



1st Newsletter, September 2021

## Enhancing Pupils' Social Skills and Enriching Teaching Methods through Storytelling and Virtual Reality

### About the Project

Story Changers is a European project (Erasmus+, Key Action 2) coordinated by M.M.C Management Center Ltd, Cyprus.

Launched in December 2020 and ending in March 2023, the project aims at enhancing primary school pupils' social skills through an innovative teaching method which seeks to build a bridge between storytelling and virtual reality.

### Target Groups and Objectives

**The project's direct beneficiaries are represented by both the pupils and their teachers. In terms of objectives, these are:**

#### PUPILS

- To enhance their social skills, such as empathy, critical thinking, problem solving, accepting diversity, self-consciousness, etc.
- To help them discover the power of storytelling and be inspired to use it in their every day life as well as in their future life (studies, professional career)
- To help them appreciate and acquaint themselves with new and innovative technologies, upgrading their digital/ICT skills

#### TEACHERS

- To help them upgrade their teaching skills through integrating the concept of storytelling into their teaching
- To help them appreciate and acquaint themselves with new and innovative teaching methods which combine storytelling and interactive VR scenarios, hence upgrading their digital/ICT skills
- To help them enhance skills such as creativity and flexibility and integrate them in their daily classroom practice
- To help them build on common experiences with their pupils, thus strengthening the professional, but also, above all, personal relationships with them. The "You Tell" stories concept gives teachers the opportunity to give the floor to their pupils, thus showing them that they respect and appreciate their intellectual and creative capacities
- To help them see beyond the given, structured and daily routine and experience a part of education that they may have never had the chance to experience

The background of the entire page is a stylized illustration. It features a child in the lower-left foreground, seen from the side, sitting and reading a book. The child is rendered in a light, sketchy style. Behind the child is a large, leafy tree with a thick trunk, also in a sketchy, illustrative style. The overall color palette is soft, with muted greens, yellows, and greys.

## Expected Results

- **Best Practices Report on Storytelling and VR Technology in Primary Education**
- **10 “You Tell” Stories and Relevant Guide**
- **5 “You Tell” Virtual Reality Scenarios and Relevant Guide**
- **“Change the Story” Teaching Package for Pupils**

## Current Phase

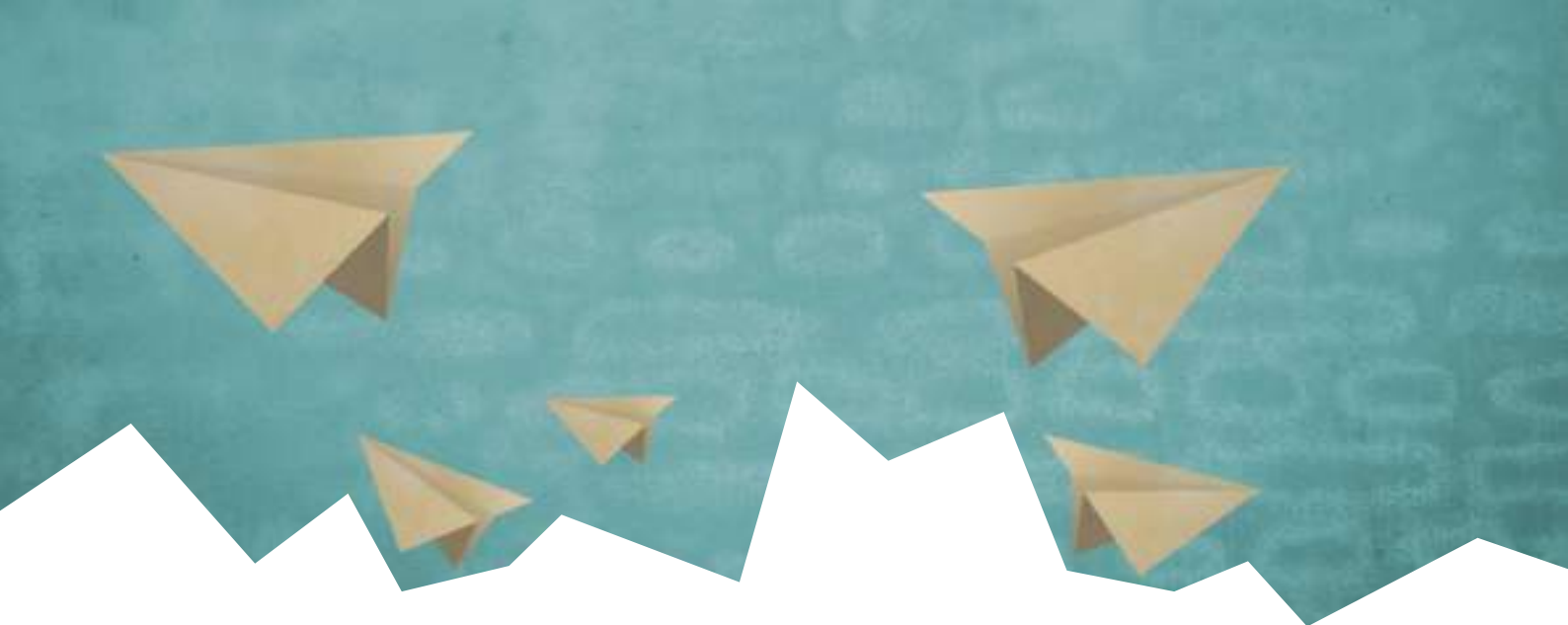
### Steering Committee Meetings

- **The Kick Off Meeting**

On 23 and 24 February, the consortium met on Zoom for the official kick off meeting. The first day of the meeting entailed the introduction of the partners’ organisations and the overall presentation of the project, its general objectives and expected outcomes, as well as a detailed description of its intellectual outputs and activities. Particular attention was then given to the first intellectual output (IO1), namely the “Best Practice Guide on Storytelling and Virtual Reality in Primary Education”, and the desk research phase which served as the first building-block for the development of the Guide itself. The second day of the meeting was dedicated to all the details of project management, quality assurance, and dissemination.

- **2nd Transnational Meeting**

The second transnational meeting took place on Zoom on August 30th and 31st. After a brief but substantial look at the results achieved so far (IO1), the first day was initially dedicated to an in-depth presentation of the next steps into the project, with particular attention being paid on the up-coming tasks related to the creation of the “You Tell” stories (IO2) and the strategy and guidelines to subsequently convert them into virtual reality scenarios (IO3).



## **Learning Activity**

The Learning Activity was coordinated by the members of the team of MYTHOS, Greece. It aimed at allowing the consortium to get familiar with the objectives, techniques and literature on storytelling by combined theory and practice. After a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of modern storytelling, in fact, the facilitators shared with the team two meaningful examples of stories for children, which focused on topics such as time, friendship and bullying among others. During the second part of the activity, the project partners engaged with the challenge of creating their own first story.

## **Project Results**

### **Best Practices Guide on Storytelling and Virtual Reality in Primary Education**

To achieve its first goals, Story Changers set out with a first phase of research which aimed at individuating meaningful examples of good and best practices in the three fields of interest of storytelling, virtual reality, and the combination of the two. More specifically, the consortium explored their various applications by focusing on their actual or potential impact in terms of enhanced teaching methods favouring the development of basic social skills. The consortium collected 25 examples of good and best practices which were developed and implemented by different entities – associations, research centers, schools, universities etc. – coming from all over the world (Australia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, US, Wales). These were included in the Best Practices Guide on Storytelling and VR/technology in primary education.

### **Guide on How to Create the “You Tell” Stories**

The Guide on How to Create the You Tell Stories was composed by MYTHOS and MMC and its purpose is to provide the Story Changers’ partners with guidelines on how to create stories for children in general and the “You Tell” stories in particular. It was used both as the basic training material at the Learning, Teaching and Training Activity (LTTA) and as a point of reference for partners in the process of creating of their “You Tell” stories after the LTTA. In addition, the guide is a sustainable output which can be used by any interested party also after the end of the project. In more detail, the guide contains information and advice on basic storytelling and story creating techniques and methods, as well as examples of stories that will help non-professional storytellers – such as teachers, trainers and pupils to familiarise themselves with the concept of story writing and narration and be enabled to eventually create the “You Tell” stories.

# Upcoming Activities

## Creation of the “You Tell” Stories and Relevant Guide

Partners will compose 10 “You Tell” stories: these will comprise several “decision points” which represent the moments at which pupils will decide what the hero of the story will do; depending on their decisions, the story will then be re-oriented accordingly. The stories should touch upon the following topics:

- Diversity
- Resilience
- Friendship
- Respect
- Limits

## Conversion of 5 “You Tell” Stories to VR Scenarios and Relevant Guide

Out of the ten stories which will be developed by all partners in the framework of IO2, five of them will be then converted into VR scenarios through the expertise of Omega Technology, Greece. A relevant guide with instructions on how to use the VR scenarios will also be developed by Omega.

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