



digitol

Generations united
combatting fake news

Handbook

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Foreword

The Handbook was developed as part of the activity planned by the “Digital Inclusion for Older People - Intergenerational synergies for the active participation in society” (DIGITOL) project - No 612208-EPP- 1-2019-1-IT-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN, funded by the European Union’s Erasmus+ Program.

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For further information go to:

https://ec.europa.eu/programs/erasmus-plus/about_en

The Report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission, General Directorate of Employment, social affairs and inclusion.

The Report has been written collectively by the project partners, under the coordination of: Antonio Dell’Atti (Consorzio Comunità Brianza).

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For more information on the project, please visit: www.digitol.eu

Introduction

DIGITOL is an Erasmus+ funded project carried out between January 2020 and January 2022, and aimed to combat hate speech, stigmatization, and any form of discrimination within the EU by increasing the digital skills and critical thinking of older adults exposed to fake news.

DIGITOL is coordinated by Consorzio Comunità Brianza and involves partners from Belgium (Age Platform Europe), Bulgaria (Znanie), Estonia (Tree Agency), Germany (Pro Arbeit) and Greece (50+ Hellas).

The purpose of the DIGITOL project is to contribute to the promotion of EU common values among older citizens at a European level, by employing innovative intergenerational educational practices and training opportunities to combat the effect and the spread of fake-news. More specifically, the project aims at combating forms of discrimination within the EU that are driven by xenophobia, populism, and homophobia, especially against migrants and refugees (but also against other discriminated groups, such as the LGBTI community), by increasing awareness among older adults for the role of fake-news in fostering malignant attitudes (Zidmars, 2016), that oppose the EU common values (i.e., tolerance, respect to diversity, dignity). This way, the DIGITOL project promotes social cohesion, solidarity, and active citizenship to older individuals, by increasing awareness about the European common values, and the role of misinformation through social media and digital means (and the spread of fake-news) in increasing radicalism, populism and discrimination.

The DIGITOL project addresses these objectives by involving older adults through an innovative, dual (i.e. online and offline), effective, evidence-based, intergenerational and non-formal educational method, in the context of a lifelong learning process, using co-creation in the development of the relevant tools, and by producing new knowledge. This project refers directly to this segment of the EU Population (i.e., older adults) that increase in number (due to the demographic change into an ageing population), and who increasingly use the Internet for communication, social integration and information retrieval. Since older adults in average lack digital literacy compared to younger adults (i.e., digital divide), DIGITOL capitalizes on the knowledge and skills of the younger generation in filtering out more effectively online information that constitute fake-news, transfusing this capacity to older adults. The present document has the ambition of summarizing two years of DIGITOL activities carried out by project partners and participants. It does so not only presenting a description of the implemented activities, but also highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, so that also other organizations can be inspired to work in effective way in the intersections between intergenerational and digitalization.





THE DIGITAL METHODOLOGY

DIGITOL has used a mixed methodology to achieve its goals. Being a project involving different actors for its implementation, DIGITOL implied the use of different approaches either for the selection of participants, for the co-design of training and capacity building activities and for its effective implementation.

A **solid link with territory** where the project is taking place has been a pre-requirement for its success. That is why the first months of the project were dedicated to a thorough needs and context analysis which has engaged several stakeholders in interviews, surveys and focus group activities. The research was beneficial to have a baseline analysis including data and figures on the participation of older people in society, their knowledge and direct use of digital tools and social media, their degree of information regarding the fake-news issue, the stereotypes that are more largely diffused because of misinformation. A synthesis of these findings is presented in Section 3 below.

Furthermore, DIGITOL has promoted knowledge transfer between younger and older adults, through an **intergenerational approach** aimed to close the gaps between these two groups and to find new ways to cooperate and interact with each other. In the project framework, young people are “intergenerational social mediators”, namely professional figures capable of activating empowerment programmes for senior men and women in an intergenerational and intersectional perspective, thus taking into account the gender, social capital and cultural differences of the individual.

Lifelong learning and active ageing are also mainstreamed in the project. Seniors attending the program are from 55 to 70 years old, with an average or high education, that are about to retire or already retired, and intellectually healthy. They belong to a category of people who can still play a prominent part in their society but who feel excluded either because they do not recognize the world where they live in, and they are not familiar with the new communication tools available. Most of them are people at risk of social exclusion, even though they would like to be fully included and to actively participate in their community. DIGITOL aimed to deal with this challenge through building digital capacities for seniors which from one side improve the communication with those around them and, from the other side, increase the quality of the information they receive and the capacity to distinguish what is correct information and what is not. **Digital literacy allows seniors to move from a situation of loneliness to one that gives them greater opportunities for independence and social integration.**

Co-creation is another concept which has been widely used during the project. Co-creation of training and capacity building programmes, of events, of pilot activities. The power of the encounter between generations lies

also in the diversity of approaches and experiences which can result in more creative and innovative outputs. Co-creation is considered a valuable participatory design where users become actively involved in the design of a product, capitalizing on the collective creativity of both developers and users, promoting this way innovation (Sanders and Stappers, 2008). Seniors' needs have been duly taken into account when designing, for example, the e-learning platform and the Digital Social Academy training modules. Seniors were involved since the preparatory phase in order to identify their needs and co-design the tools accordingly.

Ultimately, DIGITOL has aimed to help older adults become more proficient and aware Internet users thanks to an evidence-based and tested lifelong-learning method that makes the most of intergenerational learning and solidarity.

It has done through a rolling-out in three subsequent phases, which are shortly explained in the table below:

1. **Analyze & Assess (see reference to section 2)**
2. **Design & Empower (see reference to sections 3 and 4)**
3. **Engage & Involve (see reference to section 5)**

	PHASE 1: ANALYSE	PHASE 2: EMPOWER	PHASE 3: ENGAGE
1	 <p>Surveys sourcing knowledge on seniors' digital literacy and active citizenship in Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, and Italy.</p>	 <p>Develop the DIGITOL Digital Academy, a content-aware & multifunctional tool allowing users to access data, training materials and the other interactive educational tools.</p>	 <p>Engage with local communities to promote the importance of digital skills and the relevance of active engagement and participation for enhancing social cohesion of communities and cities.</p>
2	 <p>Interviews of experts providing qualitative insights on the current initiatives to combat fake news, develop digital literacy and critical thinking, as well as support older persons to engage online.</p>	 <p>Engage 10 young people (aged 18-30) in Bulgaria, Germany, Greece and Italy who will participate in the 30-hours train-the-trainers programme, focused on combating fake news and polarisation.</p>	 <p>Human Libraries – people who experienced prejudice, social exclusion or stigma, will share episodes of their life they wish to talk about. Participants-readers will listen and ask questions to challenge their own prejudices.</p>
3	 <p>Focus Groups with local stakeholders and seniors discussing the data collection findings.</p>	 <p>Engage 25 older adults (55+) to participate in the DIGITOL 60 h capacity building programme to gain theoretical and practical knowledge of the digital world and find solutions with young people to fight fake news.</p>	 <p>DIGITOL Festivals will blend together traditional and innovative actions, including public workshops on controversial topics run in partnership with schools and non-formal training providers.</p>



DIGITOL AND THE INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE



The design of the training programme **“Digital Social Academy”** took into account the key success factors that were identified in the initial research phase of the project carried out between January and June 2020. The research entailed the realization of interviews, focus groups and a survey carried out at national level (Italy, Greece, Germany and Bulgaria) and EU level. The country and overall reports resulting from the research include several recommendations taken into account by the DIGITOL partners **to create a learning environment that allows the participants to take ownership of their learning process in a proactive way.**

TRAINING CONTENT

The results from the Reports show that both experts and older people prioritized three categories:

- Using the Internet to increase the participation of older people: e.g. to help older adults become more proficient users of social media and communication apps, to ensure they have a say in online debates and consultations, to fight isolation, etc.
- Making the most of digitalised services: e.g. to ensure older people can manage their assets (digital banks), interact with their administration (pay online taxes or ask for social benefits), book medical appointments or receive digital prescriptions, etc.
- Growing knowledge for a safe and responsible digital participation: e.g. how to trust online information, how to respond to fake news, how to identify and avoid online scams, training on how to distinguish fake news from reliable information (“crap detection”), etc.

Moreover, older respondents identified the lack of adequate training offers and of initiatives targeted to older persons. They also reported a lack of motivation/time to engage with the digital world and found training too expensive, something which is further explained in the country reports.

MISINFORMATION

The results from the Reports also underline that “even though a plethora of initiatives for digital and media literacy exist, the ones addressing disinformation often focus on the younger generations“. The analysis of those initiatives showed several openings for transferability to older age groups, e.g. by using interactive methods to empower older people to become change makers in their community, or by indirectly training professionals and relatives in contact with older people. Some of the initiatives identified by DIGITOL already explore those approaches:

- initiatives run by older people, or older people’s associations;
- the provision of resources to equip professionals with the tools and materials to engage older people;
- Intergenerational initiatives that rely on the exchange of knowledge between the young and the old

INSIGHT FROM EXISTING INITIATIVES TO OLDER ADULTS

The DIGITOL data from the overall country report provides some pointers to make existing initiatives accessible to older adults and further develop media literacy training to all age groups. Building on the successes of the few existing initiatives of training including older people as well as other training offers intended to younger age groups, the consultation of experts and older people allowed the compilation of a series of important factors for designing a successful intergenerational media literacy training:

- quality and adequacy of the training programme with the practical needs of trainees,
- accessibility in terms of complexity of the content (e.g. simple vocabulary), of format of the training (e.g. short sessions), or in terms of availability of the training material
- appealing and tailored communication to reach out to the target trainees,
- excellent social skills of the trainers especially in interpersonal relationships, indeed, participation and interaction between trainers and trainees should be built on the principle of mutual respect and collaboration with facilitator;
- participatory and collaborative atmosphere ensuring mutual respect and ownership by participants from all age groups (especially for intergenerational programmes). Thinking ‘outside the box’, developing new ways of thinking and helping get around stereotypes. The method is easily applied by any trainer using any type of art (fine arts, films, theater, literature, music).

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

The intergenerational dimension of the training programme is the most crucial factor of success to ensure that both younger and older people are equally represented and listened to. Thus it is important to ensure that the learning environment is to be conducive to compromise. Additionally, both groups’ ownership and participation in all phases of the project are crucial to slowly grow a mutual understanding between age groups while an approach through an emotional and tangible lens ensures that all participants can embed their digital learning into their individual daily life contexts.

The research results underline that the DIGITOL project fills a gap that is evident from the existing initiatives as well as from the preferences of older adults. By focusing on the development of media literacy training, the DIGITOL project contributes to provide a much needed opportunity for both older adults and younger people alike to enhance their data and media literacy knowledge.

BECOMING YOUNG AMBASSADORS (CCB)



3.1

The generative process leading to the ToT

Faced with the Covid19 pandemic which heavily impacted the project, and without possibilities for physical meetings, Digital's consortium partners agreed to embark in a full online work for building and running a Training of Trainers (ToT)' with young people with project's partners

Therefore two Co-design workshops were organized in June 2020 with the objectives to build a common understanding of the ToT, its duration and format and build the main thematic blocks of the ToT. Key tools used during the workshop were video-conferencing tool Zoom and Storyboards, a collaborative online tool for brainstorming.

The Co-design workshops were designed in the following blocks:

#1

What do we want?

This bloc aims to identify the vision and the milestones the Digital project wants to achieve at two levels: firstly, at the meta-level, that is, what are the main objectives and expected results that the project wants to achieve with the delivery of the first ToT.

#3

How do we do it? [Part 1]

The bloc also looks specifically at the e-learning platform (the Academy) and what features are needed to make the ToT a successful experience.

#2

With whom? Relationships?

This bloc aims to develop a profile of participants for the first ToT. Further, the bloc also works to develop a profile (and some criteria) for Senior Trainers which serve as educational focal points per each country. Last but not least, it also brainstorms what are possible relationships between these three groups.

#4

How do we do it? [Part 2]

This bloc focuses on identification and development of the core educational elements of the ToT. It identifies the educational methodologies to be used both, during the face-to-face ToT as well as e-learning phase. Lastly, this bloc aims to identify the specific themes that should be tackled during the first ToT.

Co-design workshop's main outcomes were two:

- Academy's Educational Pamphlet (AEP);
- ToT's educational programme

ACADEMY'S EDUCATIONAL PAMPHLET

AEP is a guiding document for the partners of the DIGITOL Project on the one hand, and most importantly the Senior Trainers involved in designing and delivering the Training of Trainers (ToT).

This pamphlet is a result of collaborative work and consensus-based decision making, and its objectives are to help set the boundaries, vision, objectives, and the main elements of the first ToT for the Senior Trainers. It goes without saying that the pamphlet does not aim to influence nor impact that content and curriculum of the ToT that will be developed in dedicated meetings between the Senior Trainers, but rather identify the educational journey and objectives we want to achieve.

TOT'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Initially, ToT programme has been planned to be held residentially in four countries: Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, and Germany. It is for this reason that the ToT has been designed for residential environments. The draft of the programme presented here is the general framework which then was adopted for online environments and to respond to country-specific contexts.

The ToT's programme, presented below, was an attempt to provide an initial orientation for each country partner. The programme here was adopted for each country partner. The more specific programmes of each country partner will be presented in the next section "Digitol's ToT".

DAY ONE	
Time	Activity
9.30 - 11	Bloc #1: Build the group - Getting to know each other; - Group building activities; - Mapping expectations, fears and contributions.
11 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13	Bloc #2: Familiarize with the ToT and the project - Intro to programme of the ToT and other elements (e.g. objectives, expected results, core competencies, etc.) - Intro to the DIGITOL project (e.g. explain Capacity Building programme, international meeting in January, what is expected from young ambassadors, etc .)
13 - 14	Lunch
14 - 15.30	Bloc #3: Expose the group to each other (Part 1) - Various discussion formats on topics related to the ToT: media and misinformation; racism and discrimination; hate speech; human rights; media literacy; etc.. - Some discussion formats include: world cafe; fishbowl; agree vs. disagree statement exercise; etc..
15.30 - 16	Break
16 - 17.30	Bloc #4: Expose the group to each other (Part 2) - Various discussion formats on topics related to the ToT: media and misinformation; racism and discrimination; hate speech; human rights; media literacy; etc.. - Some discussion formats include: world cafe; fishbowl; agree vs. disagree statement exercise; etc..
Evening	

DAY TWO

Time	Activity
9.30 - 11	<p>Bloc #1: Human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights essentials: definitions, standards, instruments, values and characteristics - Human rights in context of media, freedom of speech, and hate speech
11 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13	<p>Bloc #2: Media & media literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essentials of media literacy: glossary/jargon; different types of misinformation; etc.
13 - 14	Lunch
14 - 15.30	<p>Bloc #3: Misinformation, malinformation and disinformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An entire bloc tackling all forms of fake news, propaganda and misinformation; - Foundation of information flow; - Practical training/workshop on fake news investigation and verification.
15.30 - 16	Break
16 - 17.30	<p>Bloc #4: Hate Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hate speech essentials: what it is? what forms? connections with stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and hate crime (snowball effect); etc. - How to assess hate speech cases? - What are some of the responses to hate speech?
Evening	

DAY THREE	
Time	Activity
9.30 - 11	Bloc #1: Intergenerational work (Part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to work with 50+ older adults (best practices, questions..); - Recognize stereotypes regarding elderly as well as challenges; - Different approaches to different age groups: 55 - 65, 65 - 75, 75+; - Age-Discrimination as a basic example to work with older adults on fighting stereotypes.
11 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13	Bloc #2: Intergenerational work (Part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intergenerational dialogue, communications about media use; - Good practices on the subject of adult education (over 55), information on training needs, methodologies, etc.; - Needs of older adults.
13 - 14	Lunch
14 - 15.30	Bloc #3: Practical work on adult education (Part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role play/simulation game (Young vs. Older adult); - Practical tools (eg on debunking) and how to do it with older adults; - Starting from a selection of good practices on the subject of adult education (over 55) and analysing them.
15.30 - 16	Break
16 - 17.30	Bloc #4: Practical work on adult education (Part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical parallel workshops (open dynamic space): - different approaches engaging with older adults - older adults, fake news and media - etc.
Evening	

DAY FOUR	
Time	Activity
9.30 - 11	Bloc #1: Training and facilitation skills (Part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See post-its ideas in the stormboard: https://stormboard.com/storm/1225552/ToT_Programme
11 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13	Bloc #2: Training and facilitation skills (Part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See post-its ideas in the stormboard: https://stormboard.com/storm/1225552/ToT_Programme
13 - 14	Lunch
14 - 15.30	Bloc #3: Training and facilitation skills (Part 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See post-its ideas in the stormboard: https://stormboard.com/storm/1225552/ToT_Programme
15.30 - 16	Break
16 - 17.30	Bloc #4: Training and facilitation skills (Part 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See post-its ideas in the stormboard: https://stormboard.com/storm/1225552/ToT_Programme
Evening	

DAY FIVE	
Time	Activity
9.30 - 11	Bloc #1: Action Plans - Young Ambassadors start to work in their action plans for the Capacity Building programme (i.e. how to engage with older adults?); - Human rights checklist (make sure our practices are coherent with hr values)
11 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13	Bloc #2: Presentation of actions plans - Young ambassadors finalize and present action plans; - They receive feedback from education team and from each other.
13 - 14	Lunch
14 - 15.30	Bloc #3: Capacity Building programme (Part 1) - In-depth presentation of the Capacity Building programme; - Definition of Timeline for Capacity Building programme; - Young Ambassadors should have very clear understanding of the Capacity Building programme. - Q&A Bloc #3: Next steps, timeline, and internal comms (Part 2) - Present channels of internal comms: whatsapp group, loomio, digital academy, etc.; - Define what are the next steps, division of roles and tasks; - Define clear point of contact: if Young Ambassadors require support or help whom should they contact?; etc.
15.30 - 16	Break
16 - 17.30	Bloc #4: Evaluation and Closing - Run evaluation exercise and maybe evaluation form online; - Review Fears, expectations from Day 1; - Close with a nice exercise the keep the group together; - Hugs and group photo - cheeseeee!
Evening	Farewall party :)

3.2

Main content of the ToT in the different countries

ToT in Italy

The ToT in Italy was carried out between December 2020 and April 2021, and it included five Modules, each of them followed by five Online Meet-ups. The ToT has concluded with two half-days of training workshops. The programme of the ToT, adopted for the online learning environment, has been delivered in monthly cadence.

Module 1:

Getting to know each other

This module aimed at building group cohesion and familiarising Young Ambassadors (YA) with the Digital project as well as with the team of trainers. Further, the module provided a space for YA to set the learning objectives and expectations.

Module 2:

Human Rights

The module on human rights enabled YA to learn key characteristics of human rights and links between human rights, freedom of expression, and hate speech. Using non-formal education activities, the module introduced human rights from YA's perspectives. Lastly, it enabled YA to create a shared collection of multimedia tools for human rights.

Module 3:

Hate speech

Building from the previous module – particularly on the relationship between freedom of expression, hate speech and human rights – this module looked more in-depth at the root-causes of hate speech online and built the competencies of YA on identifying, analysing and assessing various cases of hate speech. The module also encouraged critical thinking about strategies to combat hate speech online and offline.

Module 4:

Media literacy, disinformation and fake news

This module looked upon two interconnected themes, that is, the media information literacy (MIL) and media disinformation and fake news. The module immersed YA in practical work where they produced a number of materials on MIL and how they can be used with older adults. It continued with reflecting upon the role of media disinformation and fake news vis-à-vis hate speech and democracy. Various case studies have been analyzed: from Pizzagate conspiracy theory to Cambridge Analytics.

Module 5:

Human Rights Education and intergenerational work

This module aimed at building practical skills of YA in human rights and non-formal education, that is: designing educational activities; delivering educational activities; facilitation techniques; etc.—in the context of intergenerational work. This module prepared YA for carrying on the work of Capacity Building programme with older adults. Ultimately, the module enabled YA to share and discuss stereotypes that exist regarding older adults (55+) as well as challenges working with them.

Training block

The two-day training block was the concluding workshop of the ToT journey with YA in Italy. In this training bloc the main objective was twofold: to provide methodological and digital knowledge and skills for the implementation of interactive training interventions in a digital environment for a target group over 55 years old; and, to create a participatory space for YA to develop Capacity Building programme with older adults (i.e. define main elements of the Capacity Building programme such as: modules, meet-ups, timeline, teams; etc.). Given that this was the concluding workshop, the training bloc also served to clarify the next steps of the Digital project and organize an official closure and evaluation of the ToT.

ToT in Bulgaria

The ToT programme in Bulgaria is organized in 5 modules and it was originally planned to take place in Sofia, as a residential five-days training. However, the Covid19 situation denied its organization and the whole programme was transferred into online training.

Module 1:

Fake news

The module enabled YA to explore the topic of fake news, that is, the whole cycle of production, distribution, amplification and impact. YA had the chance also to learn various methods/tools of fact-checking, as well as learn basic principles of recognizing the fake news and messages, and other possible instruments for manipulation

Module 2:

Information/Disinformation/PR campaigns

This module aimed at providing to YA an entire landscape of the ‘information sphere’: from defining what information is to disinformation and its links with PR campaigns vs. political campaigns to dark ads. This included numerous case studies analysing various aspects of the campaigns and its consequences. The module touched upon other elements/topics such as the role of trolls in online media, net etiquette, etc..

Module 3:

Human rights and hate speech

This module introduced human rights and reflected upon various violations of human rights and what are the responsibilities towards them. It also looked at human rights from the perspective of media and hate speech, drawing a connection between the three topics and identifying the nodding points. The module also provided some best practices to YA in terms of combating hate speech through human rights education such as the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement.

Module 4:

Adult learning

This module introduced the topic of adult learning by defining: the principles of ; differences between adults and children as learners, theoretical background and practical advice for designing a training session for adult learners, possible challenges and common stereotypes. The module was concluded with a practical exercise where YA had to choose a topic and prepare a training session for the upcoming Module "Showcasing". The purpose of this exercise was to provide experiential learning to YA that will serve to them as a practice before the Capacity Building programme that they had to carry on after the ToT with older adults.

Module 5:

Showcasing by Young Ambassadors

The module's objective was to provide hands-on experience to YA to design and deliver a training session, exercising thus training and facilitation skills. YA were split into three small groups and each of them had to prepare a training session on a specific topic and deliver it live during the online meet up. This exercise helped them familiarize themselves with non-formal education methodologies and facilitation skills.

ToT in Greece

The ToT in Greece was a long journey that started in December 2020 and concluded in April 2021, involving ten YAs. Through participatory and interactive approaches, with the guidance of their four senior trainers, the ToT covered the issues of fake news and misinformation highlighting the issues of media literacy and hate speech, human rights and stereotypes in general and how they affect us, but also stereotypes related to ageism. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the Greek government, it was impossible to have residential ToT; therefore the complete ToT was held online.

Module 1:

Getting to know each other

The YA were introduced to the Digital project and they got to know each other. The module provided a space for YA to express their expectations and thoughts about the ways they could contribute to the ToT and the project in general.

Module 2:

Misinformation, Fake News, Safe Internet use, Media and Hate Speech

The Module introduced the concept of fake news, that is: what are the elements that characterize them and why they are so effective, the way fake news affects the receiver's emotions and feelings and what the difference is between intentional and unintentional fake news. It also looked at the role of media and hate speech, touching upon the debate of 'hate speech vs. freedom of expression'. Ultimately, the module reflected upon safe use of the internet and good practices of it.

Module 3:

Speaking about human rights: analysing bias and stereotypes through the way news or information is presented

The aim of this module was to approach the topic of human rights by immersing YA into their own biases and stereotypes, and reflect on them critically afterwards. Further, the module aimed at fostering understanding of YA how stereotypes affect the way we treat others and the impact they have on the community.

Module 4:

Intergenerational activities

This module aimed at developing empathy among YA for older adults. Through non-formal participatory education, YA reflected how the way we interact with the environment may change while we get older, because of changes they happen in our body.

Module 5:

Stereotypes and ageism

The module aimed at exploring the following questions: encourage YA to learn more about who the 55+ people are? How do they learn and what is their relation to technology and information? What is ageism and the negative effects it has on all of us? This module also provided hands-on experience for YA on research processes (data collection), short interviews, analysis and synthesis of data, presentation- leading, team work. Further, it helped YA to develop other competencies such as how to be flexible and adapt to learners' needs, to respect diversity, to be open-minded and take risks.

Module 6:

Educational tools

This module introduced numerous educational tools from the field of Geragogy and Adult Education, in order to be used during the Capacity Building programme. The module provided also an experiential learning for YA on facilitation skills with older adults. Lastly, Digital Academy was introduced and practiced as an e-learning environment for Capacity Building programme.

Module 7:

Co-design of Capacity Building programme

The main goal of this module was to create a safe space for YA to discuss, brainstorm and share ideas on actions during the Capacity Building programme. IN a participatory way, YA drafted and agreed on a training plan for the Capacity Building programme, including timeline and responsibilities.

ToT in Germany

The ToT Programme in Germany took place between December 2020 and April 2021. It was initially planned to hold two weeks of face-to-face training in December. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 related restrictions, the training was delivered using online platforms and the Digital Academy.

These sessions took place in two phases that were characterized in the following way:

The first phase of the ToT was held in the second week in December 2020 focused on training the YA with knowledge and skills related to media literacy with an emphasis on recognizing and dealing with fake news and hate speech.

The second phase of the ToT Programme took place in the time period from January to April. Its focus was on training YA with transferable skills on the design of training programmes as well as on facilitation and moderation skills through a combination of theoretical input and learning by doing components.

Module 1:

Getting to know each other

This module aimed at providing a space for YA to get to know each other, build group cohesion and map out expectations and fears for the ToT. YA were also introduced to the ToT programme, the content and the methods of the training.

Module 2:

Media literacy, fake news, hate speech, fake news and conspiracy myths

The module developed the critical thinking and competencies of YA related to media literacy and disinformation-related topics. The topic of hate speech was tackled during this module and was looked at in its relationship with media disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories.

Module 3:

Intergenerational work: YA meet with older adults

This module enabled YA and older adults to meet in safe space and discuss among each other various themes, using non-formal education methodologies. They shared with each other opinions on numerous topics: from media, fake news to hate speech; looked also at what are their own biases and stereotypes and reflected upon them.

Module 4:

Developing Capacity Building programme and considerations for designing activities for older adults

The objective of this module is to open the discussion about development of Capacity Building programme and map out some activities with older adults. Using brainstorming techniques, YA identified some key activities and methodologies that they will test in the 'mock-up session' with older adults. that they had to carry on after the ToT with older adults.

Module 5:

Development of intergenerational training with older adults & introduction of the Digitol Academy

This module enabled YA to develop the Capacity Building programme with older adults, as well as think of ways to use the Digitol Academy as an e-learning platform.

Module 6:

Intergenerational training methods and programme development

This module was a continuation of the development of the Capacity Building programme, but focusing more on training methods, activities, and educational methodologies that are more suitable with older adults.

Module 7:

Moderation, facilitation, training skills, and methods of evaluating learning progress

This module aimed at building skills of YA in moderation, facilitation and training with older adults. The module provided a space for YA to design and deliver 'mock-up sessions' with older adults and receive feedback. The module also looked at various methods of evaluating learning progress.

Module 8:

Finalisation of the Capacity Building programme

This module served to fine-tune and finalise the Capacity Building programme where YA defined the following elements: the training programme, educational methodologies and activities, timeline, the e-learning tasks, and responsibilities for each session.

Module 9:

Additional training on media disinformation and the role of artificial intelligence in discrimination

This module was delivered as a 'bonus module' to provide further training to YA on media disinformation, but approaching to it from the new emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and its role in discrimination and hate speech dissemination.

3.3 Reflections

Some of the key insights that emerged from the training implementation are the following:

- The recruitment of Young Ambassadors has also been very diverse from country to country, enriching thus the experience of the project.
- As the situation with Covid19 was uncertain, partners have also worked in building the Digitol's online Academy which has been the key hub in transforming residential ToTs into online environments. This element has been thought of since the very beginning during the co-design workshop.
- The collaboration between educational teams of each country has been key, particularly in sharing resources, activities, experiences and ideas. This has helped in keeping the international nature of the project and its cooperative spirit.
- Ultimately, in order to ensure a dynamic, interactive, participatory and all-inclusive learning environment, it was important to combine online e-learning spaces such as the Digitol Online Academy with live learning sessions through video-conferencing platforms. This has helped in ensuring long-term engagement of young ambassadors.

Finally, it is worth mentioning two testimonies from persons that have been truly involved in the realization of the Training of Trainers.

First one is Iustin Racu, trainer of Znanie who answering to the question if there was something that he wanted to share from the training phase, he replied:

“Motivation first of all. Young Ambassadors came for themselves and when they saw that they can express, share and protect their grandparents they were totally amazed with this. They have great enthusiasm, and we see how in each meeting they are asking more and more questions. There were some topics which my colleagues and I showed to them, we discussed in detail and they were like “Damn, I thought this was true! I thought this was real!”. At that moment they realized how much fake news is around us and how much news is coming from TV, social media, on the street and even young people with more digital knowledge, are misled by not-so-obvious fake news from time to time.”

Then, we report a statement from one 19-year old Greek Young Ambassador, Katerina Plagou, who commented her participation to the ToT in this enthusiastic way:

“I heard about the program from one of the five trainers. I liked the subject, it seemed very interesting and I liked the fact that it would be interactive. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the meetings aren't held face-to-face, but they are still interesting! In every meeting we are all eager to learn something new, something creative! I am glad that I was given the opportunity to deal with the issue of fake news, to meet and collaborate so well with other young people, but most of all to help people aged 55+ be able to discern if news / information are true or not, something very important nowadays.”



**THE YOUNG
AMBASSADORS
MEET
THE SENIORS**

4.1

Engaging the seniors

The Digitol project aimed to empower older adults (over 55 years old) by supporting their digital inclusion, and encouraging the growth of their skills and knowledge on the digital issue. As the Digitol partners strongly believed that promotion of digital literacy should go beyond the acquisition of basic ICT skills and must include strengthening media literacy, critical thinking and the ability to recognize reliable online information, the project was mostly addressed to older adults with basic competences of how to use the internet and social media.

An open call was made from the Digitol partners via newsletters, emails and social media ads, in order to attract at least 25 participants in each country who wished to increase their digital and media skills and to deepen their knowledge on issues such as the importance of access to reliable and correct information, combatting stereotypes and hate speech, promoting human rights and acceptance of diversity and many others.

In particular, partners were searching for adults over 55 years old who were willing to work with younger people in intercultural and intergenerational environments, to share their views with them and engage in debates

on issues considered most important for social cohesion.

They were asked to fully participate in the Capacity Building Program (60 hours: June – August 2021) given by motivated and skillful ‘young ambassadors’ followed by the design and implementation of Pilot Actions, addressing concepts such as the importance of digital skills and the relevance of active engagement and participation for enhancing social cohesion of communities and cities (September 2021 – January 2022). The ability to work in English was considered an advantage but was not required.

In order to apply, candidates were asked to complete the online application form -that was common for all partners and available in four different languages- where they briefly explained their motivation and interest in the program. Alternatively, they could register by getting in contact with the local project staff by phone or by email. Pre-selected candidates were interviewed via a conference call. Finally, selected candidates received confirmation by e-mail or in some cases, by telephone.

Participation in the training was free of charge as well as in the project activities following the capacity building program.

4.2. Main content of the CBP in the different countries

ITALY

The Capacity Building Programme in Italy was made of ten Modules; each of them included an on-site (or online) training session and online tasks on the project's Academy.

The training sessions were held in a blended format: there were some adults over 55 attending live and some other adults participating online via Zoom.

The last 2-day session of the Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme at the end of April 2021 was dedicated to the Capacity Building Programme.

The aims of the last session were:

- To provide methodological and digital knowledge and skills for the implementation of interactive training interventions in a digital environment for a target group over 55 years old.
- To define the main elements of the programme: modules, meet-ups, timeline, responsibilities, etc.

CCB also organized a follow-up meeting with the Young Ambassadors after the end of the ToT Programme for fine-tuning the Capacity Building programme and set a detailed calendar of dates and times.

ToT Senior Trainers guided the co-design process using as educational methodologies: Brainstorming, Cooperative learning, Participatory learning and Learning by doing.

Each CBP module had two or three Young Ambassadors as co-owners, who worked together on the content preparation for the Meet-Ups and on the tasks preparation and uploading on the Academy.

CCB senior trainer, Tommaso Riva, was the tutor of the Young Ambassadors, supporting them in the modules preparation and in their delivery. For doing so, they were constantly in contact via email exchanges or chatting in a dedicated Whatsapp group chat.

Ron Salaj, Coordinator of the DIGITOL's pool of the European trainers and Italian trainers' team was the Scientific Supervisor of the programme. He was the main reference for the Young Ambassadors to whom they turned for any methodological doubts or for in-depth thematic reviews. Ron also took part in the Meet-Ups about Online

Safety and Privacy, Fake News and Hate Speech, to bring his crucial expertise to the meeting and present his points of view on the various topics to stimulate discussions; both Young Ambassadors and adults over 55 could learn something new.

Antonio Dell'Atti, DIGITOL Project Coordinator conducted the more technical modules on Pilot Actions co-design and planning.

At every Meet-Up, at least one member of the CCB staff was there for technical support.

During the programme, the trainers and the participants made an extensive use of the DIGITOL Digital Academy, in particular:

- Participants were strongly invited to enroll to the platform;
- Tasks were uploaded on the Academy for each module so that participants could test themselves on what they have learned during the Meet-Up and get prepared for the next module;
- The video recording of each session was uploaded on the Academy for those who couldn't attend the meeting neither online nor face-to-face, and for those participants who wanted to deepen some particular topics.
- Participants shared their impressions and exchanged opinions on the Forum. The discussion on the Forum was moderated by the Young Ambassadors and by the Senior Trainers in turn.

GERMANY

Sessions were delivered online through WEBEX on a weekly basis. On two occasions, sessions were held as face-to-face meetings. One was a brainstorming session on Pilot Actions; the second face-to-face session was the final meeting that concluded the capacity building programme with a reflection on the content and an outlook on the next steps of the Pilot Actions.

Following two sessions on technical skills concerning the use of WEBEX, the CBP began with an introduction by all participants and a general introduction into the topic. Following this introduction, roughly each week a new topic was introduced to the participants, such as for example:

- fake news and the role of the filter bubble
- recognizing online adverts and adjusting cookie settings in the browser
- social media and election influence

Generally one session a week was dedicated to an input to the topic delivered by either the Young Ambassadors, the Senior Trainers or one of the external trainers that were recruited to bring specific and topical expertise to the session. The session following the input was dedicated to discussions among participants. Young Ambassadors or Senior Experts answered open questions or clarified what had been presented in the session before. Participants contributed their own knowledge and understanding on the topic to the discussion. In this way an atmosphere of mutual learning was created in which all those present could learn from each other.

To support the YAs, a number of external experts were recruited to the delivery of the programme, bringing crucial expertise to the project and presenting their points of view on the various topics to stimulate discussions.

To facilitate discussions and to visualize the results of some of the sessions, the online-brainstorming software MIRO was used. The Miro Board was accessible to participants so that they could review what has been discussed during the sessions.

Throughout, the DIGITOL Academy was used to communicate to the participants about the upcoming sessions. For each session, a module was created in the Academy, informing participants on the upcoming topic, providing links for further reading and giving small tasks that participants could complete in order to be prepared ahead of the session. Additionally, the forum of the Academy was used for each session in which participants could continue their discussions, post links or information and engage with each other beyond the weekly online sessions. Moreover, the presentations and information that were provided during the input sessions were uploaded on the forum, so participants could review the material that has been presented to them.

GREECE

Initially planned to take place face-to-face, due to Covid-19 related restrictions, the Capacity Building Programme had to be conducted online.

A brief course on the Zoom platform seemed necessary, as many participants had problems using it and it was the main communication tool for the courses. One-on-one meetings were arranged, of one hour approximately for each participant, where the Young Ambassador explained Zoom and its features.

The main objective of the first gathering was for the group to get to know each other, to express hopes, anticipations and desired outcomes from the program, and of course to learn more about it.

Participants were divided into 4 smaller groups of 6 –8 learners, as we felt that working on-line with larger groups of older adults would not be as effective. Lessons took place twice a week for 2,5 hours, except for the first meeting that lasted 3 hours. Lessons were held in the mornings, evenings or weekends, depending on the availability of the participants and of the Young Ambassadors.

The 1st module delivered was on the DIGITOL platform and how participants could subscribe while getting familiarized with it and the materials contained, followed by Google search and cookies preferences, allowing a safer and easier navigation on the Internet.

After that, the next modules were on the subjects of the importance of news, of reliable information and social media. Seven more hours were dedicated to fake news; understanding fake news: where they are and how they work, recognizing them and ways to deal with them. Many examples and participatory exercises were provided and participants worked alone and in groups, searching for their own examples on the Internet and bringing them back to the plenary.

The next subject was stereotypes and how they are connected to fake news, followed by hate speech and the effect it has on society and information. A module was devoted to enhancing critical thinking, the tool for combating fake news, using the approach of 'Project Zero', of the University of Harvard. Another subject that seemed to interest the participants very much was scams on the Internet and how to protect themselves from them. The final meeting involved the evaluation of the program both by the older learners and the Young Ambassadors and discussion on the next steps of the project and Pilot Actions.

The educational material was produced with the contribution of the Young Ambassadors and the senior trainers, under the scientific supervision of 50plus Hellas, assuring that the material was appropriate, tailored to the learners' needs and age friendly.

BULGARIA

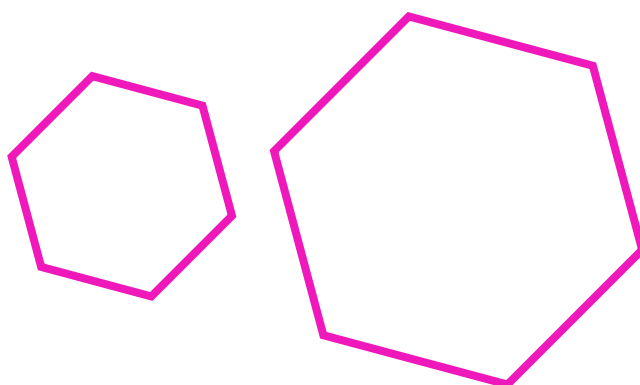
First designed as a face-to-face programme it turned out that the delivery of the programme should turn into online training. A total of 30 hours were covered by online and offline sessions where online sessions were mainly focused on self learning.

Sessions were delivered on a weekly basis through ZOOM and were scheduled for 6 consecutive Saturdays from 09:00 a.m. till 01:00 p.m. The first session was dedicated to introducing each other: the Znanie team, Young ambassadors and older adults were invited to present themselves with a few sentences in order to know who will be sitting behind the screen in the next few weeks. It was also the occasion to introduce the training programme: its aims, the modules, the platform and the expectations and dedication which will be needed.

Several tools and methods were used during each session in order to avoid the long lecturing, to keep the attention and to make the training as interactive as possible. There were powerpoint presentations, online quizzes through online tools such as Kahoot, interactive boards such as Miro, and games for checking the level of knowledge and understanding. Discussions and summarizing were mandatory parts of the sessions.

Each session was led by a different couple of Young ambassadors therefore each Friday, before the Saturday's training there was a catch up online meeting. Those who have led the previous session were passing information to those who were about to lead the next session. Information about the dedication, number of participants, how active they were, used methods, was discussed. Also some reflection on their own feelings, possible milestones, and overall atmosphere were shared. The tasks for the next time were also discussed as the older adults were having their "homework" and each session was starting with checking of their findings from the previous week.

The presentations and short discussions were held on the Digitol Academy platform. It was the space for uploading the training materials, sharing useful information, or some thoughts before and after the sessions.



4.3 Reflections

The goal of the Digital program was to empower older adults against fake news and misinformation; to address issues such as discrimination, stereotypes and hate speech. Also, to reinforce communication between generations and to promote common European values such as solidarity and diversity.

Overall, all these aspects were met, as shown by the evaluation completed from all parties involved, older participants, Young Ambassadors and project partners: digital information gaps were addressed, the design and delivery of the Capacity Building Program was very effective; all Young Ambassadors delivered the courses with excellency; the lessons were interesting and engaging for both Older Adults and Young Ambassadors. Also, the program met the goal of empowering older adults against fake news and misinformation; it addressed issues such as discrimination, stereotypes and hate speech. Finally, it strongly reinforced solidarity between generations.

However, the Digital project proved to be even more than achieving the initial goals. The positive feedback from the participants of the project highlighted even more elements that were not foreseen. During the sessions, the older participants were given the occasion to work in groups, some for the first time in their lives, and were introduced to educational methods they had never imagined possible. They made friends, shared thoughts and concerns, and looked forward to the sessions, not only as a learning opportunity but also as a means for human interaction, helping some feel less lonely and less secluded. Their active participation in the project also made them realize that there is much more for them to learn and do, and that they are capable of engaging in other further lifelong learning activities.

For the Young Ambassadors, it was also a unique experience, as they were trained and well-equipped to develop and deliver training sessions. This created a very strong sense of ownership and of belonging among them, as well as a remarkable boost in their self-esteem.

Also, the intergenerational contacts proved to be an excellent way to address ageism and the misconceptions one age group might have had about the other. It is well worth mentioning that the young ambassadors have altered the way they look at older adults, while the older participants now acknowledge the skills of the young as trainers, and found new ways to cooperate and interact with the younger generation, improving mutual understanding and social cohesion.

The Digital project achieved an inclusive digital world for all ages, at times where intense digital communications tend to facilitate the dissemination of fake news and made it clear that intergenerational approaches are extremely important for building a just society for all ages.



DIGITOL on the field

5.1

Introduction to the Pilot Actions

At the end of the Capacity Building Programme, for the partners and participants (young and seniors), it was the time to show to the world what they have achieved during the previous phases of the project. With the support of the partners, young ambassadors and seniors developed ideas and delivered impactful pilot actions in order to engage as many citizens as possible in the project and to raise awareness on the project key messages, such as media literacy and the importance of good quality information. These activities capitalized on the knowledge transferred to the senior participants.

The idea of the pilot actions was to provide the target groups with concrete opportunities to take into practice what they have learned during the programme in an intergenerational environment, and therefore to enhance their “visibility” and “participation” in society. The pilots were co-designed and delivered by the seniors together with the Young ambassadors, and it was their turn for proactive participation.

The original plan for possible activities was agreed before the submission of the project proposal and it included ideas, such as:

- Human Libraries - where people are used as books and therefore they should be prepared to build a narrative on specific questions they wish to talk about. The “readers” should listen and ask questions to learn more about the person or the chosen topic.
- Fairs/events/festivals - blending together traditional and innovative approaches where the wide public can participate, have fun, get introduced to the project topics and learn something new and useful.
- Info-days on specific topics - at school premises with young students to address the topics regarding digital rights of EU citizens, the importance of net etiquette, recognising fake news and disinformation. Other options would include workshops with stakeholders from the adult education sector where intergenerational education and inclusive education and tools to support it might be presented.

And as the real life is much richer and the ideas were born from the heart of the DIGITOL participants - younger and older- in the next part are presented the very Pilot projects partners organized in their respective countries in the last months of the project (e.g. September 2021-January 2022).

5.2

A summary of the Pilot Actions

BULGARIA

THE PILOT PROJECT IN THE PARK!

Online training might have its disadvantages but one of its advantages is that people do not need to be situated at one place. So, the Bulgarian participants from the city of Varna invited the whole group to go there and make the most of their beautiful Sea park.

Preparation phase. Promotional materials such as t-shirts, baseball hats, keyholders, credit card holders and notebooks were produced. A wheel of fortune with all the gadgets listed was produced. Leaflets with key messages and information on 5 of the project topics were produced. Playing cards with key questions covered by the leaflets were produced.

During the event. The DIGITOL participants were spread around the park distributing leaflets and drawing attention to the stand. Random people walking in the park but interested in the general topic of Media literacy were involved in a conversation. Finally, to gain the right to play on the wheel of fortune and win a gadget, they needed to draw a playing card and answer the question. If they could not answer the question they should go to a Human library - one of our older adults who should answer the question correctly and further share more information on the specific topic. Only afterwards the person would go to the wheel of fortune and to play.

After the event. The satisfaction among the DIGITOL team was enormous. People felt they have done something useful, gained much more interest than expected, transferred the knowledge and had great fun. Many of them shared that it has been much more successful than they expected.

Results. More than 300 people were involved in discussions, playing the game with the cards, and winning a prize; two invitations from local schools to visit them and to talk to their students about DIGITOL. A good number of people walking in the park were dressed or wore branded t-shirt or baseball hat with DIGITOL logo on them.

SCHOOL VISITS

Five visits to schools where DIGITOL older adults have talked with students about the importance of Media Literacy were organized, and the presentations were prepared in an interactive and fun way.

INTERNATIONAL EVENT

With adult education representatives was another great opportunity to share, to inspire each other and mostly, to develop further strategies on how to develop inclusive societies. The Event was organized with the EURORESO network during the Annual meeting in September 2021 in Rotterdam.

GERMANY

Through several brainstorming sessions and exchanges, young ambassadors, older adults and local stakeholders have developed ideas for six pilot activities. As these were quite ambitious, the group decided to focus on the development of four of the pilot actions, centered around the DIGITOL Digital Café, which foresees the implementation of up to 12 workshops focused on enhancing the digital literacy of older adults. Furthermore, it is intended to continue running the Café and its activities beyond the end of the project.

The four pilot actions that are being implemented are the following:

DIGITOL Digital Café is an interactive and participatory workshop on the use of digital devices and apps – Participants learn from others, teach their skills and exchange their knowledge with each other. People can bring their own devices and will be able to get help and guidance concerning their questions or issues with using the devices.

Workshops on key topics related to digital and media literacy skills, such as Facebook, Instagram, Google Search, etc... that will form part of the activities at the Digital Café.

Digital heroes/Digital Ambassadors. This action is about recruiting young people to take older adults on an expedition into the digital world. They teach them the relevant skills to use smartphones, tablets and apps to navigate the digital world independently.

A Website for the DIGITOL Digital Café to give the pilot actions a sustainable local presence, to advertise the activities and to inform on upcoming events. It will be linked to the DIGITOL Project Website and the DIGITOL Academy open section. The Website is still under construction at the time of writing.

All these actions have been implemented together under the heading of the DIGITOL Digital Café. The café has been implemented as an informal and relaxed place for intergenerational learning around the topic of digitalisation. The young speakers (digital heroes/digital ambassadors) share their knowledge about social media, smartphones, tablets and more. Participants (older adults) can bring their own devices so that the Young Ambassadors can address individual questions. In this way they can offer practical help and support with concrete solutions to individual problems. A workshop can last between 2-4 hours to allow for sufficient time for learning and exchange.

The “DIGITOL - Digital Café”, is being implemented in cooperation with local stakeholders from the NGO WISA – wir sind angekommen e.V. and the Senior Citizens Center (Seniorenarbeit) of the City of Dietzenbach. The NGO WISA - wir sind angekommen e.V. is engaging young ambassadors as trainers and organizes 6 training events throughout the county of Offenbach. They also send their young ambassadors to train older adults at the additional 6 weekly sessions organized by the Senior Citizens Center in Dietzenbach.

At the time of writing, a total of 4 sessions/workshops were implemented, involving between 3 and 16 participants (young ambassadors and older adults) in each session. The further 8 sessions are planned to be delivered throughout December and the beginning of January.

As the events have been very successful, the local stakeholders are planning to keep these pilot activities running beyond the end of the project. In this way, the DIGITOL Digital Café becomes a regular and sustainable action to promote digital and media literacy in Dietzenbach and the county of Offenbach.

GREECE

The Pilot Actions that were organized by the participants of the project and the Young Ambassadors with the help and coordination of 50plus Hellas were the following:

- With the occasion of the International Day of Older Adults, October the 1st, an event took place under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Labour. It was addressed to stakeholders, older adults and organizations working with older adults. It included speeches from various experts and representatives from the political scene, such as the Ministry of Labour, The World Health Organization and the Ministry of Digital Policy of Greece. The aim of the event was to raise awareness on the need for policies and a legislative framework to encourage digital and media literacy for older adults.
- Preparation of an age/user friendly toolkit with short presentations and videos for the older adults who participated in the project to disseminate in their own communities.
- Formation of an NGO network: 12 organizations from all over the country that work with and for older adults, brought together to advocate for digital inclusion of older adults in Greece.
- Our Intergenerational festival took place on November the 14th at Technopolis, a lively high-tech venue of the city of Athens. Older adults, Young Ambassadors and experts on fake news and mis-information as well as stakeholders, were given the opportunity to participate in workshops and attend speeches as speakers and spectators; they had the chance to learn more about fake news, discuss about prejudice and stereotypes and find ways to protect themselves from internet scams and fraud. Due to Covid-19 related restrictions, the number of attendees was limited. However, short videos and recordings from the workshops and speeches will be available on our website <https://www.50plus.gr/> for further dissemination.
- “Human library: The case of Themistocles”. A journey through time by professional guide Mrs. Artemis Skoumbourdi on December 5th. Walking through the Ancient Forum of Athens, what was once the center of public life where Democracy was born, issues such as hate speech, ostracism and the assumption of superiority are addressed during this activity.

ITALY

Three intergenerational groups have organized 3 Pilot Actions to raise awareness of public opinion on Digital Culture.

The initiatives or pilot actions took place on the territory of Monza and Brianza or online, and they are:

1) The “Interactive Walk between Web and Nature”.

Sunday November 7 2021, the Walk took place at the park of the city of Monza. It was a sunny and colorful autumn morning, and nearly 50 nature lovers and people interested in learning more about DIGITOL gathered to take part in the Walk. During the Walk, there was a first stop, when a psychologist expert on New Media had a speech on the risks and opportunities of the Web.

The overview of the risks and opportunities of using social networks and the Internet in everyday life has certainly raised the interest of participants and nourished discussions that continued throughout the morning and the walk.

The second stop was meant to enjoy four short theater plays staged by a group of volunteers from the DIGITOL project. Each short play warned the audience about the risks of surfing online and showed them how to identify fake news to avoid helping to spread it further.

It was a really successful and inspiring event for everyone!

For the participants because they had the opportunity to experience the park in a different way and to take time to reflect while having fun on current issues that affect everyone, such as the spread of fake news.

For the DIGITOL Team that was in charge of the planning and implementation of this action because they enjoyed the full potential of an intergenerational group work and their efforts were rewarded by the fun and interested reactions of the participants!

2) The Blog “Digitol News”

is a digital space where “invented” fake news are created and shared, to challenge public opinion on the importance of correct information. Useful lessons will be shared to learn how to recognize fake news, and to defend against its effects. This is the link to the website: <https://digitolnews.eu/> and this is the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/digitolnews>

3) The Festival “Digitally Aware? You become”

on December 4, 2021 at Villa Longoni in Desio (MB). It is a full-day event dedicated to digital culture and information, with the aim to increase awareness in the choice of inclusive and constructive languages in online environments, to offer training opportunities for a correct interpretation of information and to provide tools to learn about risks and opportunities of digital technology.

THE ROLE OF E-LEARNING



The e-learning Academy



How was it used in DIGITOL? What can you find inside?

The DIGITOL Online Academy is a learning online environment for young ambassadors, older adults, trainers and experts involved in the training and educational activities of the project, as well as a publicly-accessible repository space for information, data, resources and knowledge on topics related misinformation, diffusion of fake news, critical thinking and media literacy.

In its design and development phase, partners have agreed on the following specific objectives to be pursued by the Academy:

- To serve as a complementary and additional educational tool for the training-of-trainers and capacity building actions developed by DIGITOL, where high quality educational materials, exercises and resources will be available for the DIGITOL participants (young and older adults) to learn and strengthen their competencies.
- To provide a sustainable toolkit that enables the target audience outside the project to build capacities through the variety of resources that are made available.
- To serve as a hub of learning and information-sharing for young ambassadors and older adults on the DIGITOL topics.

Some of the main functions of the DIGITOL Online Academy are:

- E-learning spaces, distinguished by partner countries and related languages (Bulgarian, German, Greek, Italian). The e-learning sections are divided according to the following training levels:
 - Module, intended as learning units and incubators of tasks.
 - Task, intended as specific lessons.
 - Assignments, allowing to check the progress of trainees in the completion of the different tasks.
- Possibility to navigate in five languages (all languages mentioned above, plus English).
- A private section available to all users (i.e., my

account section), giving to everyone involved (i.e., young ambassadors, trainers, older adults, etc.) the possibility to create an account with a personal profile (name, surname, contact details, picture, short biography), possibility to edit the profile at any time and access the specific e-learning tools and materials available through the e-learning spaces.

- A forum for discussions, allowing for quick and easy communication. The forum is also used to upload documents and digital content (such as videos, podcasts, etc.).

While the DIGITOL Online Academy offered a dynamic learning space, it however lacked the live events feature where young ambassadors and trainers could interact and learn in real-time. This was complemented by external video-conferencing platforms.

In terms of functions and features, the Online Academy included the following:

- User-friendly, easy to navigate and multi-language support.
- A space opened only for registered users (who can access through login) where they can interact with each other through features such as forums, commenting, etc.
- A gallery of knowledge that enables uploading of multimedia content, available both in private (registered members) and public (completely free and open) formats.
- A hub where can host a list of resources, fact-checking websites, training materials, as well as can provide spaces for (self)assessment through quizzes and assignments.

In terms of roles and responsibilities, participants and users were divided in the following categories:

- Senior trainers curated the content in the academy encouraging discussion, preparing exercises and assignments, uploading resources and learning materials, etc.
- Partners of the DIGITOL project (beside Tree) overviewed the content and the dynamics within the e-learning academy; supported the work of





senior trainers and ensured that young ambassadors were strengthening their capacities and participating actively; curated the ‘exchange’ between different partners’ countries; etc.

- The partner responsible for the designing and delivering the e learning academy (TREE) provided live demo sessions (and eventually a user manual) to familiarize all the users of the academy with its content and features, and assisted with supporting all users of the e-learning academy during all phases of the project in case technical difficulties appeared, including the technical maintenance.

What is its potential?

In terms of expansion of the DIGITOL Online Academy, few ideas for updating and upgrading the platform are presented below:

- Helpdesk: a section where users can ask specific information and advisory services regarding train-the-trainers and capacity building programmes targeting digital skills and active engagement of seniors, development of cooperation models between youth and seniors, design of citizens and communities’ engagement strategies; a place where NGOs/CSOs and other organizations can ask for support coming from partners in hosting/organizing a DIGITOL activity, such as a dissemination event, a training workshop, a webinar, etc.
- Interactive games/quizzes through which users can understand what fake news is and how it can be detected and discovered (i.e., asking them to judge whether specific news is fake or real, tutorials introducing specific tips for discovering whether news are real or fake, etc.).
- Services: sections where older adults can request specific services, such as live/online digital literacy sessions (how to use a laptop, how to write a document, how to open a profile on major social media, how to call someone on Skype/WhatsApp, etc.), support in fighting isolation and creating communities/networks around them (i.e., “human library on demand”: service where they can ask for conversations with youth/adult/elderly regarding specific themes; online/live meetings with other people based in the same region/city aimed to allow them meeting and making new friends).

LESSONS LEARNED



Despite the several difficulties due to the COVID-19 situation, the DIGITOL project achieved its initial goal, which was to create an intergenerational environment capable of benefiting from the contribution of different age groups for building a more inclusive society.

It has done so through the roll-out of a set of innovative training programmes and pilot community actions focused on the importance of good-quality information for fostering social inclusion and participation, and at the same time, for fighting intolerance, negative stereotypes, and even hate speech.

The training programmes have been piloted in four different countries (Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, Greece) using a mix of online (e-learning) and offline tools, which represent one of the most important legacies of DIGITOL, now available for all those organizations (e.g. education providers, public entities, youth associations, seniors' associations, etc.) willing to replicate the DIGITOL methods and tools (or part of them) towards their members and stakeholders.

The main findings of the programmes, as well as their contents and methods, have been summarized in the present report, but they are also described more in detail in specific reports produced by this consortium and which are available on the DIGITOL project website (www.digitol.eu).

Moreover, the Digitol online academy (<https://digitol-academy.eu/>) represents a precious tool for both individuals and organizations interested in finding useful resources related to the detection of fake news and to the promotion of digital literacy by using intergenerational approaches.

The work done by the DIGITOL partners have had an invaluable result for those people (young and seniors) who have attended the project as learners and trainers, as they had the possibility to interact in a safe context and also to actually put into practice what they have learned in engaging and impactful pilot actions.

As also witnessed in the only face-to-face international event which was possible to organized during the project implementation, the International Academy in Germany held from 4 to 7 October 2021, the participants of different ages have found that there are more things in common between them compared to what expected, and that it is time to recognize the differences, but, even more, to work together for building a society which is more age-friendly, and therefore also, more inclusive.

During the project implementation, partners could learn several lessons which may be helpful for those organizations willing to work in an intergenerational framework to promote media literacy. Some of these lessons are listed below:

- The fight to disinformation and the dream of an inclusive society is not a work for few people: we have learned more than ever the importance of building alliances and communities of interest to have a higher impact in society, and to have precious allies which, each for its angle, motivation and knowledge, can contribute to the envisaged progresses. Involving stakeholders at a very early stage of an initiative or a project can make the difference for its success;
- The process of co-design training methods and tools not only provided the bases for building participatory training and capacity building programmes, but also helped to share doubts, challenges, frustrations and ideas among partners. Indirectly, it helped also build stronger group cohesion.
- All partners committed to keeping the same aim and objectives for both the ToT and the Capacity Building Programme, which lead towards their potential success.. Partners, however, agreed that each of them should have its own freedom and flexibility in terms of educational methodologies, online tools, timeline, and thematics that they would like to bring in their country programmes, in contrast to rigid programmes applied by-default in all countries.
- The knowledge gained from the implementation of the Capacity Building Program led the partners to ideas for improving such interventions. More specifically, they suggest ensuring even more interaction between the different groups, for example, by providing some moments where the seniors share their experiences related to the topics tackled during the project, technical but also practical (e.g. example of discrimination, stereotypes, etc.). Also, organizing a training exclusively face-to-face, increasing the channels and opportunities for interaction between the two age groups and trying to use less a theoretical and academic approach as opposed to a more interactive, non-formal one to reassure as much as possible that the learning process goes in two directions and not only from the trainers (the Young Ambassadors) to the learners.