

ALL
DIGITAL

ENHANCING
DIGITAL SKILLS
ACROSS EUROPE

The role of MEDIA LITERACY in
the promotion of
COMMON VALUES and
SOCIAL INCLUSION

POSITION PAPER

The role of MEDIA LITERACY in the promotion of COMMON EUROPEAN VALUES and SOCIAL INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of modern society accelerated in the last decade, bringing about massive economic, technological and social change and a new set of ensuing challenges to be addressed. One of these challenges is the overwhelming, and at times controversial, amount of information available to everyone at the click of a mouse. In this context, today's citizens need to acquire new skills to manage this new reality. Digital skills, critical thinking and media literacy are key skills and competences needed by today's modern citizens.

While we live in an increasingly **digital society**, a significant number of European citizens continue to lack basic digital skills. Media practices have changed and now we are not only receiving information passively. Anyone can be active in content creation and (re-)produce (dis)information. For example, mobile technology and ubiquitous Internet access allow citizens to produce real time information, including content for mass media (newspapers, TV channels).

The production of information and news thus no longer remains in the capacity of journalists, but something within everyone's capacity. Without the necessary skills, however, the creation of information and news is not always done in a

responsible or professional manner. This is only one example of many, highlighting why media literacy is more important than ever.

WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy includes all technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow a citizen to access, have a critical understanding of the media and interact with it.

Digital Skills are necessary to access most modern media, which is increasingly available only in a digital medium. Of equal importance to the acquisition of digital skills is teaching citizens to thoughtfully **use their digital skills** and hold a sense of responsibility (civic-mindedness) in the production, consumption and sharing of media. Therefore, digital competences should be taught hand in hand with **critical thinking** and civic skills. Otherwise, they will remain mere technical skills for using digital tools.

In addition, **communication skills** (language) are important, since they are the tools to express and articulate an opinion or a thought. By sharing personal thoughts on (online) media, people feel part of the society and that feeling of belonging is key for their social inclusion.

WHAT ROLE FOR MEDIA LITERACY IN PROMOTING COMMON VALUES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Education, including non-formal learning, is the most powerful vehicle to promote common values, social inclusion and improve social integration and social mobility.

As people spend more and more time on the Internet and engaging in digital media, educating them to use the internet properly helps to build resilience against discrimination and indoctrination, and ensures that everyone uses media in an informed and responsible way.

Hence, in a digital society, media literacy as a combination of digital and cognitive skills, plays an important role to promote EU values and social inclusion in several ways:

Resilience

Media literacy can help people to **avoid becoming victims** of “fake news”, bullying, hate speech, or falling into an information bubble or echo-chamber (as opposed to being able to access and assess information from different sources and points of view). Without media literacy, people, especially from disadvantaged groups, miss out on social opportunities or are stuck in a limited (digital) environment which only confirms and amplifies biased opinions.

Online media plays a central role in spreading extremist or racist ideologies, so critical use of media is crucial to resilience to those. Experts agree that fostering media literacy and raising awareness of online content and online strategies of extremist propaganda can challenge (violent) extremism ¹. If people are equipped with the necessary digital and civic skills, the dissemination

and the acceptance of those ideas will be more difficult. E.g., the French Ministry of Education launched a national strategy to fight radicalization ². The strategy foresees, among others, a curriculum for schools, which includes courses on Media, Information, Ethics and Political Education. The courses aim to engage young people and develop a sense of belonging to a society.

Content creation

There is a clear difference in the way socially or economically disadvantaged people and those who have a higher living standard use digital media. The first are more likely to merely consume digital media, while the latter – to create digital content.

On the other hand, today everyone can easily spread their own values and thoughts, for example through social media. Media literate online users are aware of the ethical, social and legal terms of digital content creation. Media literacy programmes are key to empower all citizens to become responsible digital content creators and, consequently, contribute to social mobility.

Dissemination

In a digital world, media is key to spread common values across Europe and create positive messages and counter-narratives.

Social inclusion

Digital exclusion can lead to social and economic exclusion, unemployment and poverty. Citizens who are not media literate face multiple difficulties to function fully in a digital society and this affects their full and responsible online participation.

¹ <https://theconversation.com/leducation-aux-medias-une-urgence-contre-la-radicalisation-cognitive-des-jeunes-72065>

² <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid72525/l-emi-et-la-strategie-du-numerique.html>

WHAT ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

Digital competence centres as education and training providers in the non-formal field, play a significant role in teaching media literacy. While they cannot replace schools (they do not have the same universal outreach), they **develop functional learning models** that can eventually be implemented in formal education on a large scale. In this sense, they are a kind of “experimentation labs” where innovative learning methods are being developed and tested with learners.

Secondly, non-formal education and training providers can reach **disadvantaged and disengaged groups** that formal education cannot, such as early school leavers and people who have left the formal education system (adults, elderly, workforce), as they offer more flexible training programmes.

Thirdly, non-formal training providers are **advocates** for state regulations and policy frameworks to enable teaching media literacy and develop media literacy programmes. They create and support networks of opinion makers. In this way, they inform public authorities and opinion makers about the real-life challenges or difficulties of teaching media literacy in the field.

Moreover, non-formal education and training institutions organise campaigns or events to raise public awareness about media literacy and available training possibilities.

Finally, non-formal training providers organize capacity-building activities and learning opportunities for a wide range of participants (teachers, trainers and citizens in general), such as training of trainers, learning content development, through MOOCs or face-to-face trainings.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAMMES

The members of ALL DIGITAL (formerly Telecentre Europe aisbl) provide several trainings and educational support to citizens, teachers and trainers at a national, regional and local level around the continent.

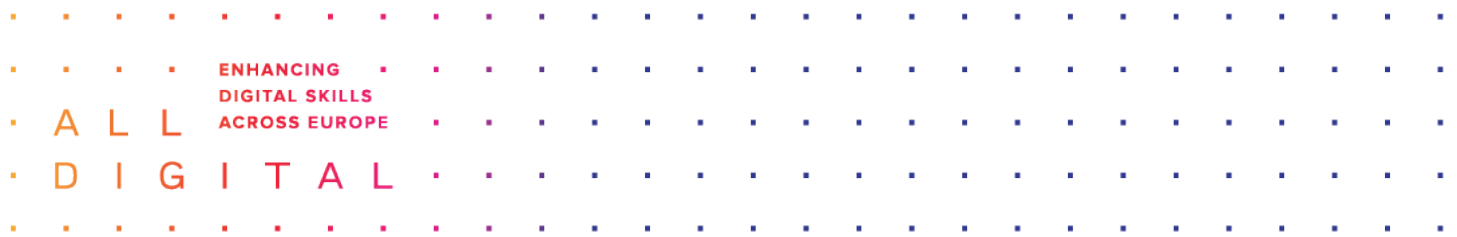
Telecentar Croatia

Telecentar has implemented several projects that aim to improve digital skills and promote media literacy in collaboration with other organisations from civil, public and private sector. The overall aim of these projects is to set up media labs in educational and cultural institutions (universities and cultural centres). The multimedia trainings in the media labs combine the basics of photography, audio, video, coding and digital storytelling in mobile journalism and web design. Based on their experience in the non-formal field, Telecentar has contributed to the development of occupational standards, qualification standards and curricula for the vocational programme for media technicians and the higher education programme for multimedia designers.

The Media Labs are facilities designed for implementation of project based learning (PBL). The entire workflow of media pre-production, production and post-production is digital and therefore it depends on the development of digital competencies.

The Association Study Centre City of Foligno

The Association Study Centre City of Foligno (CSF) is an active member of Digital Cultural Heritage, a flexible platform for experimentation and innovation and at the same time supports the birth and growth of new disciplines and trends, for instance, Digital Humanities, virtual museums, immersive tours. CSF is currently conducting two training activities in the field of Digital Cultural Heritage, both of which are in cooperation with the Digital Cultural Heritage, Arts and Humanities



School (DiCultHer) and Stati Generali dell'Innovazione (General States of Innovation).

Museater and Augmented Cultural Heritage

Museaters is a course on the valorisation of cultural heritage through augmented and virtual reality, which is open to everyone interested in improving the educational experience of young or adult students related to the cultural or artistic field. The course aims to provide the theoretical expertise, operating methods, and innovative design tools for digital enhancement of heritage.

The participants work together to design, co-create and present museatrical (museum + theatrical) representations of local heritage and traditions, developing theoretical and practical competences in the field of enhancement of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage through digital storytelling techniques, creation and sharing of open data, video-editing and graphic development, web-marketing.

Quintana 4D

The second programme is called Quintana 4D and involves students in the co-creation of a Virtual Museater for a local festival "Giostra della Quintana", a baroque re-enactment of an equestrian tournament". Moreover, it is a work-based initiative for high-school and VET students who want to have their school traineeships in the field of culture.

Media Aktie Kureghem-Stad (MAKS vzw)

Maks vzw is an NGO recognized as a non-formal education centre. It has centres in two of the most underprivileged neighbourhoods of Brussels (Cureghem and Molenbeek). Maks vzw offers low-cost courses and a counselling service, which help people to get a job. Maks' goal is to facilitate social mobility by fighting digital illiteracy on all levels.

Over the years, Maks has conducted several projects on media literacy and promotion of values."Je suis Mohammed, Leonie, Charlie. Of net nie" (I'm Mohammed, Leonie, Charlie. Or not just yet) is a project based on the polarization of

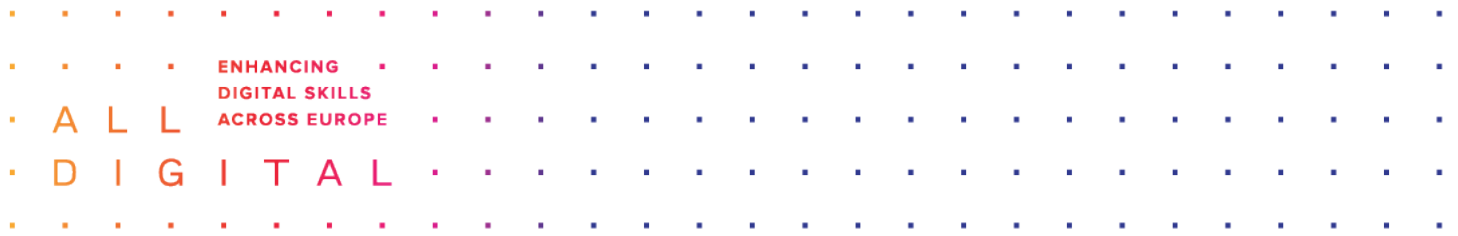
media after the Brussels bombing attack. The participants were young people who live in Brussels and during the project created digital stories concerning radicalization, social exclusion and respect.

"Mediawijze workshops op school" (Smart with media workshops in school) is another project, in which children and young people in schools are trained in digital skills like coding, stop-motion, portfolios on computers, and the use of tablets. In parallel, through these workshops, the teachers are educated in using digital methods in their classes. Workshops are run by Maks' facilitators and trainers, either in the school or at Maks' premises, depending on the agreement with the school.

Youth e-Perspectives on Migration (YeP)

"Youth e-perspectives on migration" is a project funded by Erasmus+ Programme, Youth in Action, Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships. YeP project takes into consideration the current refugee crisis in Europe and at the same time the need to teach young people digital and media literacy skills. Partners developed an innovative methodology for enhancing the media literacy and digital skills of young people and boosting their active citizenship and social entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the project's focus theme is the refugee crisis and the project's methodology was designed in order to empower young people to address issues related to migration, look for solutions and provoke actions by using digital tools.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

Funding

Local, regional and national public authorities should provide targeted funding schemes for initiatives that promote the acquisition of media literacy competences, especially those implemented by non-formal education and training providers as funding is a significant obstacle for them.

By supporting such projects, they support citizens who are excluded from formal education and provide them the opportunity to improve their lives and to fully and responsibly participate in society.

Awareness-raising campaign(s) targeting all groups of citizens are equally important to a successful promotion of social values, like altruism, fairness and respect.

Recognition and promotion

Furthermore, the learning models developed by non-formal training providers should be recognized, shared and exploited on a larger scale in formal education. Supporting the development of the learning models developed in non-formal education means supporting innovation and experimentation in designing trainings which if proven successful can have a much wider impact.

ENHANCING
DIGITAL SKILLS
ACROSS EUROPE

ALL
DIGITAL

RUE DU COMMERCE 123
1000 BRUSSELS

INFO@ALL-DIGITAL.ORG
T. +32 2 895 5775

JOIN US !

MORE INFORMATION ON
WWW.ALL-DIGITAL.ORG