HANDBOOK

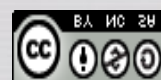# "Online youth work for inclusion of immigrants"

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Young people are increasingly engaging with new technologies and digital media. There is clearly a role for online youth work practice, in terms of exploiting a new space for youth work in a meaningful way, supporting digital literacy and enabling young people to deal with some of the associated risks. The practice implications for youth workers lie in new competencies required and new forms of boundary maintenance in relationships with young people." (Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, Brussels, April 2015)

Most of the today approach of adult youth workers in establishing a contact with youngsters many times is ineffective because the methodologies to attract the youngsters' attention and interest are outdated. Youth workers struggle in finding contacts and moment of dialogue with youngsters because they use tools that are too far from the daily life of teenagers today, who spend most of the free time online.
Gaming and social networks are some of the most common hobbies for youngsters and can be considered as a passive activity. Or, from other perspective, the youngster in that moment can be described as an active contributor to an activity or a common project in a game platform or as a moderator in a chat.

Many times, youngsters discover most part of opportunities for their free time online and that is why they do not get usually in touch with youth centre and youth workers. Even if youngsters show a big confidence in using online tools, they are still not educated in using these tools with full awareness.

Quality youth work that meets young people's needs must, in this modern era, include digital considerations. This does not mean that every youth worker should be a technical expert, but that a recognition that young people are growing up in a digital era and that they need support to navigate the online aspects of their lives and critically analyse online information/interaction is becoming increasingly central to youth work.

This project responds to the needs of our youngsters (mainstream and marginalised) and youth workers, as well as is in line with the latest findings on European level that there is a need for innovative youth work approach towards youngsters that spend a lot of their time online and do not visit (local) youth centres/clubs so much, any more.

With this project, we aim at further empowering our youth workers in innovative usage of digitalisation, online youth work and gamification methodology in regular work with youngsters (incl. immigrants) in our communities, in order to increase attractiveness of the youth work activities and make them up to date for better impact on inclusion and engagement of both mainstream and marginalised, immigrant youngsters.

Therefore, the objectives of the project are:
- Empower youth workers with knowledge and skills to implement digital tools and use online youth work in their everyday activities, with special focus on inclusion, through development of innovative and up-to-date toolkit and handbook.
- Empower youth workers and improve knowledge management of youth work organisations in theory and practice for building competences of youth workers in Gamification and adventure/escape room methodology in online & offline youth work for inclusion of immigrants, through useful/inspiring curriculum, e-learning course & toolkit with innovative methodology.

- Encourage more youth workers for organising creative and innovative youth work online and offline activities with gamification methodology based on affordable, low-cost/efficient adventure rooms among mainstream & marginalised/immigrant youngsters in our communities.
- Attract more immigrant youngsters to youth work activities by multiplying the innovative low-cost/efficient adventure rooms in our communities, and thus increase inclusion among youngsters.

This project is carried out transnationally, as it is about new technology, ICT tools/methodology that does not recognise geographical borders, but instead is present fairly in all our countries. Diversity of the countries involved bring special added value to the project, as partners come from 4 countries that are each on different level of digitalisation of youth work and using gamification methodology.

Project activities are:
- A1 – Project Management activities
- M1 – Kick-off transnational project meeting of the partners
- O1 – Toolkit "Digitalisation of youth work for inclusion of immigrants"
- M2 – 2nd transnational project meeting
- O2 – Curriculum "Gamification in youth work for inclusion of immigrants"
- M3 – 3rd transnational project meeting
- O3 – E-learning course on Gamification in youth work for inclusion of immigrants
- O4 – Handbook "Online youth work for inclusion of immigrants"
- M5 – 4th transnational project meeting
- O4 – Toolkit "Adventure rooms in youth work for inclusion of immigrants"
- C1 – LTTA Training of trainers
- E1, E2, E3 – National conferences in Croatia, Sweden, and Serbia
- E4 – International conference, Germany
- M5 – Evaluation transnational project meeting

Project partners are:
- Youth Power Germany e.V., Germany
- Association for improvement of modern living skills "Realization", Croatia
- Centre for modern living competences (CSZK), Serbia
- Wizard, obrt za savjetovanje, Croatia
- Ung Kraft / Youth Power Sweden

INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

We are happy that you have chosen to read this Handbook and hope it will be useful for your future work! The publication brings all the up-to-date issues and topics needed for youth workers read/get to know when starting online youth work with their beneficiaries. The publication will also serve as theoretical and conceptual resource for youth workers and other educators when organising further education, training and mentoring of youth workers in changing their mind-sets (blockages towards online youth work) and inspiring them for reaching youngsters online when working on inclusion of immigrants.

Youth work incorporates both informal and non-formal learning, but today, we have to move those two types of learning in an online environment to reach youth who are rather spending their free time online, than in our youth clubs. Our Handbook explores the benefits of social media (form of informal online learning) in youth work, as well as the methods and activities youth workers can use to engage youth, both in informal learning, as well as in non-formal online learning setting. Social media is a very powerful tool for connection and communication, but it is also a form of informal online learning.

Online youth work aims to introduce the participants to concepts of inclusion and acceptance of diversity. Online tools nowadays can be presented for sure as the best instrument to catch the attention and interest of youngsters because it is the closest medium to their daily life. Using online communication means speaking the same language of youngsters and through this medium it is easier to get an impact on awareness about the topic of violence, bullying, hate speech that many times are so present in our society, also as cause of messages that youngsters receive online. During this project, and also thanks to this O4 Handbook on online youth work for inclusion of immigrants, we also aim to overcome the mentioned problem by trying to use online platform as medium for youth workers to suggest activities with a positive socially inclusive message for youngsters that otherwise do not attend/visit youth club/centre.

We hope that with this publication and handbook, you will get acquainted with the most important things related to online youth work, with specific focus on immigrants. Inside, you will find different theoretical and practical concepts that will help you in better implementing your activities and will help you in raising your level of competence in this field.

We wish you a happy reading!

Authors

# Social inclusion of immigrants and other marginalised groups

Social inclusion can be defined as a process of improving the conditions for participation in society for people who are disadvantaged based on their age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status. It happens through increased opportunities, better access to resources, and respect for their rights (DESA, 2016). The more complex definition of social inclusion includes concepts like social inclusiveness, cultural cohesion, communal values, a shared identity, mutual recognition, respectful dialogue, peaceful interaction, or policies of integration (Millán-Franco, Gómez-Jacinto, Hombrados-Mendieta, González-Castro & García-Cid, 2019).

The process of social inclusion and growth in wellbeing in the culture which is the host of the migrant youth is non-linear. There are many factors which have an impact on the process like very long transnational family separations, economic and labour precariousness, and ethnic network or family burdens. All of them can affect the degree of positive development of social inclusion over time. To support migrants in the process of social inclusion it is essential to understand the process of how immigrants adapt to new settings (Millán-Franco, Gómez-Jacinto, Hombrados-Mendieta, González-Castro & García-Cid, 2019).

Migration is a rather stressful life event which involves many changes that can decrease the well-being of a person, cause immigrant syndrome, as well as chronic stress. A Breakdown of social networks, and loss of roots is one of the reasons for that. Because of the process of adaptation to a new culture stress often accumulates. It assumes many other stressors such as culture shock, communication barriers, economic challenges, loss of support, and unemployment. Acculturation is often affected by many personal and social variables which exist in the origin and destination societies, as well as by the phenomena before and during the acculturation process. That's why a multidimensional approach is needed to gradually strengthen the social inclusion of immigrants in the society where they arrive (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Many authors suggest that social inclusion of immigrants needs to be approached from a multidimensional perspective to make sure that the individual and contextual characteristics interact. The **individual dimension** includes personal characteristics like resilience or life satisfaction. The process of migration is one of the most challenging life situations. Therefore, resilience is an important factor that needs to be studied in the immigrant population, because resilient individuals have a greater capacity for integration. The life satisfaction of immigrants is another dimension that is strongly related to the level of success of social inclusion into a new society (Sand & Gruber, 2018). Moreover, social support is an interactive concept within the **contextual dimension.** It is an interpersonal transaction between the one who gives and the one who receives support that can involve emotional support, material help, and providing information within a specific context (Wills & Shinar, 2000). Social support between immigrants and indigenous people is very beneficial to the immigrant population. That is so because social networks facilitate social inclusion and provide resources that are adapted to their needs. The sense of the community is another relevant aspect of the contextual dimension because it combines individual and interactional aspects which are then influenced by the immigrants' physical and socio-cultural context. A sense of belonging to a community helps people identify with the environment in which they live and helps interaction and social inclusion (Millán-Franco, Gómez-Jacinto, Hombrados-Mendieta, González-Castro & García-Cid, 2019).

Social integration can be understood from two perspectives. For migrants it means that they need to develop a sense of belonging to the host society, which often assumes that they need to accept and act according to the social values and norms of the host society. They also need to build up social capital that is required by the institutions of the host country. The native population is equally
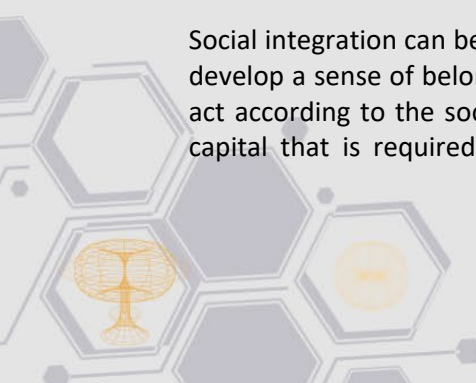
important in the process of social integration because immigrants can feel like they belong only when members of the society accept them. Mutual recognition is important as it improve wellbeing of individuals, leads to better social cohesion, and has meaningful economic implications. On the other hand, integration will be a great challenge if immigrants and the native population differ too much in many social and cultural dimensions (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017).

On average, the research shows that immigrants differ from the native population in the dimensions of self-identification, values, marriage and fertility choices, residential patterns, and civil and political engagement. That observed gap has been explained in several ways. First, immigrants might be different is many basic characteristics, like age or education, which are relevant for explaining social behaviour and choices. Second, immigrants face different obstacles when they arrive to the host society, like a lack of language skills, insufficient economic or time resources, uncertainty regarding the time of their stay, and direct obstacles to access important parts of social life, such as voting or political activities. Third, immigrants are often exposed to different cultures either in their country of origin, neighbourhoods or within families. Culture influences preferences and beliefs among individuals and groups, and consequently affects trust among people, attitudes and social preferences, as well as their perspective on religion, family connections, gender roles and the degree of political involvement (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017).
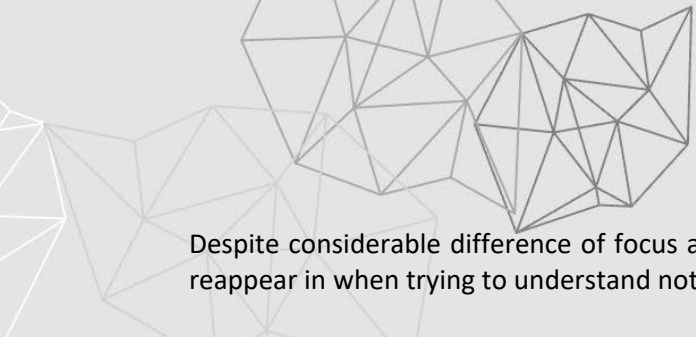
All those already established differences in preferences and beliefs further translate to differences in observed life choices and behaviour. Existing research shows that the gap between immigrants and the native population reduces over time in terms of economic dimensions. Although obstacles that immigrants face can change over the years of residence (e.g. by acquiring the language skills) or by specific policies (e.g. improving immigrants' rights), it is much more difficult to change original beliefs and preferences which are much more important for social inclusion. There is also an observed gap between immigrants and the native population across dimensions of social integration, which don't really change with age and education. Social inclusion of immigrants is lagging behind the economic participation, and the speed of integration differs significantly. More disadvantaged groups can benefit from certain policies and the process of social integration can be accelerated. (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017).

Framework – perceptions of what constitutes 'successful' integration

A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager & Strang, 2008)

Despite considerable difference of focus and perspective, there is a number of separate topics that reappear in when trying to understand notions of integration.

Markers and Means
- Employment

Employment is constantly identified as a factor which influences many relevant issues, such as promotion of economic independence, possibilities to meet other members of the host society, planning the future, having opportunities to develop language skills, restoring self-esteem and encouraging self-reliance (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002). The fact that many qualifications and precious work experience is not recognized is one of the major benefits to gain secure employment. Many immigrants are not able to provide any proof of previous qualifications. Even when they can do it, employers may not recognize them. Consequently, under-employment (which is defined as having a job which does not require any the level of skills or qualifications) has a major impact on the employment possibilities of immigrants.

- Housing

Housing is observed as having a significant effect on the overall physical and emotional wellbeing of immigrants (Glover et al., 2001). Both established residents and immigrants valued the continuity of relationships in relationship with being 'settled' in an area over a period. Immigrants also emphasize the importance of having neighbours and living in neighbourhoods which provide opportunities for learning from established members of the community. Safety and security related to housing environments are important to take into consideration.

- Education

Since education provides skills and competences for finding employment, it enables people to become more constructive and active members of society. Schools are the most important place of contact with the members of the local communities for immigrant children (and, in many cases, immigrant parents). In that way education plays an important role in building relationships which support integration.

- Health

Good health is widely recognized as an important resource for active engagement and inclusion into a new society. Additionally, reliable access to health services and supporting health outcomes is an effective way of engagement with the key social service. The shift from specialized centres to address the physical and mental health needs of services has been widely welcomed as it aims at improving mainstream health services. (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Foundation
- Citizenship and Rights

The topic of citizenship and rights creates a lot of confusion and disagreement around understanding of integration, as well as the rights and responsibilities that go with it. This partly reflects the variety of approaches to understand citizenship and nationhood across societies. To develop effective policies on integration, governments need to clearly communicate the policy on nationhood and citizenship, as well as the rights of immigrants. Such factors are fundamental in the process of creating the normative framework that determines immigrant policy and understanding of 'successful' outcomes. Defining the rights of immigrants' rights consequently defines the foundation of integration policy. Those rights may include human dignity, equality, freedom of cultural choice, justice, security, and independence, etc. Acknowledging rights of immigrants then raises the question of responsibilities (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Social Connection

- Social Bonds

Many immigrants value having the opportunity to be close to their family because this enables them to share same or similar cultural practices and maintain familiar relationship patterns. Such connection plays an important role in the feeling of being 'settled'.

- Social Bridges

Issues of social harmony and participation of immigrants in the host communities have a significant impact on the relationship between immigrants and locals. The research shows that friendliness of the people immigrants interact with on the daily basis is an important factor of developing the feeling of being 'at home'.

- Social Links

In the previous two bullet points, you saw that social bonds deal with connections that connect members of one group. On the other hand, bridges are dealing with connections between such groups. Social links are dealing with connection between persons (individuals) and different government set up structures within the country (e.g. government services). It is common that due to their circumstances (lack of familiarity with their surroundings, not speaking the language etc.), immigrants come across barriers in accessing public services. To achieve the state of equality in that aspect, additional effort from both immigrants and the wider community is needed (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Factors of inclusion and exclusion

Concepts of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' tend to be associated with policy measures that use the metaphor of 'removing barriers' to integration.

- Language and Cultural Knowledge

The ability to speak the main language of the host community is identified as the main point of the integration process. Although this issue if often in the focus, research also points out the value of the broader cultural knowledge in enabling integration processes and outcomes. Immigrants should also be aware of the national and local procedures, customs, and facilities and. While the members of the host culture should be aware of the circumstances and culture of immigrants come from.

- Safety and Stability

Immigrants feel more 'at home' in their communities if they are perceived as 'peaceful'. On the other hand, members of the host communities are often concerned about the arrivals of new immigrants and whether it will cause unrest in their communities. A sense of personal safety is for many crucial. Immigrants often indicate that they wouldn't feel integrated in a society if they felt physically unsafe. Incidents of violence or being threatened often determine the overall perception regarding the safety of a community (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Challenges and problems young immigrants face

The research shows that the ability of immigrant learners to adapt and acculturate to their host country and cope with their schoolwork was affected by the untreated pre- and trans-migration psychological stresses and post-migration academic, economic, and psychosocial challenges. When we bring these challenges together with the perceived, or real, attitudes of prejudice, marginalization, and racism from fellow- learners, teachers, and administrators, we can see that the confidence of immigrant learners are endangered. That consequently creates and environment of rejection, inadequacy, frustration, and dropping out even when dropping out is not intended (Kanu, 2008).

Another big obstacle to the school success of immigrant children are parents' beliefs about parenting and authority as well as their own acculturation challenges and confusion while they are struggling themselves with social integration and economic survival. Additionally, there is a lack of sufficient resources available to schools and lack of cooperation among various service providers – educators, housing and family services, and healthcare personnel, which can significantly impair the ability of these agencies to provide the services to support immigrant learners (Kanu, 2008).

The data suggests that there is a need for improvements on both levels – macrosystem (national and local governments) and the microsystem (the school, families). At the macrosystem level, the national government needs to put forward policies that minimize the educational, economic, and psychosocial challenges. Then schools act on the level of the microsystem as the key element of socialization and acculturation of immigrant youth. Although they usually implement several initiatives in response to the needs of immigrant learners, they need to do more to fully implement their policies about inclusion and diversity (Kanu, 2008).

Immigrant children often experience external hostility due to their status of being "different". They don't only face a higher risk of bullying than non-immigrant children, they often deal with frequent invisible aggression related to their choice of food, clothing, religion, manners, and other customs. Those struggles are usually invisible not only to society, but also within their own families. The parents of immigrant children who many times wish that their sons and daughters make the most of the opportunities available to them, often put a fixed focus on academic achievement. That's why they often miss to recognize their children's social needs. Immigrant parents also prefer that their children abide by the rules and boundaries of their own culture rather than adapting to more liberal Western way of living which consequently creates more social barriers for their children. It should be mentioned that in the situation when children progress into adolescence, conflict involving life issues such as clothing which is acceptable by others, curfews put by parents and dating can become serious and lead to different effects, such as isolation, rebellion, anxiety and depression.

Although it's understandable that parents want to respect their culture of origin and preserve their way of life, it's crucial to do it in a flexible, positive, and compassionate way. Immigrant children like any other children need validation, acceptance, and encouragement to succeed and live a happy and fulfilled life. In this way parents can ensure that their children develop the confidence they need to face prejudice and learn to love their background and who they are (Shenfield, 2017).

The data shows that sport has positive impact on immigration when used in educational environments and focused on creating learning environments that are based on mutual respect and the acquisition of values. Although sport has a significant potential to be a way to social inclusion of immigrant people in different contexts, it will depend on the objectives for which it is used. It can have a negative impact if it is focused from only on competition and exclusivity. That's why physical education and school sport seem to be practical and concrete solutions for the development of

interculturality if it fosters mutual respect which is based on educational practices that establish a positive interaction between cultures, simultaneously using the good sides of sport and the school for the development of inclusive learning environments (Carter-Thuillier et al., 2018).

Most early studies on the subject conducted from the psychological perspective suggest a high risk of delinquency, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and drug dependency, and sleep and eating disorders among immigrant children (Williams & Berry, 1991). They are also likely to develop fears, anxiety, aggression, learning difficulties, low self-esteem, and identity problems. More recent literature on the subject, however, points out that there are also certain "protective factors" that are associated with immigration status. Their purpose is to shield children and adolescents from the negative effects of the immigration experience on their mental well-being. Such factors may include lack of conflict with parents, religious practices, parental supervision, and higher levels of social support among immigrants (Stodolska, 2008).

The obstacles immigrants must face include new environment in the host country (new culture, school, and language), issues related to peer group acceptance, and a changed family situation (prolonged separation, intergenerational conflict, and often absent parents). Immigrants must face the challenge of learning the new language, adapting to the new school system, and re-establishing their relationships with family members and friends (Stodolska, 2008).

Factors in recognizing the immigrant and immigrant experience involve the conceptual exploration of the following (Segal & Mayadas, 2005):
• Having the experience of living in a new, unfamiliar country and leaving (moving away) from your home country
• Awareness of the phases in the immigrant and immigrant crisis
• Sociocultural heritage
• Problems and issues encountered by migrants while relocating
• Sensitivity toward psychosocial issues
• Programmes, policies and laws of each Immigration and Citizenship Service;
• Differences and similarities between refugees and immigrants
• Xenophobic reactions to newcomers

Assessment must involve these factors:
• The level of immigrants' and refugees' sociocultural integration
• Their abilities to differentiate between realistic and unrealistic expectations
• Problem-solving abilities, past and present
• Family functioning within the context of the immigrants' heritage
• Evaluation of the transferability of work skills
• Refugee's learning capabilities and motivation for adaptation

Intervention must work with immigrants and refugees on these skills and benefits:
• Economic self-sufficiency and asset building
• Equitable functioning in society
• Civic and political participation
• Empowerment
• Discussion and support groups
• Community organization
• Educational programs
• Individual counselling around tangible issues

(Offline) youth work for inclusion of immigrants

Youth work can significantly contribute to inclusion and participation of young migrants and refugees (Shenfield, 2017), including some of the following:

- offer a safe free time and learning space – giving opportunities to young migrants and refugees to do the things young people do - enjoying free time and informal/non-formal learning activities with their peers;
- fight discrimination, populism and (online) hate speech – including building the capacities of ž and raising awareness of both young people and local communities (society);
- provide empowerment and support the development of approach based on each person (individual and personal approach) – it should rely on the experience in the fields of coaching, mentoring and peer support;
- build strong connections between refugees/young migrants and the local communities – promote activities that bring them together, especially activities and projects that talk about stereotypes and that are supporting joint actions;
- offer different development opportunities related to skills and empowerment in general: these activities should be focused on the learner, based on the concepts of non-formal learning and should be tailor-made;
- provide information and support to refugees/young migrants in accessing their rights and to support them to participate actively in lobbying and advocacy on all levels (from local to European) – empower capacities in the field of youth-friendly communication, reaching out and provide overall holistic approach;
- provide the possibility that refugees/young migrants express themselves and be active in the local communities, especially in processes in democracy (decision-making) – especially in the activities they organise, and in supporting initiatives developed by them;
- provide contribution to the programming decisions and policies, especially focused on youth problems and perspectives of refugees/young migrants;
- be a crucial partner in cross-sectoral cooperation with different actors (educational, employment, legal, housing, etc.) – thanks to its capacity to reach out and mobilise and thanks to the knowledge of the youth field.

Inclusive practices like expanding the cultural bases of the school's recreational sports and cafeteria food items or providing prayer rooms for Muslim learners will be beneficial for promoting cultural diversity. To reduce frustration among immigrant learners and increase their motivation for learning, it is necessary to introduce better practices for initial assessment and grade placement, as well as continuous monitoring practices. To develop better relationships within communities it is necessary to gain better understanding of the migrant parents' situation will reduce misunderstanding among parents, teachers, and administrators. This is important because patterns of segregation have an impact on social networks, which consequently affect educational access and achievement, increase interaction, enhance learners' social capital, and increase their self-confidence (Shenfield, 2017).

Professional development training is needed for teachers to improve their knowledge and attitudes toward the new group of migrant learners who enrol to their classes. Appropriate professional development will also help teachers deconstruct their own cultural and intellectual values increasing their personal and collective efficacy. That will then lead to adaptations of content and methodologies in curriculum and instructional practices for the benefit of immigrant learners. Finally, collecting and disseminating information and cultural knowledge about immigrant learners in schools may lead to the reduction in prejudice and change attitudes within school environment. Additionally, learners and teachers need to develop a wider perspective to build a strong diverse and cohesive community to respond to the needs of immigrant learners (Shenfield, 2017).

Supporting migrant children inclusion through NFE (Watch, 2018)

NFE basic concepts and values

Non-formal education is in many ways different from formal education. It is rather flexible in terms of curricula, and methodology and it happens in organized and intentional settings. Learners' needs and interests are in the centre of learning process. Additionally, the contact between learners and facilitator is significantly smaller since most of learning happens outside of classes and institutions. The non-formal education focuses on skills and the development of attitudes which are crucial for the future success of young people. Studies suggest that the non-formal education meets the needs of learners in a better way, allowing them to learn about themselves and the world. In general, non-formal education focuses on the learner and is open and flexible to their needs and interests. It provides a quick response to the changing needs of individuals and societies (Grajcevci & Shala, 2016).

On the other hand, formal learning usually happens at school, it is obligatory and structured, has a syllabus and is organized by a teacher. Non-formal learning happens at institutions outside of schools (non-profit organisations, youth centres, youth clubs) and is structured, voluntary, organized by a facilitator or a youth worker. Lastly, informal learning happens everywhere around us – its main characteristics is that it should be voluntary, unstructured led by learner(s) and unstructured.
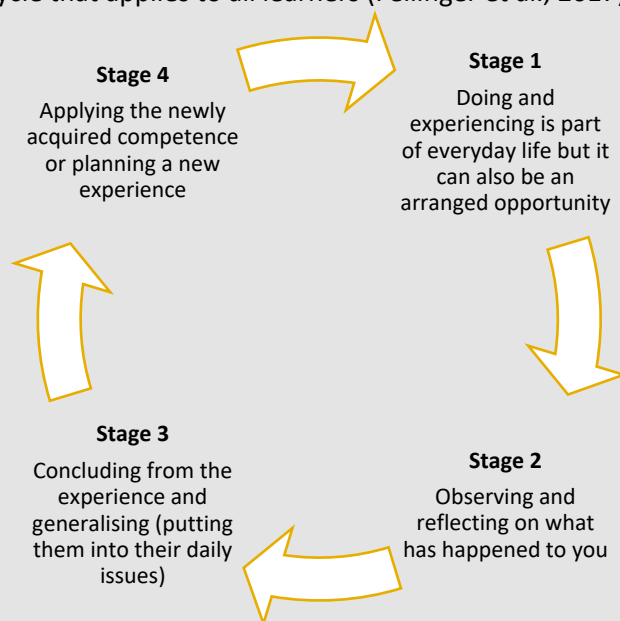
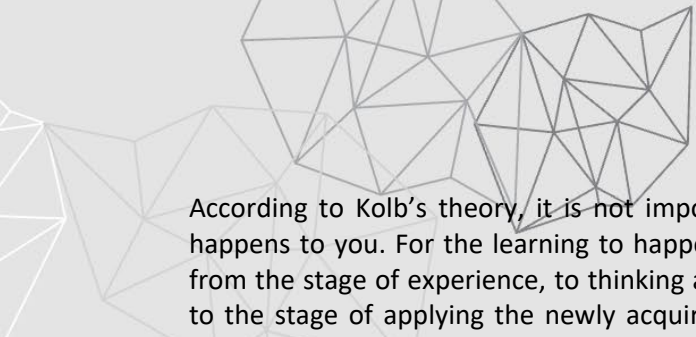| Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Usually at school	At institution out of school	Everywhere
May be repressive	Usually supportive	Supportive
Structured	Structured	Unstructured
Usually prearranged	Usually prearranged	Spontaneous
Motivation is typically more extrinsic	Motivation may be extrinsic but it is typically more intrinsic	Motivation is mainly intrinsic
Compulsory	Usually voluntary	Voluntary
Teacher-led	May be guide or teacher-led	Usually learner-led
Learning is evaluated	Learning is usually not evaluated	Learning is not evaluated
Sequential	Typically non-sequential	Non-sequential

From *Bridging In-school and Out-of-school Learning: Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Education.* (p. 174), by Eshach, H. (2007). *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 16(2), 171-190.

The European Erasmus+ Programme (continuing the Youth in Action Programme) focuses on implementing informal and non-formal experiences which support young people in acquiring knowledge, skills and competences, facilitates their social and cultural integration (minorities), ensures that they can play an active role in the construction of Europe, which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level. The programme takes care of the needs of young people and youth workers, by providing training opportunities for them across Europe as well alongside financial support to their projects. Based on the ongoing and future discussions and policies we can see that more and more importance is given to learning in knowledge-based societies (Lafraya, 2011).

Experiential learning

Non-formal learning is consisted of experiential learning activities that aim to help in development of different knowledge, skills and competences in general. David Kolb published his experiential learning theory in 1984, presenting four learning styles based on a four-stage learning cycle (Kolb et al., 2014). His learning theory offers an understanding of the four learning styles and experiential learning cycle that applies to all learners (Fellinger et al., 2017).

Stage 4
Applying the newly acquired competence or planning a new experience

Stage 1
Doing and experiencing is part of everyday life but it can also be an arranged opportunity

Stage 3
Concluding from the experience and generalising (putting them into their daily issues)

Stage 2
Observing and reflecting on what has happened to you

According to Kolb's theory, it is not important what happens to you but what you do with what happens to you. For the learning to happen, it is crucial to go through all four stages of the cycle - from the stage of experience, to thinking about the experience, to the critical analysis, and to arrive to the stage of applying the newly acquired experience and planning how to use it. Most training methods and activities follow a similar pattern - performing and experiencing an activity or series of activities, feeling and observing yourself and others at it, reflecting on the experience, drawing conclusions and putting into practice what was learnt (Fellinger et al., 2017).

Learning styles

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (1992), two British psychologists, developed a Learning Styles Questionnaire that categorised people by their preferred learning styles into:

ACTIVISTS	• Who involve themselves fully and without bias in new learning experiences. • They are open-minded, not sceptical, they tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards.
REFLECTORS	• Who like to stand back and ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. • They collect data and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusions.
THEORISTS	• Who adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. • They think problems through in a vertical, step by step, logical way.
PRAGMATISTS	• Who are keen to try out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. • They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications.

These learning styles are linked to the four stages of experiential learning:
- A preference for the activist style supports you for stage 1
- A preference for the reflector style supports you for stage 2
- A preference for the theorist style supports you for stage 3
- A preference for the pragmatist style supports you for stage 4

All round learners or "integrated learners" are best equipped to manage all four stages in the best way to get the most learning from the experience. Most people develop learning style preferences that support them in some stages and obstruct others. Preferences of the learning styles can influence the activities young people and other people learn from. Once you are aware of your preferred learning style(s), it is important to have in mind possible strengths and weaknesses of each style. Generally speaking, knowing how to select learning that suits you best involves finding activities where all the person's strengths could be utilized on the top level. It is important to remember that we tend to use our preferred learning style(s) during trainings or management. That's why it is important to use a mix of activities in line with the four learning styles so that you can provide opportunities for everyone (Fellinger et al., 2017).

Benefits and disadvantages of online learning

While many learners participate successfully in online learning, there are still many factors that reduce the efficiency of online learning platforms. Those factors include limited reach, increased time and commitment which is required to participate, and the lack of a physical connection which has a negative impact on co-operation with other learners. The online learning brings more convenience and flexibility to learners and it can adapt easily to their different social and family commitments. However, a challenge to the online learning platform is academic integrity (Alshamrani, 2019).

As perceived by the learners, the factors of online learning include not having to pay attention to the dress code, less worry about how to get to class, or dealing with bad weather were rated as the main benefits of taking courses online. Other highly rated and desirable benefit included flexibility (the ability able to learn at own pace), and not having to sit through lectures and being able to view/review lectures as needed. The data also showed that there was a high number of learners who expected that a major advantage of online courses was not having to deal with other learners disrupting class and not having to deal with other learners asking questions. Female learners were more likely to rate expected advantages of taking online courses as higher than male learners. This information is important for all those who organize online learning environments and should be used not only to strengthen their online courses, but also their traditional (offline) courses (Alexander, Truell & Zhao, 2012).

The main disadvantages of attending online courses included high probability of procrastinating, not understanding content without face-to-face contact with the instructor and higher level of self-discipline for reading and learning. Other disadvantages included misunderstanding assignment directions, trying to contact the instructor for help, and technology issues, all of which led to frustration and stress. In addition, many learners pointed out that that using the computer for other non-related learning activities while working on the course represented a distraction. Other concerns included the increased use of email communication and more easy ways for cheating (Alexander, Truell & Zhao, 2012).

Several studies have analysed and revealed several potential benefits to online learning (Alshamrani, 2019; Appana, 2008; Bartolic-Zlomislic & Bates, 1999; Taylor, 2002) and resulted in the following findings:

Benefits of Online Learning

- **Ability to take on other jobs**

The job opportunities provide additional income for the online learners. In addition, the research shows that the implementation of online learning allows the learners to continue with their existing jobs.

- **Choice of learning**

Although choice of learning was mentioned, there are not many arguments in its favour. This can be due to the fact that the conventional learning in physical classrooms also allow flexibility in the choice of curricula. In both the cases, learners have the flexibility to choose.

- **Cost effective**

This advantage has emerged because of the other two benefits since learners can access learning anytime and anywhere and have the possibility to take on other jobs. Online learning is cost-effective due to two reasons. While it provides additional income on the one hand, it also reduces learning expenses since learning platforms can be accessed anywhere and anytime.

- **Ease of access**

Ease of access seems to be the most common advantage of the online learning methodology. In total, 60% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the fact that they can educate themselves from the comfort of their homes and select the timing of the online courses. The basic resources they needed included a computer, a speaker, headphones, and a steady Internet connection. A steady Internet connection was crucial for adaptation of online learning. The remaining 40% expressed that the online learning processes were carried out from the online learning facility of the other universities with a fixed timing. The university from where the classes were carried out provided the infrastructure requirements. It can be concluded that the ease of access was determined by the factors of travel time, time spent on learning and technological requirements.

- **Fast learning**

Online learning has been acknowledged as a faster learning methodology by the respondents with 50% of them agreeing that the online mode of education will be accepted across the globe in future.

- **High levels of confidence**

The adoption of online learning has led to higher levels of confidence among the learners with low self-esteem about their communication skills. This can be due to the lack of the need to interact face-to-face which can result in peer pressure and dominance.

- **Have a access at any time and at any place**

Online learning promotes improving the scope of communication between the learners. It offers the possibility to learners who live in geographically distant location an opportunity to complete their educational process. Asynchronous communication plays an important role (Waters, 2012). The ability to learn anytime and anywhere is possible due to the existence of web-based mediums. The research successful showed that the technological requirements of the methodology benefit the anytime, anywhere access.

- **Reduced pressure and stress**

The respondents highlighted the reduction in stress levels due to the adoption of online learning. This has been pointed out by over 30% of learners.

- **New markets**

Online learning has the potential to open the door to new markets, both national and international, that cannot be easily accessed through other more traditional forms learning.

- **International partnerships**

With the door being open to global markets, there is an increased opportunity for international partnerships as well. Learners benefit from the interaction with the highly diverse groups of learners across the globe (international discussion groups and collaborative assignments).

- **Reduced time to market**

The ease and speed of uploading and updating learning materials is a huge benefit to online learning.

- **Educational benefits**

A common benefit of online courses is that learners learn more than just course content. Online learning can significantly improve writing and computer skills.
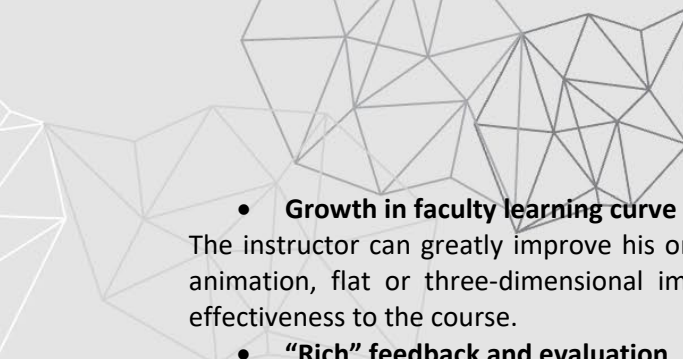
- **Anonymity**

Anonymity is another great benefit since it can result in greater participation of all learners, including those who are usually labelled as "shy". The lack of visual cues allows the instructor to treat all learners in the same manner.

- **Learner interaction and satisfaction**

Results of research on distance learning courses show that interactive qualities appear to be a major factor in determining the quality of a course as reflected in learners' performance, grades, and course satisfaction. Learners have better results while participating in online courses, as it provides them with flexibility and responsive approach, which they have experienced in this type of learning.

- **Growth in faculty learning curve**

The instructor can greatly improve his or her presentation by adding slides, audio messages, video animation, flat or three-dimensional images, and hyperlink texts. All these elements add more effectiveness to the course.

- **"Rich" feedback and evaluation**

Good software and meaningful learning apps provide substantial benefits for learners, parents, and school administrators as well resulting in improved communication, greater accountability, better learners' compliance, and greater objectivity in evaluation of learning (Taylor, 2002). Encouraging communication among learners gives them feedback from their peers as well as from their instructor and makes them feel an integral part of the group.

Disadvantages of Online Learning

Several potential limitations are also found in online learning by the learners, the instructors and other teaching staff:

- **Difficulty in sticking to the schedule**

The present research shows that there is a high chance to go off the schedule due to the adoption of the online learning methodology. The lack of face-to-face interaction and the absence of follow ups from the instructors seems to have an impact on that. However, there is a strong argument against this hypothesis since the online learning curricula is highly structured and digital in its nature. Learners receive regular and automated follow-ups by e-mail which in turn reduces the cases of going of the schedule.

- **Health problems**

Respondents highlighted an increasing number of health problems due to the continuous interaction with digital systems. Electronic devices like laptops and computers have been recognized as a cause of various kinds of ergonomic and ENT health problems in learners.

- **Lack of clarifications in a timely manner**

Lack of timely clarifications turned out to be the most common disadvantage of the research.

- **Lack of instructor's experience in dealing with online courses and international learners**

The lack of experience in working with international learners by the instructor was mentioned in the research as a crucial disadvantage.

- **Lack of interaction with the instructor**

The lack of interaction with the instructor was closely related to the lack of face-to-face interaction resulting in a huge reduction in social interaction in general.

- **Lack of monitoring**

The research pointed out that the chances of cheating are higher in the case of online learning comparing to traditional ways of learning. It can be concluded that lack of monitoring enables cheating which is another disadvantage of the online learning methodology.

- **Lack of motivation**

Lack of motivation is another disadvantage of online learning since motivation and drive for learning often come from the interaction within a group of learners.

- **Need for technology**

Online learning strongly depends on a stable internet connection which refers to internet connectivity at the server end and the internet connectivity at the client end. At the server end, the internet connectivity ensures that the content is delivered from the server without interruptions. For this to happen, it is essential to maintain a high-speed connectivity to deliver the content efficiently. Consequently, this has a high impact on the efficiency of the learning methodology, and on keeping the interest of learners. Compared to the conventional was of learning, the online learning methodology has many disadvantages in this aspect. This is because the conventional ways of learning don't depend on any kind of internet technology.

- **Plagiarism and cheating**

Around 11% of participants have reported that one negative impact in their online learning process is connected with the presence of plagiarism and the possibility of cheating. Rovai (2000) has emphasised the key aspects of online learners' assessment - supervised testing, identity security, academic honesty, and the use of online forums for the purpose of assessment and communication.

- **Reduced reliability**

Although reduced reliability was mentioned as a disadvantage by a small number of respondents, it is however very important since the effectiveness of any learning can only be determined by reliability measurement.

- **Adequate time**

Bartolic-Zlomislic and Bates (1999) conducted a research where they found that learning and teaching (instructing) in online courses and formats is time consuming. This was mainly due to the large amount of time spent on reading and writing.

- **Organizational preparedness**

Some technological developments have opened new possibilities for creating chaos within educational organizational, while others made lives more complex.

- **Learners' readiness**

Presence and expansion of online learning is one of the features of the information society which determines the level of its development. Learners' readiness has a great impact on the success of online courses or programs.

- **Differing stages of team development**

During online learning sessions there is a constant flow of new learners logging on or off at any time during a session. Such fluctuations make it difficult for online groups to engage in the typical phases of group learning like warm-up, going through an activity. That makes it difficult to maintain the workflow and group development for extended periods. This limitation reduces the efficacy of online support groups as the only source of support for some learners.

- **Crisis management**

It is rather challenging to successfully resolve an emotional crisis in cyberspace. Limited feedback and the lack of identifying information complicate the whole process of assessment.

- **Faculty learning curve**

If instructors do not have a high level of computer literacy, it may take some time to learn all the necessary requirements or fill in the knowledge gaps and to become a proficient online course developer and instructor.

- **Learners with limited language skills**

Learners with any kind of learning disability or with language limitations (such as English being their second language) may get overwhelmed with fast and multiple dialogues, which my lead to frustration with text-based communication as well.

- **Technical support**

As with any real-time event, some issues may arise, especially with synchronous learning, which can include zones. More various problems emerge as the learners' demographics gets more diverse. (Taylor, 2002). Additionally technical problems are always potential issues when videoconferencing and participating in virtual meetings. Issues such as sound and video quality can be affected by network traffic, inadequate set up, and other technical features (Taylor, 2002).

- **Team effort**

Developing effective online learning requires a significant team effort especially if the instructor lacks skills essential for facilitating online learning processes (Taylor, 2002).

- **Synchronous- or asynchronous-classroom contexts**

In an asynchronous online classroom, learners can access their online lessons at any time. A synchronous classroom includes all the learners connecting at the same time enabling them to communicate with the instructor and each other. Asynchronous classes prevent discussions from happening. Learners may have the need for immediate responses to their questions or for sharing their points of view.

- **Costs**

The cost of upgrading systems and programs may be perceived as substantial for the institutions interested in implementing online learning programmes.

- **Accessibility to course material**

To reach all learners, instructors need to design courses with having in mind availability of software and hardware to their learners. If they live in smaller centres or remote parts of countries, their access to the Internet may be limited as well as they might not be able to afford necessary equipment.

- **Evaluation and assessment**

If instructors focus on multiple choice/true/false/or other "click the answer" responses in tests or assessments, they may not be able to evaluate the depth of learners' knowledge and their ability to respond with understanding.

Creating supportive online learning environment

Engagement is a crucial element of learners' satisfaction in online courses. The definition of engagement has been widely explored in literature related to distance learning for the past several decades. Learner engagement is defined as the learner's psychological investment and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Learner engagement in online learning is very important because online learners have fewer opportunities for engagement. That's why it is essential to create multiple opportunities for learner engagement in the online environment.

Engagement strategies are aimed at providing positive learner experiences including active learning opportunities, such collaborative group work, providing space and time for learners to facilitate presentations and discussions, sharing multiple resources, creating course assignments with hands-on tasks, and integrating case studies and reflections. Engagement is the key solution to the issue of learner isolation, dropout, retention, and graduation rate in online learning.

Moore (1993) identified three types of interactions, which are important for the quality online learning:
- first one was interaction between learners: learner-to-learner interaction,
- second one was connected to interaction with different roles within the courses: learner-to-instructor interaction, and
- third one was connected with the relationship with the content and learner: learner-to-content interaction.

Martin & Bolliger (2018) confirm the importance of all three types of engagement strategies in online learning, especially learner-to-instructor engagement. This confirms the belief that institutions need to design and deliver learning experiences that engage learners for successful online learning outcomes. The findings suggest that learner engagement can be improved with interactive design of online courses and by adapting facilitation methods of online courses. Facilitation style of the instructor is essential and requires experience in time management strategies and engaging in communication.

The results from this study benefit (1) online instructors who are motivated to explore various engagement strategies to implement in their online courses, (2) instructional designers who assist in the design and development of online courses, and (3) administrators who are exploring ways to increase engagement in online courses across their institutions (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

To transition from traditional pedagogy to active online learning pedagogies successfully, instructors may need to change or adapt their teaching styles they used to use inside their "traditional classroom," and develop new skills to reach learners at distances. Furthermore, ongoing, and meaningful communication is an essential part of online learning experiences. The instructors bear the responsibility for creating a feeling of belonging to a learning community. Although the use of traditional methodology may seem to be a quick and easy solution for online learning engagement, it is also important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of online teaching methods. Success in online learning and teaching is often determined by understanding different aspects of design and ways of delivering online courses, as well as all the challenges and opportunities that emerge (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

Handbooks and guidebooks and instructional materials need to be carefully designed to address all components of the learning and teaching processes including pedagogy, course management, technology, and social dynamics. In designing a successful online teaching and learning experience,

instructors and designers should understand the all the important parts of setting the stage and managing the learning process. The order of activities, resources, and timing should be planned carefully. Furthermore, components of online learning processes such as course description, specific course objectives, course competencies, evaluation criteria, and teaching strategies need to be addressed, followed by the review of challenges and opportunities that might arise during the process of developing and teaching online courses while shifting them from traditional to online learning environments (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

Developments in IT and communication technologies have opened up the space for a wide range of opportunities for faculty to expand their learning process beyond the traditional classroom to be able to include learners at geographically distant locations. For that reason, instructors are not only required to learn about new digital technologies, but also to understand that they need to transform their approaches to learning to be able to meet the needs of online learners. Having technology at disposal does not automatically improve online learning methodology. The real challenge is to "develop fluency with teaching and learning with technology, not just with technology, itself" (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

Due to ever growing demand for education and training, online learning (and teaching) is not a necessity of the future, but already the reality of today. However, there is a lack of research data to understand impact of online learning environments on learners. Therefore, a research has been implemented, with four main goals, which were dealing with online learning environments, especially focusing on learner engagement, learner achievement and retention (Oncu & Cakir, 2011). The goals are the following:
   a) learner engagement & collaboration should be enhanced more,
   b) effective facilitation is crucial and should be promoted,
   c) assessment techniques should be further developed to get the feedback;
   d) faculty development programs should be developed and designed.
Four methods that are common in the instructional technology literature are recommended to pursue those goals. For all four goals, you can use developmental and formative research. Even though it's appropriate for all the goals, experimental research is a better fit for goals related to facilitation and assessment techniques, whereas activity theory is useful for goals dealing with learning engagement and effective facilitation (Oncu & Cakir, 2011).

Relationship management, responsibilities, and communication

Collaboration between learners, administrators, mentors, teachers, instructors, and parents (for underage learners) is needed to create a supportive online learning environment. Relationships amongst these key stakeholders must be maintained and nurtured as they are essential for ensuring that learners receive all the support they need when they need it.
   • Administrators: Be involved
Being involved in the online learning program is one of the most important ways in which an administrator can be supportive in creating a successful online learning environment for learners. Administrators can encourage involvement of various relevant stakeholders (like parents) by letting them know *how* they can get involved – ensuring that they are aware of guidebooks, deadlines, expectations, and achievements. Administrators should be able to understand the opportunities that online learning provides to learners as well as the reasons why learners may want to take an online course. Administrators are those who provide the for an online learning program. That's why they need to be flexible to adapt and change the structure whenever needed. Administrators must also be ready to address emerging challenges that mentors or instructors face and provide support when

needed. Defining clear expectations and responsibilities will set the framework for an encouraging online learning environment for mentors.

- Mentors: Build relationships

Mentors build relationships with learners because they usually offer them face-to-face support during their online classes. The role of the mentors is to establish routines and meet regularly with learners, discuss their progress, and track grades and assignment completion. The key responsibility of a mentor is to be available for learners with questions. By supporting the process of bridging communication gaps between all relevant stakeholders, mentors play a significant role in creating a supportive online learning environment.

- Teachers: Focus on communication

Frequent and timely communication with learners and mentors is the role of an online instructor, and a way how (s)he creates a supportive learning environment. The feeling of being frustrated or unimportant might arise among learners if they need to wait to long to get any information regarding their questions, issues or feedback. Teachers need to get to know their learners as they need to learn about their teacher to ensure that (s)he is a real person who cares about their success. All of these are important components of creating a supportive learning environment. Monitoring and motivating learners throughout the learning process is another way of support. Teachers are also those who create structure within the courses, communicate deadlines and expectations up front.

- Parents (if relevant): Be present

The same way mentor acts as face-to-face support for learners online, parents are the face-to-face support for learners to complete their online assignments and coursework outside of school or at home. Educational support at home is important in *any* online course, and even more important in remote learning due to the current pandemic. That being said, it should be stressed out that parents should understand what are the differences and similarities between two types of learning: online and face-to-face learning. While online courses can be convenient in terms of scheduling, many learners are unprepared for the reality of online learning. Since online courses require learners to be more responsible in managing their time and completing assignments, it is crucial that parents understand what is expected of learners.

All the above-mentioned information shows how important mutual collaboration between school administrators, online instructors, mentors, and parents to create a supportive learning environment for online learners. Each stakeholder carries responsibility for different aspects of support, although their roles overlap in some aspects. These individuals who support learners in their online coursework must also communicate among themselves, not only to learners. More importantly, there should be unified expectations in terms of assignment completion, quality of work, behaviours, and academic integrity that are communicated among everyone involved. Learners will feel more supported and be more successful if all the stakeholders collaborate (Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute, 2020).

Creating Positive Online Learning Environment: tips and tricks

Discipline and commitment are the main prerequisite for being successful in an online learning environment because most online courses require learners to follow a course schedule and complete weekly tasks and assignments. Therefore, good time management skills are essential (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2003).

Here are several tips on creating a positive online learning environment:

- Ensure that your room is motivating for learning

Choose a bright and open space that can inspire and encourage you to accomplish what you need. Choose a quiet place for working without distractions from things like family, friends, TV, and computer games.

- Develop time management skills

If you are taking an online course, it is especially important to develop good time management skills. You will not have the support of a face-to-face classroom to help you remember.

- Complete the course requirements as outlined by your instructor in the course Syllabus

Ensure that you understand course outcomes, responsibilities, assessment system, and assigned projects. Make sure that you have enough time to finish and complete all the tasks within the period asked by instructors.

- Be able to communicate through writing

Most communication in online environment happens in written form. It is critical to feel comfortable in expressing your thoughts in writing.

- Make the most of online discussion forums

Visit the online learning platforms at the beginning of every week to check all the newest updates. Write posts that include your own perspective on the topic, include links to articles or other references that support your comments or opinion. Be respectful to others and use the opportunity to connect with other learners.

- Be ready to speak up if something is unclear

An instructor cannot know if something is not clear unless the learner gives feedback or asks questions to clarify. Online learning sets the expectation on learners to know how to follow the course schedule, navigate around and use the available tools. But some learners have difficulties understanding all those tasks. Communication is crucial during those moments. To clarify all uncertainties, learners should send emails or messages via the platform to the instructor on time, to make sure they understand the task on time.

- Respect the opinion and background of other learners

Be respectful and open-minded to all the other learners you will interact with during your online learning program as many of them come from different national and cultural backgrounds.

When organising online learning activities, it is important to have in mind that there are several types of learning available:

1. asynchronous or synchronous – asynchronous means that the person can learn at his/her own pace and access the course content whenever he/she wants or has time. Synchronous learning happens live (in real time) and the participants should be present all the time during a meeting, training course or a workshop. For example, Coursera is an example of asynchronous learning, as it is possible to access the platform at any time and join the course when it best suits the learner. On the other hand, if you have a Zoom call when you listen to a webinar or an online training, we are talking about synchronous learning, as it is happening live, and learners must be present at the same time as the facilitators or trainers online.

2. A blended-learning – which consists of both online learning in any form and face-to-face course. In this case, online learning part happens in some of the stages: either before, during or after face-to-face training. Choosing the stage has enormous influence on the development of the content of your online part of the training. Usually, in youth work training, it happens that preparation activities happen before the face-to-face training, and they include getting to know activities and group building activities.

What type of learning should you use when organising online work learning activities: asynchronous, synchronous, or blended learning?

Before choosing the type of learning for your online youth work activities, you should think about these questions:

How would your target group react to different ways of learning? Some people love blended learning, whereas some like to learn in their own rhythm and pace, without strict deadlines. Therefore, you need to think about the characteristics of your target group and their preferred ways of learning. You can make a short survey upfront with your potential target group or make a short focus group to find out more details about preferred way of learning. Have in mind that extensive online presence can bring exhaustion to some learners, so it can have an impact on the type of the learning you will choose.

Who is your target group and where are they located? For some people it is easier to access online learning if you choose asynchronous learning. If you plan to have learners from all around the world, it would be easier to choose asynchronous learning because of time differences and arranging lesson plans.

Is your content intense and difficult? This question is quite important, as it can help you choose the type of learning. Asynchronous learning is a better option if you choose easy content since a facilitator, or a trainer is not always available. On the other hand, if you have intense and difficult content, then synchronous learning might be a better choice, as the trainer is more involved and can be at disposal to explain different concepts and theories presented. Also, synchronous learning is a better option if learning included a lot of discussions.

How long will your activity last? By asking yourself this question, you can easily choose what type of learning to use. If you will have a long-term course, that lasts for several months - blended learning is a way to go. This will create a stronger connection among learners and should keep them motivated to stay in the e-learning until the end. Blended learning can also be used in situations when you see that learners need motivation and people are dropping out of the online course.

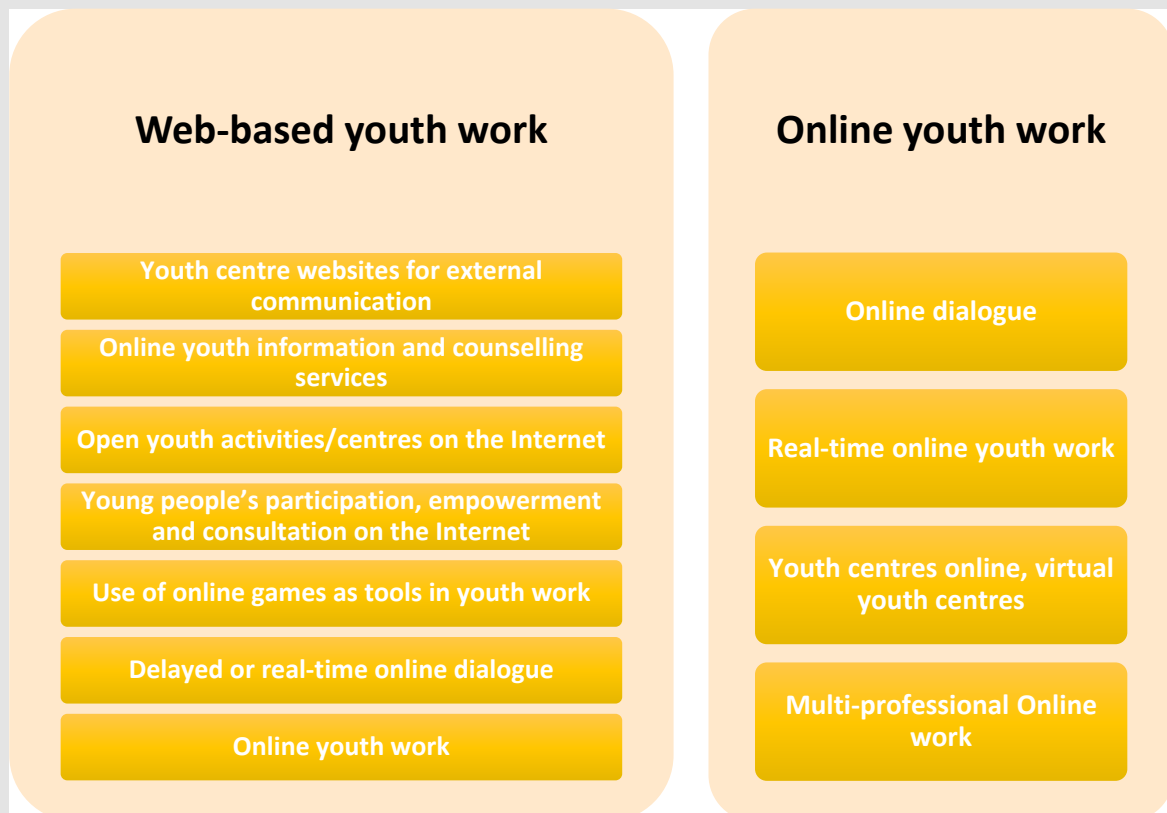*Adapted from Katinić Vidović, Morić, Mičijević (2019.)*
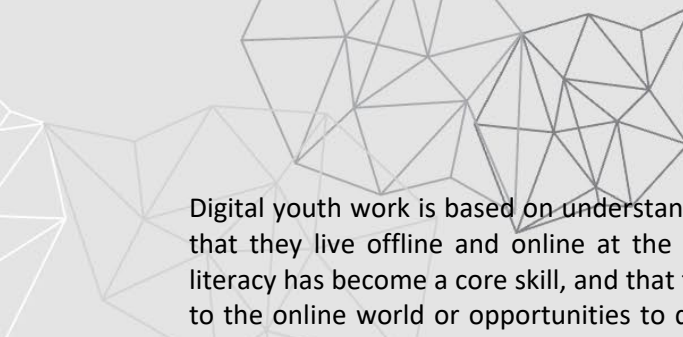
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Web-based and Online youth work

The terms Web-based learning, online learning and digital learning are often used in the same context although there are some differences. Web-based learning assumes learning materials delivered in a Web browser, including materials packaged on CD-ROM or other media. On the other hand, online learning assumes having content readily accessible on a computer. The content is available on different locations: Internet, or can be installed on a CD or computer in the classroom or youth work centre. (Tsai & Machado, 2002).

Web-based learning assumes getting access to content through a Web browser (not just activities), and actual learning materials delivered in Web format. In this, Web-based learning is analogous to textbooks, where the content of it determines if a book is a novel, a report, or a textbook. Offering computer-based training to simply download from a site is not Web-based learning. Web browsing the learning content (even linearly) is the key feature of Web-based learning. Web-based learning content is usually downloaded from a Web site, but there are also alternative solutions available. Usage of the CD-ROM is typically a good solution in situations without network access, like in schools without Internet access or in the middle of a military conflict (Tsai & Machado, 2002).

Online learning is referring to the more common concepts of online help, online documentation, and online services. It assumes having already available learning materials in a computer environment. Often, online learning refers to learning materials directly accessible from within a core application (like in online help); however, learning materials available online on a network also qualify it they are readily accessible. Network use is not essential, and in fact the concept of online learning surfaced before the development of the Web and before learning materials were distributed over the Internet or networks (Tsai & Machado, 2002).

Web-based youth work

- Youth centre websites for external communication
- Online youth information and counselling services
- Open youth activities/centres on the Internet
- Young people's participation, empowerment and consultation on the Internet
- Use of online games as tools in youth work
- Delayed or real-time online dialogue
- Online youth work

Online youth work

- Online dialogue
- Real-time online youth work
- Youth centres online, virtual youth centres
- Multi-professional Online work

Online youth work methods (Sinisalo-Juha & Timonen, 2011)

Digital youth work is based on understanding how important digitalisation is in young people's lives; that they live offline and online at the same time, that the internet surrounds them, that digital literacy has become a core skill, and that there are many disadvantaged young people without access to the online world or opportunities to develop digital skills. Digital youth work isn't only for those with strong technical skills, it's based on the willingness to understand young people's life contexts, to learn from them and to support them to navigate their lives. It's also about making the most of new technology to make youth work offer better and more exciting for youth. Digital youth work includes utilising skills to help young people have their voices heard through digital media and technology and supporting them to have their rights upheld, in the digital world as well as the physical one (European Commission, 2018).

According to the EU expert group on digitalisation and youth, established under the European Union Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018, digital youth work:

- means using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work proactively.
- is not a youth work method – digital youth work can be included in any youth work setting (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work…).
- has the same goals as youth work in general and using digital media and technology in youth work should always support these goals.
- can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments – or in a mixture of these two.
- is underpinned by the same ethics, values, and principles as youth work.
- Digital media and technology can be used either as a tool, an activity, or a content in youth work.

Nieminen (2007) (in Sinisalo-Juha & Timonen, 2011) has studied and defined four key functions of youth work: socialization, individualization, compensation, as well as resourcing and allocation. In addition, Nieminen defines one so-called hidden function: control. It is useful to analyse Web-based youth work also from the perspective of these key functions.
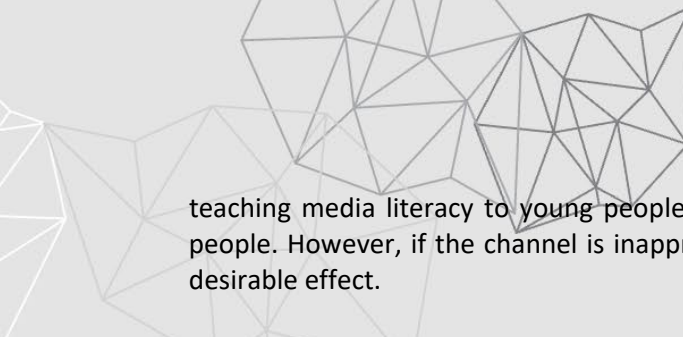
The socialization function of youth work refers to attaching a young person into the culture, society, and surrounding communities. This process requires knowledge and skills from a youth worker, as well as the communication of values and practices. It is significant for young people to encounter professional youth workers. Similarly, they express that it is important for them to have online youth workers from the same geographical area.

The individualization function refers to supporting the growth of a young person into an independent individual aware of one's needs and goals. The starting point here is listening to, recognizing, and respecting the young person's needs. Young people should be provided a space where they can develop their personal characteristics. In Web-based youth work, online youth information and counselling services offer information pages as well as delayed question-answer services.

The starting point of **the compensation function** is addressing any difficulties in the socialization and individualization functions. The objective is to address factors which threaten equality and non-discrimination, and to support those young people who excluded in the society. Web-based youth work reduces the differences in the living conditions of young people. It enables young people to gain access to at least minimum services regardless of their place of residence.

One function of youth work is to **influence the resources** allocated by society to young people, as well as the **allocation** itself. Another goal is to train young people to influence the decisions concerning themselves. This is also called education for democratic citizenship, which includes

teaching media literacy to young people. Social media is an easy channel for influencing to young people. However, if the channel is inappropriate for the cause, using social media will never have a desirable effect.

The control function is granted to youth work from outside. It is not actual youth work, but expectations concerning youth work. In web-based youth work, this might assume that the primary duty of a youth worker is to observe the online behaviour of young people and to report any suspicious activity. Such a view puts the youth worker's educational role in the background (Sinisalo-Juha & Timonen, 2011).

The objectives and tasks of online youth work

Young people can mainly be reached through the Internet since most of them have a natural skill in dealing with information and communication technologies (ICT), but there are many other areas in which youth work can play an important role. In addition to general objectives and tasks of youth work these areas primarily involve information and prevention tasks.

- A discussion regarding the IT and the dangers related to it cannot be avoided. Although there are many young people who are very competent in using all kinds of digital tools, they might encounter many dangers in digital environments.
  - Pathological use: Just like excessive reading or sport can be damaging for anyone, the excessive use of information communications tools or related services can be equally damaging. Therefore, there is space for preventive measures that warn about the potential dangers of excessive use of ICT and prevent it. However, (often unpopular) debate among professionals regarding what excess means, and so far, no concrete conclusions have been found. It is important to approach this topic with caution.
  - Safety: The other element of information and prevention activities relates to safety – there is an increased need to control it. There are many kinds of security risks related to ICT-related services that many young people are not aware of. In addition to the protection of electronic data, protection against harmful content is naturally also important.
  - Law: the issue of copyright has not become only an issue among the young people who are rather laid-back about it, it is also a question of safety with serious consequences. There are many examples, e.g. the online distribution of video recordings made of school fights, or the recording and storage of activities from illegal sources or recordings made of criminal activities, etc.
- Digital literacy, meaning being skilled in using digital devices and apps doesn't mean that someone is skilled at selecting values from a sea of information. That's why it is one of the tasks in digital youth work to teach what information is important and which is useless – i.e. youth work can play a role in promoting the development of information literacy.
- Youth work can play an important role in sharing knowledge by disseminating, summarising, and translating international materials. The translation and sharing valuable materials could represent one of the foundation pillars of intercultural learning.
- One of the tasks of virtual youth work could be the development of controlled, secure spaces with access to computers and the Internet for young people. This does not only consider having access to a computer for young people in youth centres, but also having multiple computers connected to the Internet enabling young people to explore various types of cooperation ranging from games to more serious activities.
- Digital youth needs to maintain a degree of flexibility. With a high degree of freedom made available to young people, it needs to come with the attitude of availability of youth workers. Instant responses create an environment of trust, and if there is a delay, trust is not formed, and youth engagement decreases (Székely & Nagy, 2011).

The tools used in digital youth work

Nowadays digital youth work uses a diverse and continuously developing set of tools. Tools can be divided into two parts: passive tools which focus on facilitating the dissemination or distribution of information, and interactive applications (Székely & Nagy, 2011).

Passive tools: solutions that allow one-way communication, e.g. traditional homepage, offline and online newsletter, guerrilla marketing, etc.

(Inter) active tools:
- Interactive online presence (indirect dialogue) – any kind of a webpage, blog or wiki that has options to comment, supplement, or is suitable to start a conversation. Practically any objective can be achieved with the help of free editing systems.
- Indirect, generally delayed dialogue – text message campaigns, e-mail lists.
- Direct, instant dialogue – chat, telephone, conversation through avatars in the virtual world because the content of the conversation is more important than the channel.
- Social networking sites – starting a sub-site on an already existing site or creating an independent site. This makes it possible to reach those learners who could not be present in the offline space.
- Video portals – politicians, governments and business organisations already use videos in online environment to send messages, recruit followers and announce calls, etc. The European Union has a separate video portal, called Eutube.
- Games – serious games have built up market worth billions and represent potential opportunities in education, training, and community building. Although many serious games are highly powerful tool in building, motivating, and maintaining communities, there are not really recognized and used in the world of digital youth work.
- Virtual worlds – the latest and most innovative platform of digital culture. Virtual environments have only just started to be developed across the globe.

Online youth activities

Based on the research done by Morić and Gospodnetic (2019), young people use internet mostly for entertainment, fun and connecting with others. Furthermore, an on-line survey conducted by Fleming & Rickwood (2004), found that of 6,700 adolescents from 12 to 17 age used mostly their computers for sending e-mail, playing games online, researching homework assignments, instant messaging, and listening to music.

Research shows us that youth are representing the group that is significantly involved in different online activities, and mostly messaging other people and gaming. For example, Facer, Sutherland, Furlong, and Furlong (2001) came to conclusion that during their time online, 65% of children are using Internet to access e-mail, chat programmes and games. As young people are heterogeneous group, everyone has different interests, so boys like to spend their time surfing in general and playing games, whereas girls like to chat and use internet shopping (Zhang, 2010).

When deciding to research young people, it's good to keep in mind that the way they communicate and create relationship has changed: they use online world to create social networks and communicate. It also must be highlighted that Internet has a parallel dimension, completely different from the real world. It gives the opportunity to people to engage and foster relationships, however, it changed the way how we interact, make contact or give support to other people. It has to be mentioned that Internet is also used for educational purposes (e-learning courses), searching for available information, or searching for some kind of entertainment. However, social networks are different, as they include contact with other people, which make activities more engaging. (Park, Kim & Na, 2015).

Living their lives online, people usually see it as a different, parallel reality, so they distinguish their online and offline lives. Based on this, new rules are created, which includes also how to act, what is allowed or not allowed, etc. Even though they may be living on the different geographical locations, young people in the online realities share activities, interests, rules and sense of belonging. Their activities online help them to create a new personality which will free them from their offline personality and social roles. With the online activities, young people have the possibility to show their inner self, because of the anonymity of the internet and they can be the person they want to be (Mesch, 2009a).

When using the computer, young people usually do a media multitasking, which means they are using more activities at one time and can switch between them, and they can include sending messages, using search engines or sending e-mails. For example, when using instant messages, 75% of young people mentioned they implement this activity at the same time while consuming other media content; similar situation is with using e-mail, where 83% of people did media multitasking. (Mesch, 2009a).

As it was said before, for young people, Internet is mostly used for communication (such as messaging, viewing videos and chatting), but they should also be aware of the negative effects it has on them, which can include rude and harmful behaviours.

Internet is innovative, as it brings activities of social interaction, which provides the space for getting to know new people, and if it is viewed in that way, internet is not only a communication channel, but as well as the space for social activity. Some research findings show us that usage of Internet is closely correlated to the risk of bullying, and if young people use the Internet more, they could be more exposed to the cyber bulling. (Mesch, 2009).

When talking about the most ranked online activities, they are the following: social networking, work for school, fun and entertainment, playing games and buying items online. As we all know, social media has become dominant practice among teenagers – and this include usage of Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WeChat or some other platforms. (Sampasa-Kanyinga & Hamilton, 2015). This usage led to some concerning data – there are 97.7% of Internet addicted individuals. This result partially confirmed the findings of Sampasa-Kanyinga and Hamilton (2015): teenagers who use social media intensively were more frequently classified as affected by internet addiction and showed greater psychological stress.

Xin et al. (2018) noted that prevalence of Internet addiction is connected with gender, confirming the results of researches implemented in the past, which show that men had a higher prevalence of either mild or severe Internet addiction. Furthermore, what he found out was that activities which men and women are using on the Internet are correlated with addiction. For example, when they compared men who had internet addiction and used social sites and online gaming (group one) and those who did not implement these two activities (group two), it showed that the first group significantly exceeded the second group (Xin et al., 2018).

A collection of online activities

In this section, we will talk about possible online activities you can implement when working with young people and immigrants. As you already saw, you can do various topics online, but it's important to assess the needs and than start from thinking about the form of your online learning (asynchronous or synchronous, blended) and adapt the activities.

Based on organisation Verke and their web-page DIgitalyouthwork.eu (2021), there are several tips that can be used in order to maximise the impact of online activities. They suggest to do the following activities:

1) Use Discord as a platform
Discord is a platform that allows you to talk and type with others and is quite popular in the gaming communities. It can be set up for free and it is used quite widely among young people in certain countries. The platform can be used both for reaching out to young people and for engaging young people online.
For example, the imitative Save the Internet has used actively different tools in order to reach out to young people and inform about their campaign. One of the platforms they used is Discord, where they gathered a lot of young people supporting their cause.

2) Actively use TikTok to organise different activities
The new social media platforms allow youth workers and youth organisations to use them in order to organise different activities online. Firstly, using TikTok helps in understanding the needs of the young people and what they are talking about. This can give you a good overview what young people are interested in. Even though you will find a lot of funny videos, there is a lot of them which are serious. Furthermore, you can organise a challenge, which are quite popular on TikTok. So, if you make a challenge, you can invite young people to join and gather support for the topic you are dealing with. This can be the topic of immigration, dancing for lowering hate speech or creating a sound that can be reposted and acted out.

3) Discuss different topics with youth using Instagram Live.
Instagram has a significant share of young people who use it. Youth workers can use the method of Instagram Live in order to discuss the topics that are important to young people, especially immigrants. You can organise a Q&A session or talk about different topics and introduce them to young people. Furthermore, you can use Instagram stories to gather feedback from young people on how they are feeling and what are their needs. This can be done using the poll option, and it's quite easy to use.

4) Use simple games to engage young people
Simple games, such as tic-tac-toe or the hangman can be used to have fun and fill in the time for young people. They can help in bonding, understanding others, but also just having fun. In the activities, we would recommend also to use online energisers, which can be different (e.g. stretching – everyone makes a move and everyone repeats; I see… - person should choose a colour, object or something else and say what they see: for example, "I see something blue" – in this case, everyone should find quickly something blue from their room and show it on camera).

5) Host a stream on Twitch
If you have young people who are interested in gaming, you can use the opportunity to host a stream on Twitch and gather young people. If you are not into gaming, you can cover different other topics, as people use Twitch for different purposes. One of the examples was a youth worker who cooked and shared recopies, which was a huge hit in Finland.

In order to find out more about possible activities, we would recommend to check Digital Youth Work webpage, where you can find more examples and inspiration regarding digital youth work.

External communication - Using social media in youth work

Social network is an Internet platform that we use to build relationships with different people primarily based on real life connections and different interests. Networks are usually primarily based on communication in various formats, which includes sharing different media forms, such as videos, blogs, posts, snapshots from live and other. Some of the most used and popular social networks include Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp and Twitter, and nowadays more and more TikTok. As new social media is appearing every day, it is important to develop critical thinking, to see why and how we are using these new platforms (European Commission, 2018a).
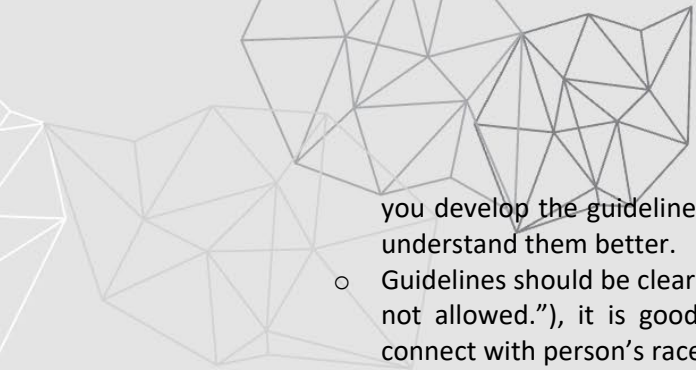
Social media provides opportunities to communicate with young people, enable conversations outside of face-to-face meetings, and opportunities to build relationships and, when others are involved, create a sense of community. When talking about youth work, it is important to notice that youth workers can use social media to communicate with young people in various ways (European Commission, 2018a):

- Broadcasting or marketing communication – using your organisations Twitter or Facebook account, you can inform wider community on the activities you are implementing. For example, you can use this for:
  - Inform young people about new opportunities they might be involved in;
  - Providing updates to your project;
  - Present the results of the work the group of youth you are supporting has done.
- Group communication – you can create a common group on different social media sites, such as Facebook or messaging site (Whatsapp). If this is implemented, it can be a good way to keep youth about activities, new opportunities and other important news. Usage of this helps to easily share information and keep connections with young people.
- Individual messaging – you can use private messages on different sites to reach out to young people. If using this method, have in mind that some policies should be implemented to keep everyone safe. Think about your own best practices in the offline world and copy them to the online world. Have in mind that different things can be interpreted on the different level online, where the non-verbal communication is missing, which can help in getting your message to young people.

If your goal is to stay in touch with youth outside of the sessions and work you are doing, and you want to build a peer support network, it is recommended to create a private online community. This is a place where people involved can ask questions, engage and share information. If you will create such a community, it is good to think how your own best practices work in the offline world and how would they look in the online space. This can include:

- Competent youth workers who will check young people frequently online; it is recommended to have at least two of them.
- In the beginning, it's good to think about who will be part of the online community and how will they find about the group and join in? Who will be responsible for this part?
- Also, it is important to think what level of support you are going to provide to those young people who are not good in digital skills. Is it possible to organise a training course or a introduction before starting the group?
- It is important to create a set of community guidelines: they should include the target group, rules (what is acceptable or not), what are inappropriate behaviours and what are the consequences.
  - As youth work is participatory, it would be a good idea to create guidelines together with young people. You can create a short workshop asking young people to help

you develop the guidelines – in that way they will take the ownership and they will understand them better.

- o Guidelines should be clear and concise. If you set up a rule (e.g. "Rude comments are not allowed."), it is good to explain further what is meant by this rule. Does it connect with person's race, gender or abilities? Or with something else? You can also write what will happen with these comments (e.g. they will be moderated and deleted).
- o When your guidelines are finished, put them in the visible place online, so everyone can access them – you can pin them, so they will be visible on the top of the page.
- Create a moderation policy. What if someone in your community breaks the guidelines? What will you do? This should be communicated before joining the group.
- Think about the different roles you can assign to young people in the group. As the community establishes itself, you might consider assigning people to roles, such as: Conversation Starter, where this person could write posts once a week to engage other members.

Social media can be used to promote your organisation and to engage new target groups (European Commission, 2018a). Even though, there are lots of social networks, you do not need to use them all, think about your target groups and what is their preferred way of communication. Some of the questions you can ask yourself are the following:

- Is our target group using this platform?
  - o In order to find this out, it is suggested to do a quick research, either by asking young people directly or in a survey, or you could also ask their parents, even organise a small gathering to ask for additional questions.
- Is the organisation competent to use the platform?
  - o You need to ask yourself is your staff competent enough to use the platform and use all the features it has?
- Time and budget: can we allocate enough time and budget to make our presence on the platform a successful one?
  - o When creating some pages or using some platforms, they will be time consuming, especially in the beginning. For example, creating a Facebook page can take some time and you will need to put significant effort to reach out to people. Maybe you will need to use Facebook ads to reach out to young people. Think about the budget which you have, as it would be good to have a small one.
- Is the content we are posting engaging and will it produce success?
  - o If you will be using Instagram, you need to ensure (high) quality photos. Think about do you have resources and time to take these kinds of photos, as they are relevant for your audience and can create a success.
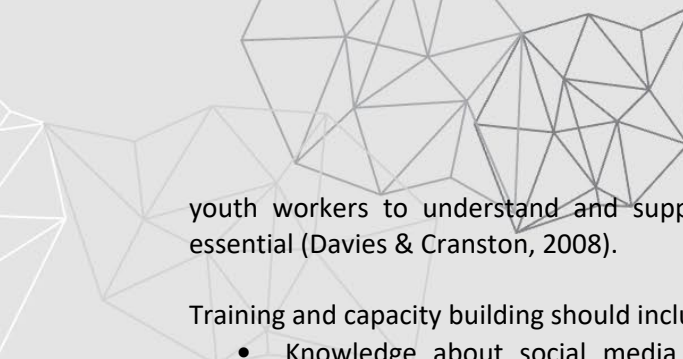
If you would answer these questions, it could help you to decide which platform would be the best for your actions. You can test the platform for some time and make a decision is it for you or not and than decide to move to other platform.

Social media can be helpful to youth work in the following fields:

- Promotion and recruitment – informing about different activities and events.
- Engagement – soliciting young people's opinions.
- Staying in touch – sending messages.
- Sharing variety of media – including photos or music.

The documents on the EU level state that there is a clear need connected with the training and capacity building of youth workers. The training should start from the needs and the current skills youth workers are having. Some research suggests that 86% of youth workers say that "training for

youth workers to understand and support young people's use of social networking" would be essential (Davies & Cranston, 2008).

Training and capacity building should include the following topics:
- Knowledge about social media sites – this would help in assessing the situation and responding to young people's use of different sites.
- Knowledge about opportunities and risks – that would help in raising the competences of youth workers in the field of safety and risks.
- Practicing and using youth work skills in the online world.
- Becoming more confident – this would help in removing the fears and other blocks which youth workers have, and having a training course where they could explore sites could bring some positive advancements in their future work.
- Identifying emerging trends – this is important skill, as it can help to create a response from youth work field.

If youth work can have an ongoing and right support, it can help in effective dealing to the challenges and opportunities of online social networking. It is important to note that many processes, skills and policies already exist in the youth work field, but would be good to apply these in the online context (Davies & Cranston, 2008).

How can youth work get the most out of social networks?

- Promotion and recruitment

Using social media helps youth organisations, initiatives, centres and projects make better promotion and visibility as they are providing online presence, which on the other hand may not be available online. Your target groups can like the page or add you as a friend. When they become your supporter online, you can share information directly to young people through status updates, posting videos, music, blogs and other links. In that way, information related to project or service can be delivered faster, than through regular marketing. In some cases, you will create a post that can reach a lot of young people and can be shared a lot – this means you have created a "viral" post, which will make your services or activities more visible. If you are interested to find out more, check out different resources on the topic "viral marketing" on search engines (Davies & Cranston, 2008).

- Staying in touch

Young people may still not be using e-mail or are moving away from the usage of this service. On the other hand, sending SMS and making phone calls could have significant costs. Because of that, using online channels will help your organisation and young people to stay in contact. If a youth worker has its own profile, or the organisation has its own page, you can easily send messages to young people who added you as friends or liked your page (Davies & Cranston, 2008).

- Engagement

Online activities can create a safe space for consultation with young people, and they can help in creating and maintaining discussions related to services and improvements. This way of approaching young people and engaging them, helps in their inclusion (Davies & Cranston, 2008). However, even though online world can help us, on the other hand it can create exclusion, as some of the young people do not have devices or technical support to access the services. Have in mind that you will be able to engage certain groups of young people, but others could fall out. For example, this could include people who have lower economical background, no computer or lack of internet. This especially is connected with young people from rural areas, where services (including Internet) could be weaker than in the bigger cities.

- Sharing variety of media (stories, music, videos)

One of the core postulates of the social networks is connected with sharing different type of media that can provide space for sharing creative works created by young people and other artists. In some cases, it is used to share stories and celebrate young people and activities youth workers are implemented. If you organisation wants to create more visits and reach out to different young people, it is advised to post photos from events, especially if there are more people on the same picture (so called 'family picture'). In that way, you can also use information to present information about future events and services you are offering. (Davies & Cranston, 2008).

Please note that all of above-mentioned benefits of social media sites can provide us with clues about young people and what is important to them. (Davies & Cranston, 2008). It would be good, in order to have a broader picture to implement some activities online and use desk research to find out more.

Social media campaigning

Social Media Campaign can be defined as the implementation of the marketing campaign in order to gain and improve brand awareness, interaction on social media, as well as to reach key performance indicators set by the organization. They are usually measured using analysis and sales revenue outcomes. (Winterer, 2021). Therefore, a social media campaign can be defined as a "coordinated marketing effort to reinforce or assist with a business goal using one or more social media platforms." (Ecommerce Marketing and Strategy, n.d.).

Setting social media campaign goals

If you want to implement a social media campaign on social media, have in mind that you should be covering one specific goals and that it should be a part of the overall marketing or communication plan. Some of the goals could be increasing visibility on Facebook, or increasing number of followers on Twitter, or getting more reach with posts with a certain topic (e.g. tolerance, equity, immigrants). Some of the goals of your social media campaign could include:
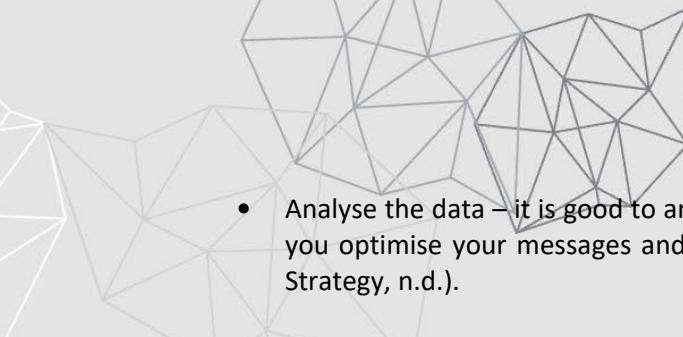- Receiving immediate feedback from your target groups;
- Creating and sending messages;
- Creating and implementing list of audience that are loyal to your organisation and engaged;
- Raising and improving brand engagement;
- Increasing website traffic;
- Raising awareness on the certain topic (Winterer, 2021).

In order to maximise the impact, it is important that you set the SMART goals, especially the ones that are measurable and specific. Before setting your goals, it would be wise to check your numbers before (number of followers, likes, etc.) and it would help you track your success and what could be optimised. Different target groups will have different preferences, especially connected with the networks they use. Have in mind that would be good to use the platform that your target group uses the most (Winterer, 2021).

Best practices for social media campaigns:

- Action-gate: includes inviting your target group to interact with your posts – you can ask them to post questions, you can organise surveys, provide reviews, or contest. It will create more significant engagement.
- Give your target groups a reason to engage: if you give the reason, such as discounts, different gifts or special content, people could easier follow you and provide you with information you need. Should you give gifts or prizes, make it relevant for your organisation – you could, for example, give out some promotional materials, publications you have printed or some other interesting things.
- Be proactive in the campaign – one important element of social media and campaigns is to be proactive: to answer to the inquires fast and provide positive interactions, especially with personal attention. Use "at" or "monkey" sign to tag your followers and create better connection.
- Promote it wider: if you are organising a campaign on the one platform, use other platforms to invite your followers to join there. Actively promote it wherever and whenever you can!
- Focus on your organisations brand – if your organisation has branding (specific fonts, colours or motives), create your campaign around already existing elements, so you can keep others informed about your organisation. Include the branding on all the posts and web pages as well.

- Analyse the data – it is good to analyse the data from the campaign frequently, as it will help you optimise your messages and adjusting the whole strategy. (Ecommerce Marketing and Strategy, n.d.).

How do social media campaigns work?

When implementing your social media campaign, it would be good to have the following elements in mind. Based on Winterer (2021), here are some important elements of the campaigns:

- **Social**

As we already mentioned, being social means that you will share the content that is meaningful for your target group. Being social means also that you answer all the messages and comments and that you are interactive with your audience. Be sure to engage with other pages or events and give them a "like", as it will increase your visibility and reach.

- **Content**

It was highlighted that content should be high in quality and that it needs to attract your target groups. Suggestion is that you create and develop your content yourself, but you can repost some of the existing content available online, especially if it's connected with your target group (e.g. some article or music video). Within your organisation, you can create custom images and videos, other documents such as blogs and infographics. Being visual in the content usually brings more engagement and it will help in the better optimisation of your campaign budget.

- **Advertising**

Using advertising techniques is quite common in social media campaigns. They usually consist of creating an ad and monitoring the progress. These ads can help you in reaching out to your target groups or driving traffic to your website. If you decide to use advertising, have in mind that it's quite budget friendly option.

- **Analytics**

When implementing social media campaigns, measure your data. Within the social media sites, there are tools that enable you to get valuable data, such as level of interaction, number of likes, number of reach, etc. It would be good to also set up the measurements how your visitors interact with organisation's website. (Winterer, 2021)

In general, social media represents the valuable tool for implementing campaigns, as it can help you in receiving global attention and keeps xou connected with your target groups. When implementing a campaign, it can seem scary to monitor and constantly update social media profiles, but at the same time it brings a lot of creativity, fun and can help in refreshing the view on your organisation.

Top tips for building a social media campaign, based on Plan international:

- **Be consistent** – Publicising quality and regular content will help you reach wider and reach out to different target groups; also, it can help in creating anticipation and your target groups will be happy to see more.
- **Encourage interaction** – Making your target group interact is the most important element of social media. It's not important just to spread news, but also to receive feedback. You can do that by creating surveys and polls, as well as using different interactive tools available online. With doing this, you send a message to your target group that you care about their views and opinions and that you really want to listen to them.
- **Understanding your target groups** – The first step in quality campaigning is to think about your target groups. Some of the things you should take into consideration are connected with the language they use, problems and issues they have, concerns they have and what is

their geographical location. Based on this information, you can create tailored messages and campaigns.

- **Show why you care** – In order to campaign have a bigger impact; it's a good ide to emphasize your own relationship with the campaign you are discussing. Don't forget to invite your target groups in your personal sphere, by sharing photos or videos. This creates a feeling of reliability and increases the impact of your messages, because audiences will listen to you more**.**
- **Use hashtags** – If you will use hashtags in your campaign, it will make it more visible, and also if you use friendly ones, it will help you in drawing the audience in.
- **Create content you like** – It is advised to make to create a content related to the issues and campaigns you are close with and you are passionate about. Generally speaking, you're your own passion can be visible by others when you post content. (Plan International, n.d.)

Using technology safely

With all what has been said before, it is important to have in mind how to use the technology safely, especially taking into consideration the level of media and digital literacy of young people, and in this case, immigrants. Online world can be quite overwhelming and young people need to know how to protect themselves and know the basic concepts of digital privacy, digital netiquette and cyber safety. In this part of the Handbook, we are covering these topics.

Digital Privacy

The concept of digital privacy relates to the privacy of the information that is shared in a digital form. For example, some schools have already implemented a safety protocols related to chat rooms and emails to filter out inappropriate words or malicious websites. (Miller, 2016). In formal educational system, teachers need to ask consent forms from parents, so the students can create an account to use a specific website. It is important that teachers have overall understanding of digital privacy to support students. It would be wise to review the privacy policy and avoid websites that require entering names or emails (Miller, 2016). This has become evident now in this new digital era, and especially youth workers should provide safe and private spaces for young people. Digital privacy is also connected with using the GDPR rules set by the EU, so it would be good to learn them and see how we can support privacy of young people even more.

Digital Netiquette

Digital netiquette is a set of rules, either formal or non-formal, which people need to follow when they are communicating online. For example, it is important to be both critical and kind when entering the online "fights", and this is considered to be productive and healthy. (Martin, Gezer & Wang, 2019). And even though we would like to be perceived as nice, the data shows a different picture. One of them showed that 69% of adolescents perceive themselves nice to others when using social media, but on the other hand 88% of them reported to see other people being mean. Furthermore, 15% of adolescents have reported to be a victim online, especially connected with other bullying them. Parents also play a crucial role in the digital netiquette – the parents who were more engaged in the use of technology from their children, as a consequence, adolescents showed significantly higher level of digital netiquette (Kamau, Khamasi & Kosgey, 2016).

Even though young people have better understanding of both technology and using social media than the rest of the population, it was shown they have a lower competences in understanding what are the negative consequences of sharing information using social networks. It was shown that they post care-free and take their posts for granted; besides that, they rarely read privacy policies or cookie policies set up by the services they use (e.g. social networks, subscription sites, web sites). (Kamau, Khamasi & Kosgey, 2016). Therefore, it is important to raise competences of young people in digital netiquette field, so they can know how to act and what information is safe to share online.

Security aspects when being online

According to Kamau, Khamasi & Kosgey, 2016, we have demonstrated electronic dependency, which could be seen by usage of different devices. Therefore, it is necessity to synchronise and back up data in case the device is stolen or damaged. Even though young people know how to use the devices, the question arises if we have the skills to protect ourselves. Sometimes, the most skilled people fail to do some of the following things that can help in strengthening security:

- disabling firewall and not using it;
- forgetting about updating the antivirus programme;
- using the same password across the platforms or not using enough strong password (combination of small and capital letters, numbers and characters);
- keeping the same password for long periods of time;

- avoiding safety precautions (it can include downloading programmes while connecting to a business network);
- avoiding security on your computer (pressing Win + L key).

One more threat to young people is connected with logging out from the services or computers. With doing that, hackers can view the information easily, especially in the situation if people were sharing files. It is important to be aware of the different applications that young people can use on the Internet. Some applications have developed and upgraded their applications to make logins through social media accounts. For example, if you decide to install some applications through Facebook, you can give out the access to your public profile, information about your preferences (movies, music), email address, groups you have joined, photos posted, list of friends, etc. (Kamau, Khamasi & Kosgey, 2016).

Therefore, safety has become a personal responsibility, even though young people and students are not aware of the consequences their behaviour can have. If you want to talk with young people about these topics and find they are closed to the conversation, a good idea is to open a "hotline", where anonymously and in confident surroundings young people can share their stories and troubles. However, youth workers should be careful, as different topics can emerge. (Kamau, Khamasi & Kosgey, 2016).

Cyber safety

When talking about cyber safety, you may also have heard about different other terms, which include talking about digital, online, Internet or e-safety. It can be defined as the responsible and safe use of ICT – Information and Communication Technologies (Third, Forrest-Lawrence & Collier, 2014).

Cyber safety addresses a wide range of issues including: cyberbullying, netiquette, sexting, grooming, online privacy, digital footprints, digital fraud, hacking, piracy, plagiarism, Internet addiction, etc.

In this part we will be talking about relationship between online safety, risks and potential harm. Research has shown that if the person is exposed to risk, it is not necessary that it will end up with harm: it is good to have some exposure, as it helps in developing competences important for understanding the digital life (digital literacy skills) and in that way people can learn about online safety. Similarly, if a person is aware of the potential risks, that does not mean they will change their behaviour and lower the risks. However, it is important that young people and general population is introduced to the risks online, as well as with risks engaging with other people. After knowing the risks, the focus should be put on developing skills and strategies how to deal with the risks. (Third, Forrest-Lawrence & Collier, 2014).

Some scientists and researchers believe that the focus should not be put on raising the awareness about cyber safety, but to put emphasis on the behaviour change. As the debate is still ongoing, there is an evidence that experiential learning brings the most effect. However, this learning should be supported, so young people can navigate risks and see the consequences. With using experiential learning, people can understand online safety better and develop skills important for the future life. (Third, Forrest-Lawrence & Collier, 2014).

When developing a project or an action related to cyber safety, young people should be actively involved in the whole process. This means that youth should think about the issues and design and implement potential solutions. This will help them to better understand the issue and needed

competences. It is important to note that youth workers should focus more on the wellbeing of youth and to empower them in the field of technology, not only having the attitude that young people needs to be protected and safe. (Third, Forrest-Lawrence & Collier, 2014).

In order to have a successful project, action or initiative dealing with cyber security, it is recommended to (Third, Forrest-Lawrence & Collier, 2014):

- Mention the people who are implementing bullying; it is important to know that bullying other people can be connected with some challenging issues or problems young person is having;
- Connect your project with the formal cyber safety education; but also include different information gained through conversation with different stakeholders;
- Highlight that taking risks can help in developing digital literacy, but also acknowledging that risks do not need to be connected with harm;
- Put focus on long term change in behaviours, which will help in developing skills and resilience of young people (not only talking about awareness raising);
- During the implementation, it is important to promote digital literacy and usage of other resources, such as emotional ones;
- Educate young people about the possible legal ramifications of their online interactions
- Use the available literature on legal rights and protective measures;
- Highlight the existing need of parents, youth workers and other youth welfare professionals (such as social workers, doctors, teachers);
- Use links between both live and online practices.

Challenges for young people
In the next ten years, there are some potential issues and challenges for young people, especially connected with the digital online environments. These should be addressed by youth workers and they include (Lorenz & Kikkas, 2019):

- **data and privacy protection**: here, it is not only about the different organisations and companies that can intrude the privacy, but the focus is put on the possiblity to be forgotten on the Internet. On May 28, 2018 the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been validated. The regulation is dealing with the ways of how the data is collected and shared. This means it gives young people the right to be forgotten (if they wish so).
- **harassment and cyberbullying**: we already talked about this issue which is highlighted both by professionals in the field and by parents. The topic of harassment and cyberbullying should be adequatly addresed, as the number of young poeple commiting suicide is rising;
- **hate speech**: even though young people are living in the more diverse society than their parents were, hate speech is still prominent with people who are different in any way (gender, sexuality, disability...). Young people should be introduced to this concept and what are the ramifications of their actions. One of the campaings implemented was the one developed by Council of Europe called «No Hate Speech» which tried to combat hate speech and promote human rights online.
- **social engineering, manipulation and 'post-truth society':** young people should have their critical skills developed, especially related to misinformation and fake news.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as an intentional, agressive behaviour carried out by a group or an individual, by using digital means of communication. Usually it happens more times throughout a ceratin period of time, against a victim, who is in this situation frequently helpless. (Smith et al., 2008). As the Internet progressed, the forms of cyberbulling have become more diverse than those used in regular bullying. The issue is that the persons implementing the harmful actions can stay annonymous, which helps them in doing the act. Sometimes, young people could be exposed to aggresion, which differs to bullying, as the latter happens several times over some time period and it entails the concept of power balance. (Park, Na & Kim, 2014).

It has to be emphasized that the behavioural aspects in the 'regular' bullying and cyberbulling are completely similar. However, the impact and consequences in the online bullying are bigger. First and foremost, the power differences can be quite different in online world. The issue here is that the relationship between the person bullying and the victim is quite different: if it would happen live, you would have bully and victim. However, in online world, victim can become a bully themselves. Or even bystanders can join in. Secondly, the anonymity brings greater concern in the cyberbullying world, as persons can change their roles over time: depending on situation, person can be a bully, victim or a bystander (Park, Na & Kim, 2014). This is especially important for work with teenagers, who are living their lives fully online.

With the level of Internet penetration increasing, cyberbullying is consequently growing. Here it is important to mention that bullying is not an unusual thing in adolescents' life: as some of them explore their relationship, they can be in different situations and become a bully or a victim. This can create some concerning effects, such as suicide, depression and low self-esteem and feeling of worth. (Park, Na & Kim, 2014).
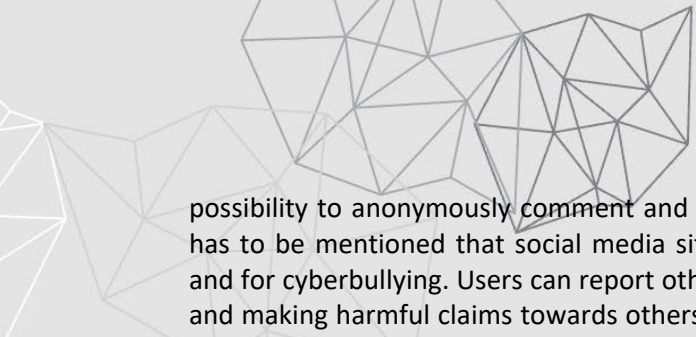
Any activity which is initiated should take into consideration that youth is spending a significant amount of time online and that they are engaging in different activities. The recommendation is to work on different set of values online, such as moral and ethical values and how to behave. Every intervention should emphasise the fact that everything we do has consequences, including online and offline world and that it can have serious impact on other young people. Therefore, it is important to provide them with sense of online reality and how it corresponds to real life. The intervention should not focus only on the consequences, but it should tackle moral and ethical reasons connected with their everyday life and emerging social context (Park, Na & Kim, 2014).

In order to initiate cyberbullying actions, the bullies can use different online activities (websites, messages, cell phones) to reach out to their victims. Especially this is concerning as it can happen at any time of day or night and that the messaging services evolve (Zhang, 2010). This is especially concerning with some of the social media sites, such as Snapchat or Telegram, where persons can time the messages and they disappear after even as little as 2 seconds. In that way, victims cannot react and report perpetrator (even if they were educated and had the strength to do it at that time). This is a completely new threat and talking about these issues with young people, even children from the early age, is quite important.

In cyberbullying, victims still can experience serious social and mental consequences. Researches have shown that chats are well suited for cyberbullying to happen as they offer different functions (private talk, public talk, group talk, etc.) (Zhang, 2010).

One more form of cyberbullying has been shown through trolling. It is a form of pursuing targets online and it happens often to both anyone or celebrities (based on persons' opinions, clothing and general looks). This form of cyberbullying can be tracked down when social media allowed the

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possibility to anonymously comment and harass other people. (Lorenz & Kikkas, 2019). However, it has to be mentioned that social media sites have implemented strict policies for harassing others, and for cyberbullying. Users can report others, or even the content produced, if they feel is harassing and making harmful claims towards others. In that sense, companies are trying to lower the number of these activities happening. One example of this was the page called "High school prostitutes Croatia", where a perpetrator has decided to put the pictures of high school girls and tell that they are prostitutes, with using harmful language. After seeing this, a group of users and experts in youth work and communication decided to act and reported the group and page and have monitored that the new page is not created again. With all the reports filed and with clear explanation of the situation, the pages were removed and the users who were administrators were blocked.

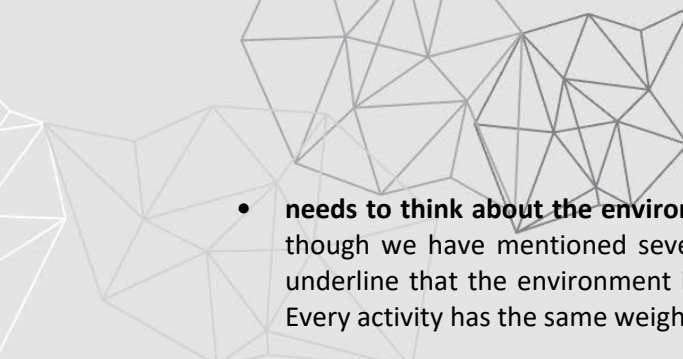## How to maximise your online youth work impact

Basic rules for online youth workers

One of the main pillars and requirements in youth work is connected with building up trust and maintaining credibility, and if the youth work manages to accomplish this, it is an important criterion for success. Therefore, youth workers can follow some simple and general rules, but they are not enough by themselves for success.

A youth worker who is dealing with digital world (Székely & Nagy, 2011):

- **needs to be verifiable and identifiable** – this is quite important for youth workers working online, as others have the need to identify them online easily, using number, e-address or nickname or chat name. In order to get trust, this information should be understandable, identifiable and verifiable using a different source (for example, through using the list of employees on the web page of your youth organisation). Avoid usage of ID that has mixed messages, especially secret or funny messages, as they could lead to distrust. In this case, it is good to use the rules when meeting a new person and asking ourselves: How would we introduce and what would be written on our name cards?
- **needs to be accessible** – Taking into consideration the instructiveness of the digital surroundings, having your name and an address is not enough. You should enable interaction with your target group, providing your contacts via e-mail, chat ID, telephone or mobile number, or social media site where they can reach you directly. With using only empty list of names, without any usage of personality, can easily lead to less credibility. So, youth workers need to have in mind that Internet is not only a tool to consolidate the offline environment. It is up to youth workers to make sure that they can be easily reached out and not having others to search for their new identification.
- **needs to respond** – one of the main requirements of the Internet and social media is that it's important to stay proactive and be responsive – it would be smart to reply as soon as possible and use emojis as well. If you don't have time, it is recommended to at least respond when you will be available to get back to the person. If you provide contact details, than you should be responsive.
- **needs to communicate following the rules of "written verbality"** – the same rules apply as in the offline world; even though communication is easier in the digital form and we communicate more openly and in the laid-back approach, this still means that we need to follow certain rules. For example, sometimes, young people tend to over share on their profiles, even if they don't know the persons who are on their friend lists. You should always have in mind that the digital environment can be as hurtful and harmful as in real life and that it is similar to the real word, both in positive and negative aspects.
- **needs to have in mind that communication in digital world isn't one-way street** – have in mind that as a youth worker two-way communication is important. So, don't use newsletters or homepages as a primary source of your information. If you have a static format in which people can't interact, than you will not get quality feedback and reach out to young people
- should strive towards building a network, not only individual contacts – the efforts in online youth work are successful only if the youth workers build a network of young people, not only individual contacts. The network includes being interactive, communicating with others, building community and knowledge sharing. Youth work will be always successful if it creates a network, but not only provide solutions to young people.
- **needs to be modern** – youth work should innovate and think about the novel elements, which have the ability to attract new young people, and keep the ones who already are using the services or activities. So it would be good to use modern technical solutions.

- **needs to think about the environment of the work: even if it's digital, it is still real –** Even though we have mentioned several times in our publication this information, it's good to underline that the environment in which youth workers are implementing activities is real. Every activity has the same weight as the ones in everyday life. (Székely & Nagy, 2011).

Practical advice for organisations dealing with young people
The corona pandemic showed us that online work is quite widespread and that we can have some obstacles while implementing the activities. Also, before the pandemic started, the trend was that the young people were already spending a lot of time online, and were getting information from their mobile phones and computers. So, it is recommended that you do the following (Székely & Nagy, 2011):

- regularly update information about your organisation on the website, social media or other platforms you use to reach out to young people;
- while creating content, make diverse content, and include different types of media, such as text, photos, videos, audios, and others; think about the key messages you are sending and how they are shaped;
- provide opportunity for your target group, in this case young people (especially young immigrants) to comment, share and give feedback – the possibility to express and give the opinion is quite important; so, interact with your audience and regularly ask for feedback;
- be available: for organisations, especially youth workers, is important that they are available: on each message, you should reply as soon as possible, not later than 24 hours (Székely & Nagy, 2011).

Have in mind that youth workers should address digital literacy needs of young people and that the role of the youth work is to try to organise meaningful activities and opportunities that could be transferrable to everyday lives of young people. (Pawluczuk, Hall, Webster & Smith, 2019).

Role of the youth worker is to empower young people to become active in their local communities and shape their future and society in general. (Sapin, 2013) This is especially important for youth workers, so they should be equipped with relevant training, based on their needs and already adopted skills in the area.

It has to be mentioned that digital literacy and creativity are considered as important skills for the future and because of that new funding has been made available. For example, Erasmus+ programme puts the focus on the digital part of young people's lives and it's a horizontal priority in the new Programme period. The importance of the digital literacy and using digital tools safely has been shown also by creating the Digital Transformation Advisory Board by SALTO Participation and Information, whose aim is to better shape the digital transformation in the youth field. (SALTO PI, 2021). The Erasmus+ programme also gives opportunities for mobility of youth workers, which includes job shadowing, participation in training courses, workshops and other activities and organisations could apply to these in order to discuss current digital needs.

Down below, you will be able to find relevant training needs for youth workers. Even though some needs may have changed in the meantime, they are all still quite relevant and important to cover, as it will help in creating the better system in the future.

Relevant training needs of youth workers, based on *Principles for Youth Workers' Development of Digital Youth Work* (European Commission, 2017)

Practice

- Plan and carry out digital youth work in accordance with the goals of youth work and the needs and wishes of young people; don't forget to integrate the digital activities into your regular offer;
- Using innovative approaches, present activities, tools and methods of digital youth work to young people who you are working with; introduce them as an opportunity for young people to gain something new;
- Empower and facilitate learning based on inquiries and create a safe space where both youth and youth workers can explore, learn and engage in problem-solving;
- Encourage the transition from consumer of the content to creator role;
- Take into account youth rights, accessibility, employment and safety, especially when choosing a tool for implementation of activities;
- When planning the activities, include an appealing evaluation
- Showcase and increase the recognition of the impact of Digital Youth Work

Ethics

- Reflect on the digital aspect of the activities, while transferring your best online practices and decision making processes into the digital format;
- Keep professional boundaries and relationships;
- Activities should be implemented in a way that they empower youth and help them to defend and understand their rights;
- Provide adequate support to young people in order to take control in the fields of technology, digital media and digitalisation in general and include critical thinking methods.

Professional Development

- Search for training and development possibilities in order to learn and improve knowledge in skills in this field;
- Be a pioneer in challenging mindsets and contributing to digitally agile culture within the sector;
- Become active in learning from other youth workers, in sharing the knowledge and cooperate on the international level;
- It is not important to know all the technicalities and be the expert in the field; it is more important to have an interest in this field and open mindset.

Recommendations on training topics important for youth workers and for implementing online youth work activities with immigrants

The expert group consisted of researchers, practitioners and policy makers on the European level have been dealing with the role of youth work, especially in the field of integration of young migrants. They have, during their work, recognised main areas of training for youth workers (Giannaki et al., 2019):

- Topic of different national frameworks related to migration and asylum seekers, which includes knowledge of the law, stakeholders and procedures;
- Skills related to advocacy, especially related to migrants rights;
- Knowledge of the international human rights law;
- Competences important for participating and engaging in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including skills of awareness and communication;
- Usage of social media and digital youth work essentials;
- Implementing the projects that have the core of diversity and intersectionality in themselves;
- Having the skill and ability to engage with young migrants and empower them to become youth work peers and models to other young people;
- Competence to develop and implement non-formal and informal methods in the field of languages and communication skills;
- Skills to provide mental health and well-being support; as well as the ability to know when to contact experts in the health field.

It for that reason invites authorities on the different levels (local, regional, national, European) to do the subsequent things (Giannaki et al., 2019):

- Organisation of training activities on all levels, and for the topic use the areas mentioned above (e.g. advocacy, human rights law, methodology…).
- Regularly evaluate and update training opportunities for youth workers, so they can be addressed for the new challenges and situations that arise;
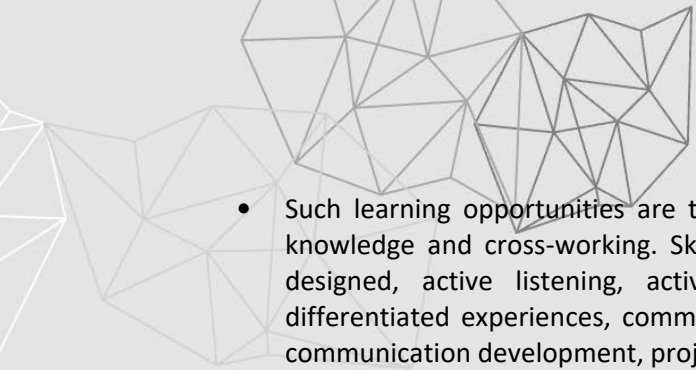- Being proactive in informing about possible learning opportunities;

On the other hand, the Expert group invited youth workers and youth work organisations to implement recommendations as well, and they include:

- Search for the training opportunities and use already existing opportunities on different levels;
- Share your experiences with other practitioners, network and reflect within the sector. (Giannaki et al., 2019).

Taking into account their opinions expressed in the online questionnaire and good practice reports within the project "Becoming a part of Europe project", youth workers tend to affirm the following (Ribeiro & Palhares, 2018):

- In order to promote young migrant, refugee and asylum seeker (YMRA) social inclusion, Youth Workers need to ask for more support so that they can contribute to well-being, employability, security and safety among these young people.
- This is to be done by promoting and encouraging active citizenship and sense of belonging among YMRA, through the development of social networks based on interculturally meaningful learning opportunities. These should aim at discovering and developing their maximum potential (to bring out the best out of them), taking into account their own expectations, contributions and life goals.

- Such learning opportunities are to be built based on informal learnings and intercultural knowledge and cross-working. Skills and abilities are to be developed, policies are to be designed, active listening, active participation, active sharing are to be followed, differentiated experiences, community engagement, qualifications and validation of these, communication development, project collaboration and good practices are to be developed.
- This work is to be mastered taking into consideration the necessity to increase the possibility of allowing them to participate, work together with, build bridges between, and be in contact with others.
- From the beginning to the end, the personality of the youth workers and their ability to personalize, adapt and renew at every step makes the difference.
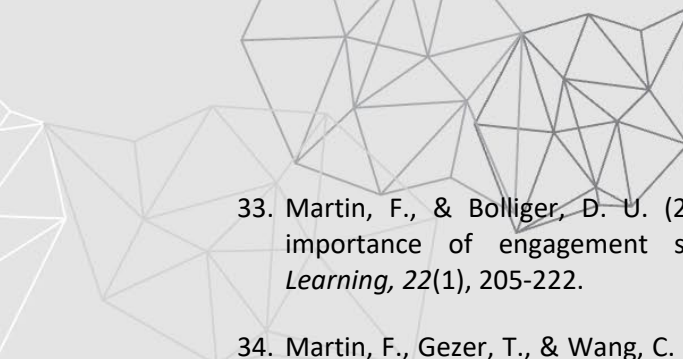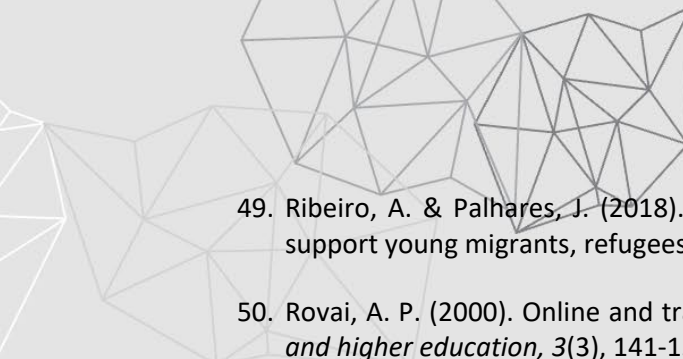
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