



Every Journey Counts: SAFETeen's new tools are ready for the classroom

By Maria Papdakaki, Project Coordinator

After two years of research, design, and collaboration across four European countries, SAFETeen has reached a major milestone. The digital tools and pedagogical handbook developed to help teenagers navigate the road more safely are finalised and ready for piloting in schools. For young people who commute every day, often distracted, often unaware of the risks, this could not come soon enough.

Every day, millions of adolescents make their way to school on foot, by bike, by bus, or by scooter. They cross busy intersections, scroll through their phones at traffic lights, and make split-second decisions that they barely register as decisions at all. Road traffic injuries remain one of the leading causes of death among young people in Europe and yet risk perception and safe decision-making are rarely taught in the classroom with the rigour and relevance they deserve. SAFETeen was built to change that.

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The SAFETeen project, a European partnership spanning Greece, Italy, Finland, and Cyprus, has been developing a suite of tailored digital tools and a comprehensive pedagogical handbook specifically designed for secondary school students. The aim is not to lecture teenagers about danger, but to equip them with the cognitive and behavioural tools to perceive hazards accurately, weigh risks realistically, and make balanced decisions in the fast-moving, unpredictable environments they encounter every day on their commute.

After months of development, testing, and iteration, those tools are now ready.

The **digital tools** have completed advanced testing and interface refinement, and are designed to engage students in the way that works best for their generation, interactively, visually, and in ways that connect to their lived experience of urban and suburban mobility. The materials are differentiated to reflect the diverse social and geographic contexts in which students live and travel, recognising that a teenager commuting through central Athens faces different challenges from one cycling to school in rural Finland. This is **road safety education for the 21st century**: evidence-based, contextually sensitive, and built for the young people it is meant to serve.

The **pedagogical handbook**, developed in parallel, provides teachers with structured classroom activities, practical guidance, and a clear pedagogical framework grounded in adolescent development and road safety research. Together, these components represent a research-informed, classroom-ready resource that treats teenagers not as passive recipients of safety messages, but as developing agents whose judgement can be cultivated.

One of the most significant moments of this project period took place in the previous months in Nicosia, Cyprus, where twenty teachers from the four partner countries came together to engage with the SAFETeen materials first-hand, put the digital tools to the test, and share their professional insight. Their feedback was direct, substantive, and invaluable. Teachers raised questions about classroom application, highlighted moments where the materials could be sharpened, and identified features that resonated most strongly with their students' everyday realities. That feedback has been incorporated into the final versions of both the digital tools and the handbook.

In the coming months, SAFETeen enters what is perhaps its most important phase, which includes real-world pilot implementation in partner schools across Greece, Italy, Finland, and Cyprus. Students and teachers will use the tools and handbook in live classroom settings, generating data on usability, engagement, and effectiveness. Their experience will inform the final refinements before the official public release of the SAFETeen resources, which will be made freely available to schools across Europe.

The finish line is in sight. Months of collaboration, research, design, and shared commitment to teen safety are converging into a resource that has the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of young people across Europe and beyond.



SAFETeen teacher training in Cyprus sets the foundation for safer teen mobility

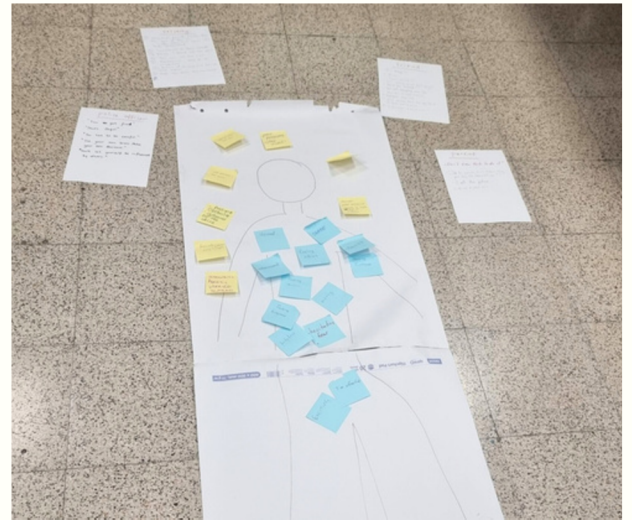
By Sissy Kroustalidou, RDPSEC Pedagogical Team & Dr Christiana Philippou Charidemou, Health Education Inspector

The SAFETeen project marked an important milestone on 17–18 September 2025, when teachers from four partner countries—Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Finland—gathered at Frederick University in Nicosia for a two-day teacher training event. The meeting brought together the educators who will soon pilot SAFETeen’s tools in their schools, creating a dynamic and collaborative environment focused on promoting safer commuting habits and responsible decision-making among adolescents.

The training was organized with the support of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Cyprus, through the Health Education and Citizenship Inspection Office, which coordinated the programme and provided logistical and academic support throughout the event.

During the sessions, participants were introduced to the overall philosophy, objectives and pedagogical approach of SAFETeen. Project partners presented the **full set of educational resources**, including the **lesson plans** designed for classroom use, the **VR simulations** that allow students to practice navigating real-life mobility scenarios, and the **emergency aid tool** that helps teenagers understand how to respond in unexpected situations during their daily commute.

The programme combined presentations with hands-on workshops and collaborative working sessions. Teachers had the opportunity to test the digital tools themselves, explore different classroom implementation strategies and discuss practical scenarios that may arise when working with students. Through these interactive activities, participants gained a deeper understanding of how the materials can be used to actively engage adolescents and encourage safer everyday behaviour.



In parallel, structured group work enabled partners to review and further refine several project outputs, including elements of the educational handbook, assessment tools, activity templates and methodological guidelines. Educators, researchers and specialists exchanged perspectives on classroom needs, **cultural differences across countries** and effective ways to support students’ awareness, well-being and empowerment. This exchange contributed to strengthening the scientific grounding of the materials while ensuring their relevance to real school environments. One of the most valuable aspects of the training was the open exchange of ideas among educators from the four participating countries. Teachers shared experiences from their local communities, reflected on the mobility challenges teenagers face and discussed how SAFETeen’s approach can support safer and more responsible choices. Their feedback also helped the project team fine-tune the educational content and tools ahead of the piloting phase.



By the end of the event, participants left with a clear vision of how SAFETeen will be implemented in their schools. The training in Cyprus not only strengthened cooperation among partners but also reinforced the shared commitment to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to move through their daily environments safely and confidently.

With SAFETeen, the partnership continues to take meaningful steps toward fostering a culture of safer, more responsible mobility for the next generation.



Piloting the Handbook: Empowering Teachers, Protecting Teens

By Brita Somerkoski, Senior Research Fellow UTU

Between the ages of 12 to 15, teenagers experience major cognitive, physical, and emotional changes. Their decision-making may be limited, emotions and social drive heightened, and peer influence strong—making young people vulnerable while commuting. For this reason, the SAFETeen project is producing a practical handbook for teaching youth road safety lessons. It is common that, among the adults close to a young person, teachers spend more time with lower secondary school students than any other adult. This is why teachers play such an important role in reinforcing positive road safety attitudes and behaviors. Although road safety issues are not particularly complex, teachers in general have had very few materials available that specifically address peer pressure in youth commuting, explains Senior Research Fellow Brita Somerkoski from the University of Turku, Finland.



The handbook sets goals for road safety education based on operational objectives, teaching approaches, educational resources and assessment tools. Its overall aim is to provide secondary education teachers with a **comprehensive tool to help students understand different aspects of safe commuting**, with emphasis on **peer pressure** and how to make **safe choices** even in the face of negative social influence.

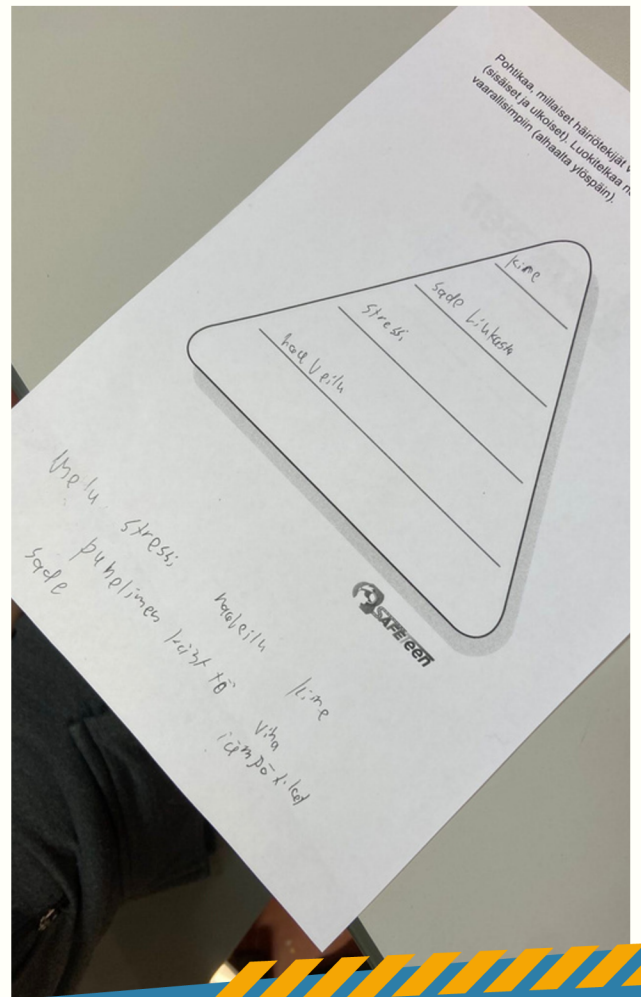
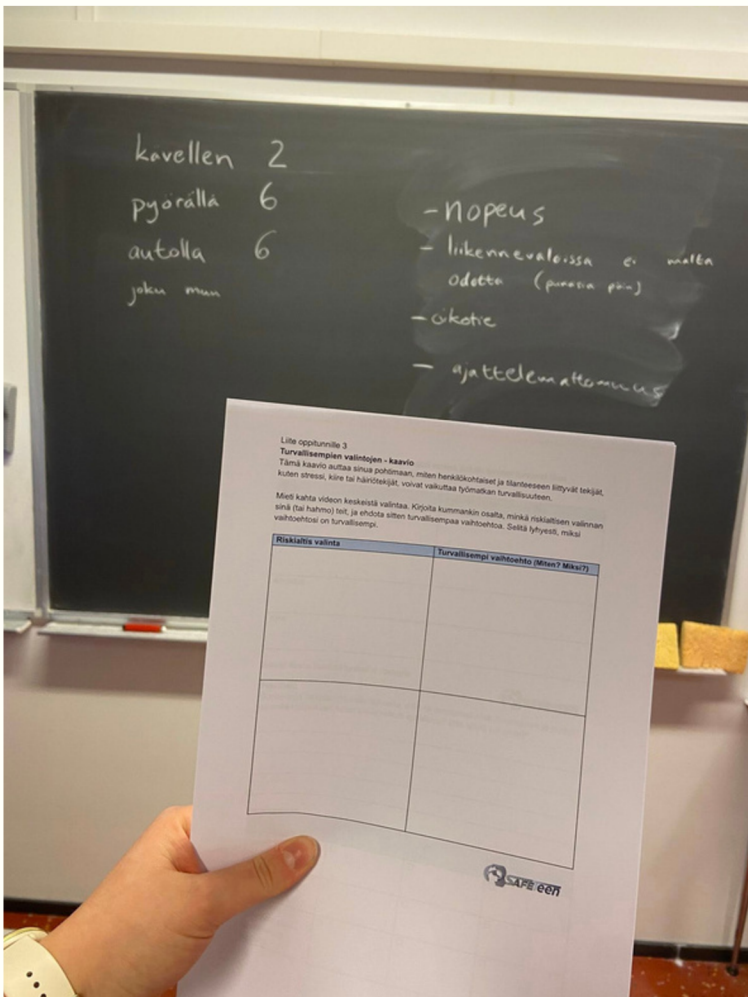
The handbook is research-based. SAFETeen **focus group** discussions revealed that, although traffic infrastructure and climate differ across European countries, similar problems dominate young behavi-



or. The handbook guides teachers in aligning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment mechanisms, while also encouraging creative use of alternative resources and localized learning environments. Producing such a comprehensive pedagogical handbook to this extent would not have been possible without the contribution of **teachers** from the partner countries, notes Brita Somerkoski.

At this stage of the project, the Pedagogical Handbook is in its pilot phase. This piloting phase tests the applicability and usability of the handbook and provides valuable insights into how methods and digital tools can support road safety education in real classroom settings. Teachers in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Finland are teaching students using Pedagogical Handbook lesson plans designed around four key factors: Educational, Personal and Situational, Social, and Exposure Factor. The lesson plans were built around these four factors, with learning environments designed to be actor-oriented, experiential, and practical. The digital tools developed within the SAFETeen project also guide students in evaluating their own skills and reshaping their attitudes in situations involving peer pressure.

The handbook enables teachers to train students in **real-time scenarios**, preparing them to critically assess risks and make safe commuting decisions. It also includes descriptions of local perspectives on youth road safety in each partner country, as well as the most common theoretical foundations related to road safety, peer pressure, and **decision-making**. The lessons in the handbook are designed to be integrated into the comprehensive school core curricula of all partner countries. Although the learning environments vary-from drama and group discussions to interviews and decision-making scenarios-the basic structure of each lesson remains the same: after a motivation and activation phase, new concepts and content are introduced, practiced through activities, and finally assessed. During and after the pilot phase, experiences and feedback are collected from the teachers applying the handbook. At the end of the project, a final version will be translated in partner languages and made freely available to everyone.

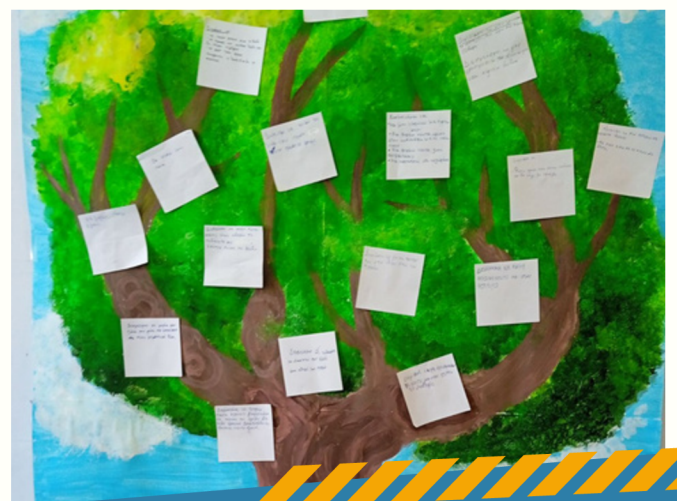
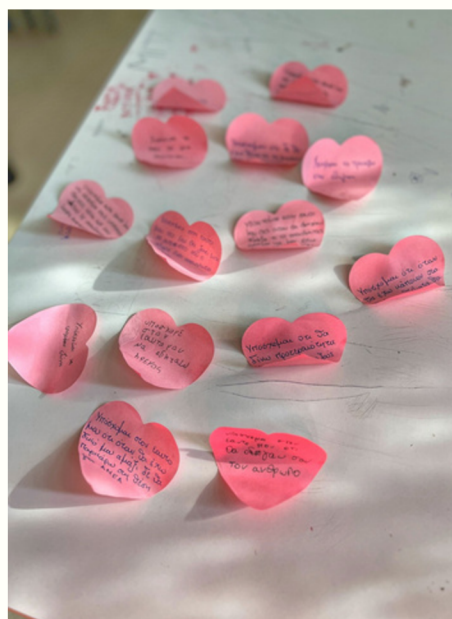


SAFETeen piloting phase

By Sissy Kroustalidou, RDPSEC Pedagogical Team

The SAFETeen piloting phase has started in January 2026 and will be completed by the end of May 2026, engaging more than 100 students in each partner country. During this period, students will work with the project’s structured lesson plans, which are based on SAFETeen’s four key risk factors. The **Educational Factor** addresses the limited road safety and micromobility training many adolescents receive, helping them understand traffic rules and safe habits. The **Personal and Situational Factor** focuses on how inexperience, distraction, fatigue, impulsivity and emotional stress can affect judgment during everyday commutes. The **Social Factor** explores influences such as peer pressure, group behaviour and family habits, while the **Exposure Factor** examines the impact of infrastructure, traffic conditions, visibility and weather on safety.

Several of the lesson plans will integrate the project’s VR tool and emergency aid tool, giving students the chance to practice decision-making in realistic scenarios and learn how to respond to unexpected situations. This integration will also allow the project team to collect meaningful data on the effectiveness and usability of these digital tools. Throughout the piloting, teachers and students will share their experiences and feedback, helping partners refine the SAFETeen materials and ensure that the final resources are practical, user-friendly and aligned with the real challenges young people face in their daily mobility.



Partner Presentation

University of Turku (UTU)

Get Inspired by Science

Founded in 1920 as a gift from the Finnish people, the University of Turku (UTU) is one of Finland's leading multidisciplinary universities. With eight faculties, approximately 22,000 students, and 3,400 staff members, UTU is a vibrant academic community committed to advancing education, research, and societal impact. Located in Southwest Finland, the university fosters creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration across disciplines, while maintaining strong international connections through research networks, exchange programs, and global partnerships

Rauma Campus – Teacher Education in Practice

Within the Faculty of Education, the Rauma campus offers a distinctive environment for teacher education. Situated in the historic coastal town of Rauma, the campus is known for its close-knit atmosphere, innovative teaching methods, and strong ties to local schools and communities. The Rauma Teacher Training School (Rauman normaalikoulu) operates on campus, serving as a model school where future teachers gain practical classroom experience integrated with pedagogical research. The campus also features unique learning spaces that reflect Finnish culture and educational innovation.



UNIVERSITY OF TURKU



A student-built Sauna symbolizes collaboration and creativity, while the Teaching Garden provides an outdoor classroom for environmental education, sustainability, and nature-based pedagogy. Together, these facilities support experiential learning and interdisciplinary projects. In addition, the campus collaborates closely with Rauman Pikkunorssi, an Early Childhood Education and Care Centre offering research-based education for 115 children, further strengthening the bridge between theory and practice. With its welcoming atmosphere, modern facilities, and strong community partnerships, the Rauma campus provides an inspiring and immersive experience for those passionate about education. Whether in Turku or Rauma, students benefit from international exchange opportunities, supportive learning environments, and a commitment to making a meaningful difference locally and globally.



Workshop on road safety education

The Laboratory of Health and Road Safety (LaHeRS) of the Department of Social Work at the Hellenic Mediterranean University, together with the European Association for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion (EuroSafe), co-organized the 12th European Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion (EU-SAFETY 2025), held from September 30 to October 2, 2025, in Heraklion. As part of the conference, a pre-conference workshop titled “Digital Tools for Teen Safety in Everyday and Emergency Mobility Situations” showcased innovative educational tools developed during SAFETeen project. Participants experienced live demonstrations of the Virtual Reality tool and the emergency aid mobile application, and took part in interactive activities.



SAFETEEN project presented during Erasmus Days 2025

The Regional Directorate of Education of Crete participated in Erasmus Days 2025 on October 17 at the Hellenic Mediterranean University, celebrating the impact of the Erasmus+ programme across Europe. Schools from Crete showcased their projects, sharing experiences through presentations, interactive sessions, and networking activities. The SAFETeen project was featured during the event, highlighting its contribution to promoting safety, inclusion, and well-being among young people. The celebration reflected the spirit of European cooperation, demonstrating how Erasmus+ initiatives connect communities and foster a more inclusive future.



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