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CREAM: from PR2 to PR4

CREAM focuses on utilizing **Creative Writing Workshops (CWL)** to enhance students' interest in STEAM subjects. The project aims to develop an educational approach fostering creative thinking and innovation through STEAM disciplines, engaging students actively in the learning process. The project's objectives include expanding opportunities for STEAM-focused learning activities, acquiring scientific knowledge, and actively participating in the innovation process of local communities.

What are the main project's results?

The project is divided into several Project Results (PR1-PR5), with specific activities such as research on innovative STEAM teaching methodologies, co-designing the Creative Writing Workshop concept, testing and validating the model through pilots in four countries, collecting stories and testimonials from pilot experiences, defining a strategy for exploitation and sustainability, and drafting a set of recommendations for policy makers.

The specific objectives of the CREAM Project are as follows:

1. **PR1:** Conduct research on innovative STEAM teaching approaches using creative writing methodology in schools, resulting in the production of a "State of the Art analysis on STEAM creative teaching approaches and initiatives" document.
2. **PR2:** Collaboratively design the concept of Creative Writing Laboratories (CWLs) to develop the CREAM CWLs model.
3. **PR3:** Test and validate the CWLs model through pilot implementations in four countries (Italy, Slovenia, Greece, and Poland), involving various stakeholders such as schools, companies, social enterprises, NGOs, universities, and other education providers.
4. **PR4:** Implement storytelling activities at the end of each pilot to share lessons learned, create short video documentaries of pilot experiences, and highlight successful stories of scientists and innovative company founders. This aims to make participants scientifically aware and encourage consideration of scientific careers.

5. **PR5:** Develop a sound exploitation and sustainability strategy tailored to schools, providing a manual for replicating the CREAM experience and adopting, adapting, and tailoring the CWLs model. Produce a Policy Paper containing recommendations for policymakers based on the project's findings and experiences.

In summary, the CREAM project aims to **combine theoretical knowledge with practical instructions** derived from direct experience to promote the inclusion, interest, and participation of students in STEAM disciplines.

PR2 - Collaboratively design the concept of Creative Writing Laboratories (CWLs) to develop the CREAM CWLs model

Activities under PR2 so far have included **co-design workshops**, analysis of **gender issues** in student participation, development of a **model for Creative Writing Workshops**, **fine-tuning** and **validation of the model**.

In PR2 of the CREAM project, a Creative Writing Laboratory (CWL) model was introduced to boost students' interest in STEAM subjects through innovative teaching techniques. The phase involved workshops to acquaint stakeholders with the project, identify key players in the education system, and gather feedback to enhance the CWL model.

The workshops covered topics such as existing teaching methods in:

1. STEAM education;
2. Examples of the CWL model in practice;
3. Assessing its effectiveness;
4. Integrating technology;
5. Implementing it in the classroom;
6. Developing assessment tools;
7. Evaluating methods.

Following this exploratory phase, the project transitioned to the design stage, where the CWL model was developed collaboratively, addressing the specific needs and challenges of all users through a co-design approach. Drawing from the insights gained, the consortium will proceed to finalize the CWLs model. Recently has been created and uploaded on the official website of the project a pdf containing the development of the CREAM Creative Writing Laboratories model.

PR3 - Implementation of pilots of CREAM (Creative Writing Laboratories model)

These pilots will engage various stakeholders, including schools, companies, social enterprises, universities, and education providers.

Implementation Preparation for CWLs:

- Professors and students will require training on the CWL learning method before piloting.
- Staff training in facilitation skills is crucial prior to pilot implementation.
- Project partners will manage schools and STEAM centers nationally, organizing training sessions.
- Training for professors has been completed.
- Experiences and lessons from testing inform final CWL model development.

To effectively implement the project, several steps have been taken. Firstly, schools and stakeholders have coordinated to prepare for national pilot programs. Consortium schools as well as external institutions have been engaged to collaborate on the project and participate in presentations. The pilot programs have begun in the academic year 2022-23 and will continue into the subsequent year. Selected schools will host 8-hour online seminars for professors involved in CWLs to enhance their facilitation skills and teaching methods. The students and professors' overseen a training phase supervised by the team. The students were provided with individual study paths to improve their skills and learning abilities. The CWL model has undergone a six-months validation period, during which four schools implemented the pilot programs. All project partners will monitor the implementation process and invite external participants to contribute. Training materials have been developed and made accessible in multiple languages through project websites and e-learning platforms.

The concepts, ideas, and aspirations outlined in PR2 will undergo practical testing during the CWL course pilots scheduled from February to July 2024. Feedback will be gathered through various methods, including pilot outcomes and dedicated surveys. This extensive dataset will inform the extraction of lessons learned and best practices, refining and validating the current CWL Model into its final version, expected to be completed by August 2024.

Next Steps: PR4 - Storytelling of CREAM Creative Writing Laboratories

PR4 will implement **storytelling activities** at the end of each pilot to share lessons learned, create short **video documentaries** of **pilot** experiences to promote the project. At the moment, a document has been created containing guidelines for creative contributions that students will provide during CWLs pilots, in order to gather materials to create the short video-documentaries about the project.

Following the collection of material and video editing, the result will be published within the CREAM project website between August and September 2024.