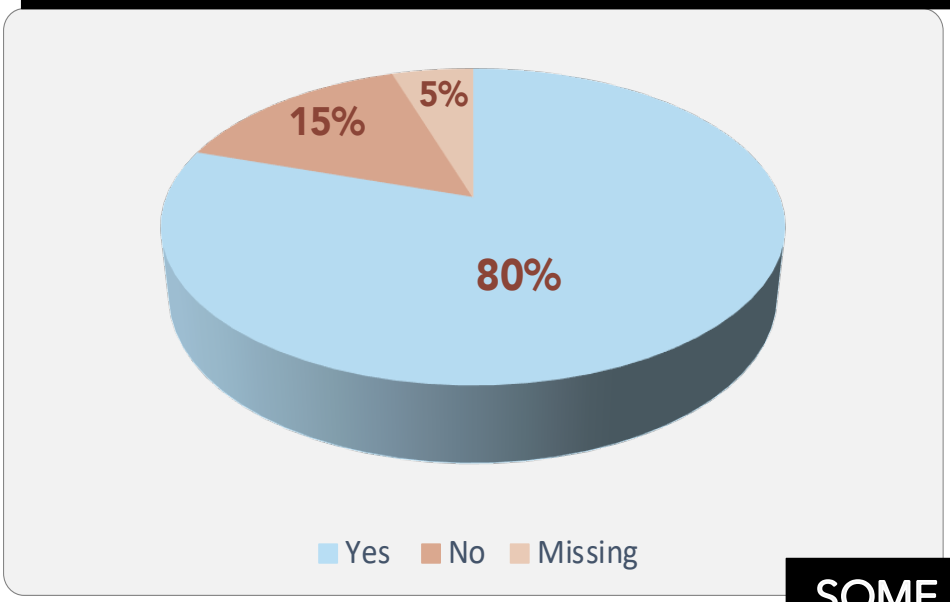
TEACHER TRAINING GUIDE (IO3)

The teachers involved in CEPNET were continuously guided by the research team to take over their roles as coaches in their student's projects. The research team was continuously guided by the teachers in the development of IO3 the Teacher Training Guide. In a formative evaluation process the teachers reflected their practical experiences in CEPNET and contributed their ideas on what a training guide should contain and how it should be structured. It was the wish of the teachers that it should be a flexible, modular online tool that allows independent access to all levels of CEPNET and offers both focused and detailed information. The latter also supported by a variety of different resources (links, videos, articles, student projects).



The Teacher Training Guide - Intellectual Output 3 - is an online tool available on cepnet.eu and allows teachers to familiarize themselves with the CEPNET model in a focused way. It was the wish of the teachers to have an online version of IO3 with a high degree of flexibility for individual use in school.

INTEGRATION OF CEPNET INTO REGULAR TEACHING



"CEPNET certainly ticked many boxes of curricular demands." Teacher IRE

"We will go on working on the competences". Teacher AT

"The project has been very useful to learn about the 2030 agenda goals and to raise awareness and empower the young students." Teacher IT

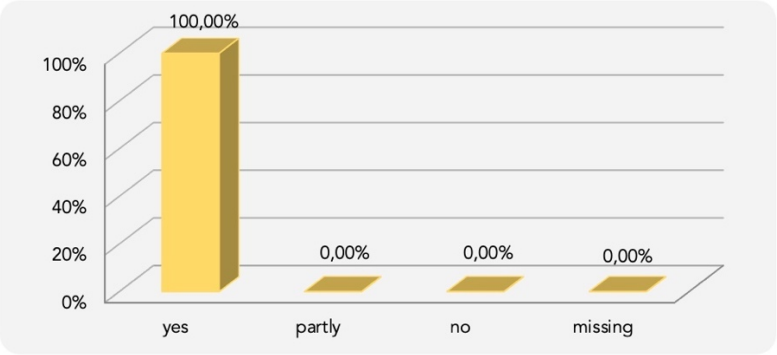
"CEPNET was a great opportunity to demonstrate many independent, self-motivation and social skills". Teacher NI

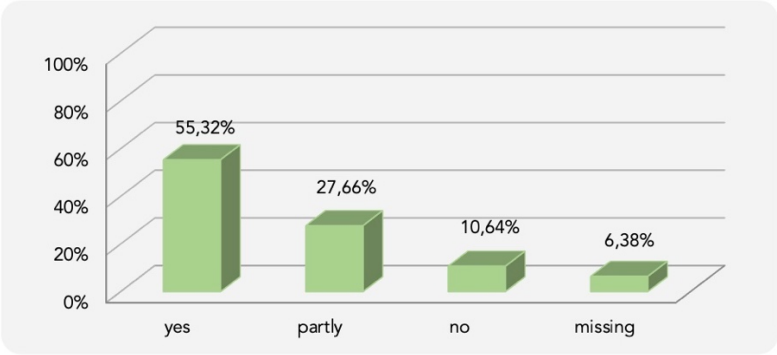
SOME REASONS FOR FURTHER USE

THE DIFFERENCES

There were differences between the countries, for example, when it is pointed out that in Cycle 2 100% of the Italian students liked the research phase, whereas this was the case to a much lower level in Austria. One might assume, that it was due to the fact, that there was just one class with 23 students participating in Italy whereas in Austria the number of students was 94. Still, this does not tell the whole story.

DID YOU LIKE DOING RESEARCH?





The students were asked the following questions in a closed (yes, partly, no) and open (do you want to tell us more) form:

- Did you feel included in the group?
- Did you have a say?
- Did you like the discussions in the class?
- Did you like doing research?
- Did you like the online dialogues?

THE ANSWER IS YES

C1 & C2	AT	IRE	IT	NI	Total
Inclusion	59%	92%	87%	84%	80%
Have a say	62%	88%	80%	73%	76%
Discussions	64%	67%	89%	79%	75%
Research	59%	68%	95%	59%	70%
Online Dialogues	50%	51%	87%	78%	67%
Total	59%	73%	87%	75%	

When listening to the students' voices evaluation tell us, that CEPNET worked very well in all four countries, however in terms of number it worked better in Ireland, Italy, and Northern Ireland. It is structural conditions telling us more about these differences. First of all, the school type needs to be considered – it makes a difference if we face a Private School in Italy or a Special Needs School in Austria. This relates to the composition of the student body in terms of diversity – differences in learning abilities are evident, the familiar background is another issue. Many parents in the Austrian school did not appear to have the same interest in their children's research unlike parents in the other countries were involved in CEPNET in supporting their children in their research when discussing issues at home or attending their final project presentations. Other structural conditions are more related to the CEPNET project itself. Meaning that in the second cycle there were differences in whether the model was basically secured in the school like in Ireland, Italy, and Northern Ireland or whether CEPNET had already been rolled out widely, as it was the case in Austria. This is also reflected by the degree of support given by the research team, which as estimated by the teachers in Cycle 2 ranged from zero % up to 75 %, with a mean rate of 62 %. A clear difference between the countries is evident. The teachers coming from Austria, due to Covid 19 restrictions in their school, requested the lowest rate of support. The other schools working to a higher or lower level on the structural integration of the model within their school had to different degrees a higher need for assistance.

IMPACT

RETHINKING SCHOOL

CEPNET offers the opportunity to rethink school - to put students first and to put their interests at the center. Students are empowered, increase their cognitive and emotional competences, and broaden their attitudes. This is not due to a year-long process, but due to a research phase of about 12 weeks. The children worked on the highly diverse UN SDGs, however, it could have been any other topic, such as a focus on child rights, entrepreneurship, citizenship, or digitalization. The topics are not in the foreground - the focus is on structurally securing the model to empower children in school. For the teachers, this project means taking a back seat and swapping their classic function of imparting knowledge in favor of a role as coach for the children. This requires confidence and trust in the children and has been successful in CEPNET, as the children loved to do their work and as shown by the high number of teachers who will integrate the approach into their regular teaching practice. In this way, CEPNET draws its circles outwards into the families, like the high appreciation of the students' research results shown by a parent: *"Amazing day when it was clear to see the hard work and efforts of both adults and children."* Moreover, CEPNET does not stop at school or at the family level, it reaches out to the communities and also to a governmental level.

THE MEANS OF TRANSPORT ARE READY TO BE USED

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