Unleashing the Power of Community Animators
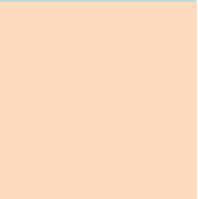
Challenges
in the Digitalisation
of Society

Edited by

VALERIJ DERMOL

ANICA NOVAK TRUNK

ToKnowPress

Unleashing the Power of Community Animators

Unleashing the Power of Community Animators

Challenges
in the Digitalisation
of Society

Edited by
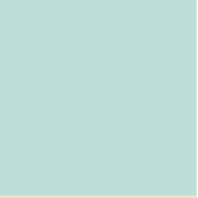Valerij Dermol
Anica Novak Trunk

Unleashing the Power of Community Animators:
Challenges in the Digitalisation of Society

Edited by Dr. Valerij Dermol and Anica Novak Trunk
Reviewers Dr. Kirk D. Anderson and Dr. Anna Rakowska

Contents

5

Chapter Nine

Bridging the Digital Divide: Challenges and Strategies in European Digital Societies

Stephanie Reiner
Verein für sozialwissenschaftliche Beratung und Forschung, Germany
reiner@sowibefo-regensburg.de

Veli Kreci
South East European University, North Macedonia
v.kreci@seeu.edu.mk

Burim Ismaili
South East European University, North Macedonia
b.ismaili@seeu.edu.mk

Shpresa Alija
South East European University, North Macedonia
s.alija@seeu.edu.mk

Susana Amalia de Juana Espinosa
University of Alicante, Spain
susana.espinosa@gcloud.ua.es

Matilde Brotons-Martínez
University of Alicante, Spain
matilde.brotons@ua.es

Maria del Carmen Pérez Belda
University of Alicante, Spain
mc.perez@gcloud.ua.es

Valerij Dermol
International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
valerij.dermol@mfdps.si

Even though ICT access has improved in many European regions in recent decades, inequality of digital opportunity must be acknowledged. The 'digital divide' indicates that not everyone can access and exploit internet information. Jobs, education, media, politics, and administration have changed drastically due to the Covid-19 epidemic, widening

the digital gap even more. Internet trends that threaten democracy, such as disinformation, fake news, and hate speech, also widen the social gap.

EU aspires to eliminate the digital divide and create a 'digital society' where all individuals may benefit from technology. The digital world should also respect democratic rights and principles (European Commission, 2022b). The European Commission intends to train all citizens in digital skills to reach these goals and improve everyone's everyday life, employment, and learning systems in a mutually beneficial way.

The 2000 *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* by the European Commission was about continuing 'lifelong learning' rather than creating one-time learning arrangements. Namely, it is not just institutionalised; 80% of learning is informal. Learning occurs mostly outside educational institutions and often without the purpose of learning. Digitalising formal learning procedures alone excludes many because institutionalised education is generally limited to children, trainees, or professionals. Besides, not everyone can afford or access schooling. For example, financial education has been suggested for school curricula; however, despite the firm intentions, the implementation has been slow for years. We can conclude that institutionalised education typically lags behind society.

We maintain that the foundation of the digital society lies not only in traditional educational institutions but also in other crucial social support systems, including civil society groups, companies, and universities. The inception of the Erasmus+ project 'University and Business Inclusive Digital Learning Coaches (UnInLeCo)' is rooted in this belief. The UnInLeCo initiative is designed with the explicit goal of establishing and reinforcing a robust social support infrastructure. This infrastructure is intended to assist underprivileged populations in enhancing their digital skills and fostering positive learning attitudes. As highlighted, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the digital divide, posing challenges to all partner countries involved in the project. The subsequent sections delve into both general and specific challenges each partner country faces.

Covid-19 Pandemic Digital Challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic showed that education systems are unprepared for digital transformation. Due to the Covid-19 issue, schools and civil society organisations still use digital media and IT technolo-

gies to communicate and educate. Institutions have employed various methods to tackle issues related to digital transformation. For instance, schools have transitioned courses and lessons to online formats or have mailed educational materials. Many institutions have adopted learning platforms, often through collaborative efforts between schools and regional media competency centres or by utilising platforms like YouTube to provide digital learning resources.

The abrupt transformation in education delivery has hit students and parents from economically poor immigrant and socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods hardest. They might have poor computer abilities, limited hardware, and sometimes little writing incentive. The cliché suggests these target populations are addicted to mobile phones, yet studies demonstrate low digital participation. Disadvantaged groups know little about digital learning platforms, video conferences, and systematic utilisation of online resources. Many parents of students lack wireless Internet and use obsolete cell phones and volume-limited mobile data plans. The technology, software, and basic principles and requirements for digital learning tools are also unknown. Thus, the crisis intensified the exclusion of vulnerable people from education and non-formal and informal learning. Overall, social exclusion risk increases due to increasing individual and community expenses.

The Covid-19 crisis highlights one of the prerequisites for effective digital education and training: connectivity and appropriate digital equipment for learners and teachers; confidence and competencies in using digital technologies to support learning processes; cooperation and exchange of best practices and innovative teaching methods. In this period, educational institutions that had invested in digital capabilities were better able to adapt and expand their instructional approaches, engage learners, and continue learning. The situation showed that all educators must be able to use digital technology to teach and ensure everyone can engage in digital education; however, the situation showed that teachers and students need to improve their skills and introduce new learning methods.

As part of the UnInLeCo project, a comprehensive study was conducted, focusing on the specific needs of young students and parents among project partners. The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the unique requirements of partner countries involved in the project:

- After the recession, underprivileged groups in Spain had trouble getting into and staying in school (Escorihuela, 2016). Universities and businesses must have worked with civic society to reengage them. Spanish schools were closed at the start of the lockdown, forcing instructors, students, and parents to adapt to new learning methods. Everyone had to take online classes, and most Spanish students had to study at home.

- The importance of good family-school relationships may be stressed, focusing on Spanish schools' teaching and learning approaches during the Covid-19 pandemic. During crises, collaboration and communication enable the management of educational issues, including online education (Serrano-Díaz et al., 2022). The challenges in online education may be exacerbated when families with limited economic and social resources need to collaborate and communicate. Numerous studies indicate that disparities in access to education contribute to social issues in economically disadvantaged circumstances (López-Noguero et al., 2021). Cabrera (2020) argues that online telematics teaching in Spain during Covid-19 increases educational inequalities among students by revealing the material deficiencies of electronic devices in the most disadvantaged homes, with lower income and fewer resources, especially single-parent households, especially those with parents with compulsory secondary education or lower, from public centres and especially from southern Spain. According to Fundación FOESSA (2021), the 'digital divide' is a new cause of social exclusion and inequality. In a digitalised culture, not having an adequate connection, device, or digital management skills means losing possibilities in jobs, education, public help, and personal social interactions. This affects 46% of households that are excluded, compared to 35% that are not.

- Educational programmes have mitigated the worst effects of new educational gaps with relative success. During the state of alarm, education was moved from schools to families, highlighting an already existing inequality that now takes on new forms: gaps in digital access, technology use, and results. In households with Roma children, 44% lack Internet access, four times the general population, and two times higher in households with disabled children. Fundación FOESSA's (2021) research found that the epidemic

has widened educational disparities in a setting of substantial disparity in training, learning circumstances, and academic outcomes.

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, Slovenian schools collaborated with pupils via video conferences, online classrooms, email, and video explanations. The DIGI school initiative, which targets socially disadvantaged pupils, was another Ministry effort to address technical equipment issues. Donors helped collect more PCS for low-income distance learning students (Ermenc et al., 2021). Schools around Slovenia let kids borrow computers.

- The primary issues with using a computer were sharing it with siblings, not knowing how to use it or not having an adequate setting to learn, and Internet connection issues. Distance learning provides individual learning support for children with learning disabilities.

- Teachers received robust online learning support. In Slovenia, the Ministry for Education provided materials and support that helped teachers teach online. Therefore, some teachers were better equipped to teach than others. However, 67% of Slovenian instructors were willing to use ICT for teaching, according to TAILS 2018.

- Teachers made videos using home electronics, which may be a concern. Therefore, these recordings were sometimes of worse quality and sound, which could irritate pupils with specific deficiencies.

- The Covid-19 problem has hit Roma and migrant children also in Slovenia. Combined with a short digital skills transfer training programme, so-called intercultural mediators, established in a preliminary study, can connect beneficiaries.

- In North Macedonia, Covid-19 affected practically all aspects of society, especially meeting distance. National health authorities in North Macedonia worked hard to employ technology to improve services and manage the health system. UNICEF, WHO, and UNFPA are implementing 'Safe and Innovative Health Services during the Covid-19 pandemic in North Macedonia' with funding from the Covid-19 Fund.

- Educational institutions also suffered from the pandemic. The North Macedonian government halted all schools on March 10

because Covid-19 forced all pupils to stay home. Due to several challenges, most schools were unprepared to switch to distance learning from home. In addition to the problems, this pandemic revealed certain institutions' inability to equip their staff for remote teaching and learning. The next segment was more volatile to these changing teaching and learning delivery strategies, even with educational layers or study groups.

- Due to several challenges, primary education was more susceptible to switching from onsite to online programmes. First, rural schools had trouble using online platforms to organise online classes due to poor internet connectivity or speed. Many households lacked a PC, laptop, or other technology to attend lectures, connect to virtual classrooms, and study frequently. Many senior workers lacked the digital skills to handle this new circumstance. Urban areas with stable internet connections fared well. Thus, the Ministry of Education had to create a national platform for online learning during pandemics.

- Secondary schools were similarly unprepared for this forced learning transfer from onsite to online learning and teaching. Most families had children in primary and secondary schools and just one digital gadget that both could not use, worsening the situation. Except for children, parents had a more challenging time paying high internet fees and acquiring gadgets for online schooling.

- Some private universities in North Macedonia that had already been using some Learning Management System (LMS) were almost ready for this crisis situation, and students and teachers were exposed to online learning due to the digitalisation of many services.

- In addition to hardware and software issues, teachers needed training on such programs. Most had trouble assigning tasks online. They might meet students online but not set up and retrieve and collect assignments. Amid growing uncertainties due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education in North Macedonia announced that over 270,000 high school and primary school students, including 19,000 first graders, would start school online at home in 2020/2021 (Civil.Today, 2020) communicating with their teachers via the national distance learning platform. The national remote learning platform sought to standardise and unify

education. However, educational access remained a problem, especially for Roma, disabled, and at-risk children (Hunt, 2020).

- Covid-19 and the well-being of children and parents made managing students' well-being vital. There were several ways this epidemic had affected people. Many psychological concerns and unanswered questions caused demotivation and worry. All villages in Macedonia faced the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused problems (Zeqiri et al., 2022).

- Movement restrictions, quarantines, distance learning, and social isolation have harmed children's mental health. Distance learning increased students' tension and anxiety by 25% in secondary schools and 18% in elementary schools (United Nations North Macedonia, 2021).

- Due to the Covid-19 isolation and restrictions on face-to-face interactions, many institutions had to resort to remote communication. This included scenarios where patients communicated with their doctors, service providers interacted with their clients, businesses engaged with stakeholders, and professors connected with their students. The pandemic highlighted the need for enhanced digital capabilities to navigate such challenging circumstances.

- Prominent educational institutions shaping public opinion in North Macedonia faced the crucial task of addressing social conflicts, particularly those related to the Roma minority, given the nation's rich intercultural diversity. It was imperative that students from diverse backgrounds were exposed to social phenomena and encouraged to develop innovative solutions to mitigate these challenges.

- During the Covid-19 pandemic in Germany, typical school programs shifted predominantly online. However, refugee and migrant students were often left out due to their parents lacking access to necessary tools like hardware, software, and virtual teaching expertise. In response, there has been collaboration among universities, towns, and industries to address this gap and ensure these students have the support they need.

- The emphasis on our children highlights societal disparities, but the digital competence of European youth is not solely determined by their parents' education, background, or financial status. It is evident that rural residents face fewer digital access op-

tions, and factors like gender, age, and disability contribute to the digital divide. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic underscored unequal participation in digital transformation. Considering these aspects is crucial for shaping a democratic, digital Europe.

- Despite its potential to simplify living, seniors in Germany are routinely barred from digital media. Senior-friendly computer and mobile phone courses and online platforms are useless without an internet connection. Non-use is primarily due to technical-structural hurdles, notably in rural areas and senior homes. Unlike young target groups, seniors are generally critical of new media (SozialBank, 2019).

- In Germany, the 'digital divide' between major and minor municipalities is still enormous due to 'digital refuseniks' and 'digital laggards' (Initiative Stadt.Land.Digital, 2017), but rural areas have caught up. Though they lack digital media competency and use, their receptivity to it has grown (Initiative D21, 2019, 2020; Roßmann, 2020; Bürger & Grau, 2021).

- 48% of Germans want to be more digital, such as buying tickets on the app, arranging a doctor's appointment online, or using smart home apps. The survey showed that digital technologies are transforming daily life and that many struggled. According to the study, more training in digital technology skills is needed (Digitaltag, 2023).

To summarize the findings, let us break it down into the following key points:

1. Underprivileged communities in Spain still struggle to obtain and maintain education post-recession. Universities, corporations, and civic society must work together to solve these problems.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic forced most schools to switch to online learning. Family-school interactions were emphasised to combat the digital divide and social issues caused by low resources.

3. The pandemic caused educational inequality in rural areas. The issues were sibling computer sharing, digital literacy, and online learning video quality.

4. The pandemic made switching from onsite to online schooling difficult in most countries. Teacher training and unequal digital tool availability were significant difficulties.

5. Pandemic limitations caused psychological disorders, demotivation, and anxiety among students and parents.

6. Seniors and rural communities face a persistent digital divide. Ongoing digital adoption issues require strong initiatives.

7. European youth digital competence is affected by many causes, including the Covid-19 epidemic, which highlighted unequal digital transformation.

8. Rural-urban differences hinder digitalisation. Digital literacy and training must increase to close the gap.

9. Despite a desire for digitalization, problems, including digital technology issues, require substantial training.

These challenges must be observed and approached because a 2019 OECD study found that digital change can create inequality and cause individuals to lose touch. A comprehensive and coordinated political approach with skills development initiatives as a core part of the European digital transformation is essential to strengthening skills.

Characteristics of the Digital Divide

Our study analysis and country-specific research highlight the factors influencing digital participation, which include:

Geographical Location. In recent years, there has been progress in narrowing the digital divide in Europe, especially regarding basic broadband access. However, towns and rural areas still face challenges and may not benefit as much from digital advancements as European cities do (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung, 2017; Nüßlein & Schmidt, 2020; Masterson, 2022). Despite efforts, a digital gap persists. Initiatives such as the European Parliament's Briefing on 'Bridging the digital divide in the EU' aim to address this rural-urban discrepancy (Negreiro, 2015; DigitalEurope, 2020; European Committee of the Regions, 2021). The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) by the European Commission (2023b) is a tool that can enhance transparency regarding digital performance indicators in these areas.

Education Level. As various studies indicate, lower education levels tend to diminish digital competency. Research consistently shows a strong correlation between digital skills and the number of years of education. Individuals with limited or no education at the low and middle school levels tend to exhibit weaker digital abilities. This digital divide

poses a significant risk of leaving educationally disadvantaged populations behind, impacting various aspects of life as digitization continues to advance (Bachmann et al., 2021).

Economic Class. Education plays a crucial role in determining economic class, and studies show that income significantly influences one's readiness for the digital future. Individuals with higher incomes are more daring in embracing digital technologies, often leveraging the latest gadgets and superior internet connections. This digital advantage is closely tied to financial capacity, with internet access becoming increasingly dependent on income levels (Nüßlein & Schmidt, 2020). The *Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027* (European Commission, 2020b) and *DigComp Framework* (European Commission, 2022a) aim to improve critical multipliers, educators, and risk groups' digital readiness. From 2019 to 2024, the European Commission will focus on 'A Europe fit for the digital age'[1] through the Erasmus+ programme. Another noteworthy endeavour is the European network 'All Digital – enhancing digital skills across Europe,'[2] which empowers digitally disadvantaged groups to gain digital skills and take advantage of digital transformation.

Writing and Linguistic Skills. Refugees and migrants often face educational disadvantages, which extend to challenges in digital competence. Consequently, individuals who are illiterate or struggle with language may find it challenging to stay connected online. Proficiency in a language is closely tied to one's origin, and the migration process can diminish social participation, exacerbating these difficulties (Borde et al., 2021; Bachmann et al., 2021; European Commission, 2020a, 2021a). Recognising the challenges migrants face, a comprehensive plan for integration and inclusion spanning from 2021 to 2027 has been established. The issuance of the *White Paper on Migration Uncertainty* (Bijak et al., 2023) further emphasizes the commitment to enhance integration efforts and shape EU migration policy. The strategic focus revolves around leveraging ICT-based solutions, implementing participatory design and co-design approaches, and fostering end-to-end cooperation among various stakeholders involved in integrating migrants into European societies.

[1] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit
-digital-age_en
[2] https://all-digital.org

Disabilities. Digitalization presents significant opportunities for individuals with disabilities, yet existing access barriers need addressing through digital skills training. It is crucial for society to be aware of these online obstacles, particularly those involved in designing digital media, hardware, or IT programs. Europe has taken steps, including publishing a study on inclusive web accessibility for people with cognitive disabilities (European Commission, 2021b). Despite these efforts, the Social Europe Initiative criticizes the European Commission for not sufficiently addressing disability issues at the European Futures Summit, highlighting concerns about conference participation and the accessibility of the online platform (Moledo & Couceiro, 2022).

Age. Age affects digital capabilities, too. Children and teens' computer skills are overstated, according to studies. Even if 14- to 24-year-olds are 'digital natives' who grew up with the Internet and shaped its technical advancements via their actions and interactions, their digital competence is frequently insufficient. Meanwhile, internet abilities are generally weaker, especially among older people, sparking public controversy. People born before 1980 are called 'digital immigrants' because they must learn to use digital technologies as adults. The European Commission must confront the ageing society due to demographic change. The European Commission's (2010) *Digital Agenda for Europe* aims to address these issues.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a heightened emphasis on political accountability in supporting seniors. A noteworthy example is the Council of Europe document titled *The Digital Era? Also my Era!* (Hermans, 2022). This document provides a comprehensive overview of the subject, highlighting promising practices and emphasizing age-appropriate media education.

Additionally, a 2021 survey by the Council of Europe, titled *Against Ageism and Towards Active Social Citizenship for Older Persons* (Quinn & Doron, 2021), explores the impact of the pandemic, specifically focusing on the use and necessity of digital technologies to ensure social participation and active citizenship among older individuals. This survey addresses ageism in a digitally influenced world.

Looking ahead to *Europe's Digital Decade: Digital Targets for 2030,* the European Commission underscores the importance of digital citizenship for adults (European Commission, 2023a). This requires a commitment to freedom of choice, protection and security, solidarity and

inclusion, participation, and sustainability. Notably, in the transformation process, there is a central emphasis on prioritizing people to foster democracy.

Gender. While gender differences in childhood and adolescence are relatively minor, they tend to widen in adulthood, rendering women another vulnerable group. This gender disparity in digital skills and opportunities is underscored by the OECD study *Bridging the Digital Gender Divide* (OECD, 2018). Moreover, the European Commission highlights that women are less likely to possess specific digital skills and work in the field of ICT compared to men. In response to these challenges, the European Institute of Gender Equality actively promotes gender equality and digitalization in the EU (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018). Members of the European Parliament are also advocating for digital gender equality through initiatives such as their *Spotlight on EU Action for Women* (European Commission, 2020c) or more digitally oriented EU measures for women in Digital Scorecards (European Commission, 2021c), and the *EU Women's Digital Manifesto* (n.d.) along with organising events in collaboration with Euractiv. Recognising the need for transformative change, the *Memorandum for Lifelong Learning* (European Commission, 2000) identifies 'learning in social environments' as a crucial field of action. It emphasizes that institutionalised learning alone cannot effectively compensate for the disadvantages faced by women in the digital realm.

Learning Opportunities in Social Settings for Digital Societies

Learning in a social environment refers to outside institutionalised learning processes, such as school, company, and adult education, which are especially important during global change. Examples include voluntary work, cultural, social, and ecological projects, and forming opinions and social learning in digital spaces (Trier et al., 2001; Stahl, 2003; Amadeu Antonio Stiftung, 2019).

The European Commission (2000) introduced the term 'learning in a social environment' in the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* and identified three categories of 'appropriate learning activities':

- Schools award degrees and qualifications for formal learning.
- Non-formal learning includes 'on-the-job learning' and art, music, sports courses and civil society activities like youth organisations, trade unions, and political parties.

- Informal learning is a natural part of daily life, but unlike the other two, it is not intentional, so learners may not perceive it as increasing their knowledge and skills, but it shapes them.

Social learning provides a valuable opportunity for excluded and disadvantaged groups to develop social skills and digital abilities directly relevant to their everyday lives and practices. This becomes particularly crucial because the Internet and social media while connecting people globally, pose potential threats to society and individuals. Cybercrime, the spread of fake news, disinformation, and the prevalence of hate speech have become commonplace, posing significant challenges to democracy on a global scale.

In light of these concerns, it is essential to safeguard the democratic values we uphold offline in the digital realm. Recognizing the importance of a safe and trustworthy internet, the EU and international partners have jointly proposed, in the *Declaration for the Future of the Internet* (European Commission, 2022b) initiatives to ensure the Internet serves as a secure space for everyone. The goal is to protect democracy and humanity in the online environment, aligning with the values we cherish in the offline world.

Digital Society Partners

In building and navigating a digital society, several partners play vital roles. These include government universities, companies, and civil society organisations.

The *government* bears the responsibility of providing essential resources for the digital society and formulating educational support measures and regulations. However, effective collaboration with other social actors, particularly universities and companies, is indispensable as they serve as crucial partners, catalysts, and contributors of resources.

The Triple Helix discussion, which involves *universities collaborating with industry and public organisations,* is further enriched by the concept of the 'Third Mission.' This broader mission encompasses knowledge and technology transfer, regional engagement, collaborative research with *civil society,* and active student participation.

In a digital society, *businesses* play a pivotal role. They must consider the societal impact of digital products and services during their development and ensure compatibility with social values. The digital trans-
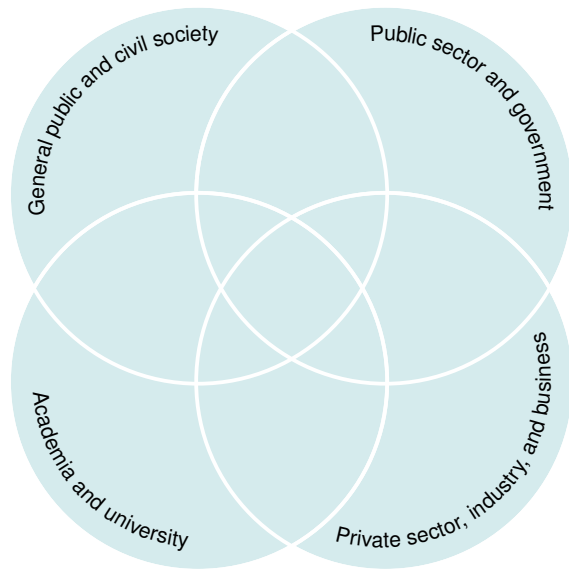
FIGURE 9.1

Four-Helix (adapted from GRRIP Project (2020) and Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung (2023))

formation also extends the traditional understanding of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (Andersen, 2022).

Digital support from *civil society organisations* is vital to the digital transformation, particularly because they engage with disadvantaged groups and comprehend their unique needs. These organisations can facilitate the acquisition of IT basics and advanced skills in IT systems and processes through accessible educational initiatives like computer courses and informal learning.

As a resource-based intervention, empowerment utilizes social support to enhance autonomy and self-determination in a digitally influenced world. In this context, supporting actors can act as 'coaches' to assist individuals who may feel powerless in navigating the digital realm and help them overcome technical challenges. Social animators, in particular, can play a significant role in fulfilling this coaching function.

In the Erasmus+ Project UnInLeCo, the key idea was that universities, businesses, and selected civil society organisations leverage their digital expertise and educational resources to train so-called digital learning coaches. These coaches, drawn from relevant civil society organisations and comprised of both professionals and experienced volunteers, play a pivotal role. They facilitate the dissemination of digi-

tal skills and serve as multipliers, extending their support to a diverse range of individuals, including both advantaged and disadvantaged populations within the community.

Empowering Individuals Through Digital Inclusion Initiatives

This section describes some good practices from several European countries, Spain, Slovenia, North Macedonia, and Germany, highlighting diverse approaches and innovative projects promoting digital inclusion and skill development and showing that empowerment is essential besides access to the target group and a trustworthy relationship because informal learning occurs in a familiar social environment. People are encouraged and given easy access to the digital world, especially with civil-sector support.

The examples outlined below demonstrate that various aspects such as media production, social media engagement, everyday software and hardware usage, smart city initiatives, digital business model development, digital mindfulness practices, cybersecurity awareness, IT programming skills, and more have the potential to empower individuals in a digital world. All the examples were identified within the UnInLeCo project.

Spain

- *Millennials* project is co-financed by the European Social Fund, focusing on training courses for 16–29-year-olds. It covers a range of digital skills, from cybersecurity to project management.[3]
- *Alicante Futura* offers a 100-day digital boot program, preparing non-technical individuals for the digital job market.[4]
- *Madrid for Refugees* empowers refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants with digital literacy skills for social integration and job-seeking.[5]
- *E-Inclusive* project by Cocemfe creates a global telematics web platform, enhancing digital accessibility for people with disabilities.[6]

[3] https://www.eoi.es/es/empleo/empleo-y-practicas/en-que-consiste
[4] https://www.impulsalicante.es/alicantefutura/queesalicantefutura
[5] https://madridforrefugees.org/en/digital-literacy
[6] https://www.cocemfe.es/informate/noticias/clm-inclusiva-cocemfe-pone-en-marcha-un-proyecto-piloto-de-transformacion-digital

- *Using Digital for Employment.* The Roma Secretariat and Red Cross launched 'Using Digital: Socio-Occupational Itineraries from Analogue to Digital,' innovating employment support processes.[7]
- *We Break the Digital Divide.* Caritas's project ensures safe internet use for families, fostering digital literacy.[8]
- *Jovesolides E-Inclusion* promotes digital literacy through their 'E-Inclusion project,' especially among the aged and unemployed.[9]
- *Digital Boot Camp.* Verne Group offers a 'Digital Boot Camp for Non-Technical Professionals' to become digital employees in just 100 days.[10]
- *Proyecto e-IRIS* helps libraries establish modular digital citizenship spaces for users and people with disabilities.[11]
- *Programa CERES.* The European Social Fund-funded 'Programa CERES' trains female trainers to teach rural women basic computer and information skills.[12]
- *Next Generation Funding* supports the 'Programa de alfabetización digital' in various regions, addressing the rural digital gender gap.[13]

Slovenia

- *Third Age University* promotes intergenerational activities and offers various ICT-focused programs.[14]
- *Symbiose Genesis* is an intergenerational project providing local ICT workshops for seniors.[15]
- *Digital Skills for Integration and Active Citizenship* project aims to improve the digital skills of migrant people to support their integration and active citizenship.[16]

---

[7] https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/prensa/comunicados/131803.html
[8] https://www.caritas.es/accion_social/rompemos-brecha-digital
[9] https://jovesolides.org/proyectos-emprendedores/e-inclusion
[10] https://www.vernegroup.com/actualidad/noticias/lanzamos-el-programa-new-digital-workers
[11] http://eprints.rclis.org/42680
[12] https://programaceres.es
[13] https://www.cursosmujerrural.es
[14] https://www.utzo.si/en
[15] https://simbioza.eu
[16] https://discproject.eu

North Macedonia

- *Romaversitas* programme empowers Roma undergraduates with digital skills.[17]
- *Roma Economic Development Initiative* empowers vulnerable communities economically and offers digital skills training.[18]
- *eLearning Centre 'IT Training and Education'* supports universities using technology for teaching and learning.[19]
- *SEE University Business and Innovation Centre* fosters start-up enterprises and digital skills training.[20]
- *SEEU Quality Assurance and Management Office* provides training for academic and administrative staff, including digital skills training.[21]

Germany

- *Computerspende Regensburg* donates computers to low-income individuals and promotes digital autonomy.[22]
- *Binary Kitchen.* The non-profit hackspace 'Binary Kitchen' creates digital projects and collaborates with other associations.[23]
- *Campus Asyl* promotes equal participation through various activities, including digital empowerment initiatives.[24]
- *Digital Empowerment Initiatives.* Several organisations in Germany are dedicated to educating refugees and promoting digital empowerment.[25]
- *We Integrate* association supports politically persecuted people through the 'We Code IT Academy' project, offering digital skills training.[26]

---

[17] https://romaversitas.org.mk
[18] https://redi-ngo.eu/projects-list
[19] https://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/centres/eLearning
[20] https://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/centres/bic
[21] https://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/about/quality-assurance-management
[22] https://computerspende-regensburg.de
[23] " https://www.binary-kitchen.de/wiki/doku.php
[24] https://www.campus-asyl.de/ueber-uns
[25] https://www.fczb.de/project/digital-empowerment
[26] https://digitale-helden.de