Internet access for Participation, Learning and Active Youth

I-PLAY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

how to foster digital inclusion

I-PLAY

INTERNET ACCESS FOR PARTICIPATION, LEARNING, AND ACTIVE YOUTH

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🌐 https://europeforcitizense.wixsite.com/i-play

👤 https://www.facebook.com/IPLAYdigitalinclusion

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Credits for this publication and for the general success of this project go to:

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About the project

"I-PLAY: Internet access for Participation, Learning and Active Youth" started on the 1st of March 2021 and ended on the 31st of May 2023, designed by 9 partners from 7 EU (IT,PT,FR,BE,BG,LT,HE) and 1 neighbor (AL) Countries, with the aim to establish a Network of Organizations and Towns, to give voice to rural and peripheral territories and digitally excluded citizens (migrants, refugees, disabled,…), by facilitating debates on the need of an equal access to the Internet and on its future in EU. The global health emergency caused by the COVID-19 has forced EU citizens to digitally re-think their way of life, working, studying, learning, communicating and participating. But, how it is possible to move so quickly towards a digital-based society, to talk about civic and democratic participation and to contribute to the Union policy-making process, without guaranteeing EQUAL ACCESS to the internet for all? What are the EU initiatives and programs on this purpose and how could everyone contribute to a more digitally inclusive society? With its structured work plan (6 International Events,24 Local Debates and 8 Local Dissemination Meetings in 8 Countries),the project impacts on more than 600 direct and 35.000 indirect participants.16 Young Players (2 per country) first contribute to local researches on good practices to be shared (collected in the E-Book "I- PLAY Inclusive practices") and, then, act as digital facilitators and multipliers, by stimulating debates on the future of digital inclusion in EU, and collecting ideas and proposals on e-Citizenship, Digital Solidarity, Distance Learning, Remote Working, Digital Communication (collected in the Recommendations "I-PLAY for the Future of Europe: how to foster digital inclusion"). The Recommendations, as result of this long-lasting participatory bottom-up approach, are then addressed to the relevant policy-makers, thanks to some partner organizations with their consultative status at the EU Parliament and thanks to the Eurodesk Network which will support the dissemination campaign.

SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

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The methodology

I-PLAY rationale

According to the EUROSTAT "Broadband and Connectivity" 2019, In the EU about 86% of the households have access to the internet at home, but in the rural and peripheral areas of Countries like IT,LT,AL,PL,BG,HE,PT, this percentage decreases to 62%. Also, about one- third of these individuals have never used the internet because of the low level of digital skills (especially in BG,FR,IT).

On 16 April 2014,the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe laid down the basic framework of principles to protect the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights for ALL internet users, in the "Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users". The guide emphasizes that the protection of the right to freedom of expression and access to information, the right to freedom of assembly, protection from cybercrime, the right to private life, and the protection of personal data are all equally protected ONLINE and OFFLINE.

Moreover, the UN, in UDHR of 2016, says "The Internet is one of the most powerful instruments of the 21st century for increasing transparency in the conduct of the powerful, access to information, and for facilitating active citizens participation in building democratic societies".

The global health emergency linked to COVID-19 has forced EU citizens to completely re- think their way of life, of working, studying and learning, communicating and participating. Indeed,

- remote working became, for many organizations, the only possibility, regardless of their private and public nature
-"distance learning" applied to schools and universities
-information became exclusively reachable online
-digital citizenship (E-Gov, E-Democracy,..)

This situation has brought the issue of internet accessibility and inclusiveness to World attention.

In this still complex picture, the questions the I-PLAY Network aims to address and answer are the following:

-how it is possible to move so quickly towards a digital-based society, to talk about civic and democratic participation, to contribute to the Union policy-making process, to be engaged in civil society organizations, to volunteer and practice solidarity, without first guaranteeing EQUAL ACCESS to the internet for all?

-has the Internet become a "Key means" by which the individuals can exercise their right, or, can it be considered itself a Human Right?

-what is the EU doing to guarantee equal access to the Internet to every citizen, and how could the CSOs, public authorities and individuals directly contribute to this process intended to fight against digital exclusion?

Today it is impossible to talk about solidarity, active citizenship, participation in European democratic life and intercultural learning, without talking about Internet Accessibility.

However, in EU it still exist several barriers to the practice of these rights, especially for those citizens who face physical, geographical, economic, social, and cultural obstacles.

This Network believes that, thanks to a bottom-up approach, the use of a combination of formal and non-formal methods and to the promotion and organization of researches, exchanges of good practices and debates between disadvantaged citizens and decision- makers, CSOs, private entities and local authorities, it will be possible to understand the real needs of the territories (mainly rural and peripheral European regions) and to give a concrete contribution to the debate on the Future of EU, by drawing recommendations for a more digitally inclusive Europe.

The aim

This research aimed to meet the objectives of the "I-PLAY" project "to give voice to rural and peripheral territories and digitally excluded citizens, by facilitating debates on the need for equal access to the internet and on its future in EU" and "to provide an overview of digital exclusion in the I-PLAY Countries and to give a heads-up on how to organize the proposed digital inclusion campaigns".

Ethical consideration

This study has been conducted in accordance with the recommendations for ethical research, respecting the anonymity, and with the Data protection Act of Regulation (EU) No 2016/679 of the European Parliament and the council of 27 April on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of the data.

Data collection

The present recommendation paper used a quantitative and qualitative collection data survey and desk-based research for exploring the digital access among the EU countries.

A sample of 182 people participated in the survey (annex 1) mostly conduced online by all the partners via Google Forms. The respondents came from the project's partner countries (Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, Albania, Lithuania, Romania, France).

Italy
by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

1. *Country background*

The digital divide is a situation that divides the population in access to the internet (Cavallo & Pierani, 2021). This parameter has an important value because it highlights an increasingly serious inequality in the access and use of technologies. The effect is the gap between the part of the population able to use these technologies and the part of the population that is excluded from them and North and South Italy (Olivanti, 2021). This results in serious discrimination. According to the latest Auditel-Censis report, about 14 million users either do not access the network or do so intermittently and with a low-quality connection. Only 59.4% have both a home and mobile connection. The problem is that 2.3 million Italian families are not connected to the Internet in any way, around 10% of the total. In times of pandemic, restrictions, and blockades, not having the right technologies available or not being able to use them means remaining on the sidelines. According to data: 8.4 million families, 35.1% of the total, do not have a PC or tablet at home (73% of families with the lowest socio-economic level). According to ISTAT and Eurostat data, Puglia is in fifth from last place (Pierleoni, 2022).

Figure 1: Overall composite TASICI scores
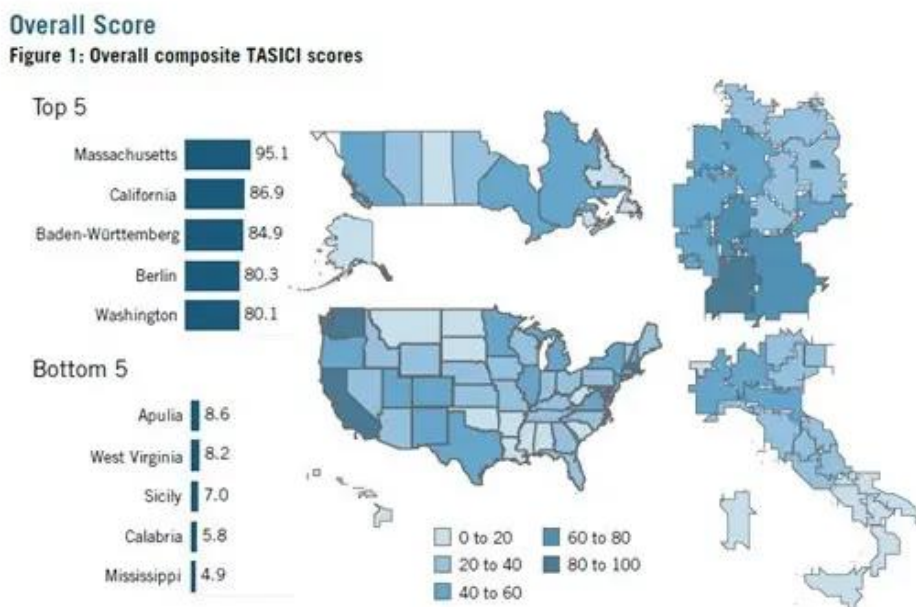
2. *The Methodology*

2.2. *Questionnaire*

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS prepared the questionnaire in the Italian language and shared it in WhatsApp and Telegram via Google Forms.

2.3. *Participants*

The participants were 45 in Puglia Region but not only. The average age is between 35-44 years old (fig.2.3.1), 55,6 % are female (fig. 2.3.2) and 31 people live in urban area and 14 in rural area. The majority of the respondents have high school diploma. Only 4 people are over 65 years old.
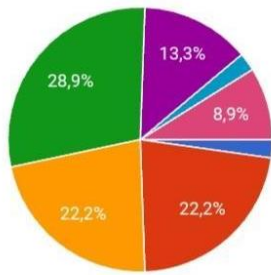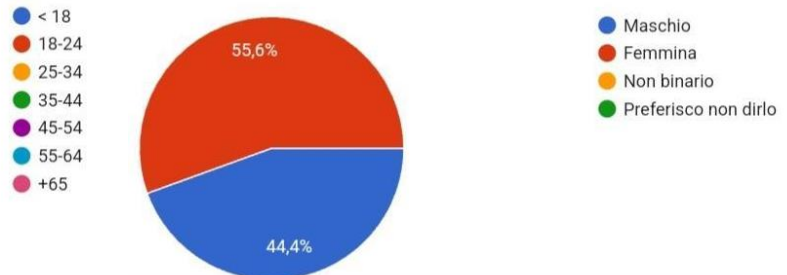
Fig. 2.3.1   Fig. 2.3.2.

2.4. *Translation*

It was necessary to translate the items into the Italian language. The translation was done with the help of an English translator. In the end, the responses were translated into English.

2.5. *Limits*

Some people don't know how to use their mobile phones to answer a questionnaire, and those who live in rural areas and the South Salento area can't answer because there isn't internet access or the connection is very low.

3. *Key findings*

The majority of respondents have access to the internet at home. Only 4 people don't have Wi-Fi at home, but everybody has internet on mobile phones and portal devices. Only 3 people saw that they don't have digital skills to use and access the internet (Fig.3.1)
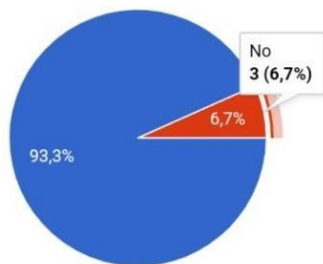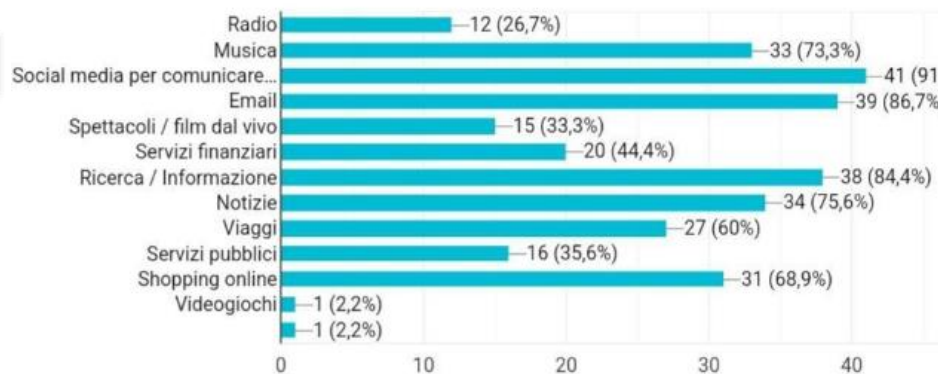

Fig. 3.1.   Fig. 3.2.

They use the internet to socialize with other people through the use of social medial platforms, for work, study, and streaming, too (fig. 3.2). Only one person doesn't feel safe using the internet, and 4 people responded that they are "a bit confident". The majority of people do feel safe using it (fig. 3.3).

The majority of the respondents opted 'several times a day' for using fixed internet as well as internet data on a portable device. In the future, 71,1% answer " very often" to the question "How often will you use the internet" (fig. 3.4).
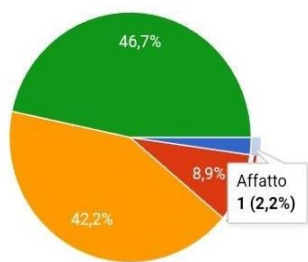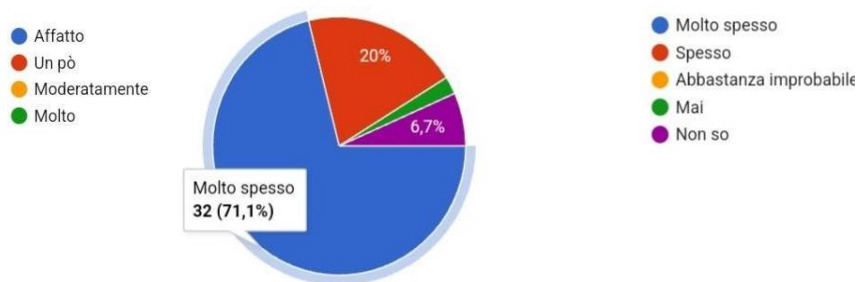
Fig. 3.3.   Fig. 3.4.

4. *Conclusion*

About the digital divide, Puglia Region and Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS are promoting digital culture among citizens, to guarantee access to services and electronic communication networks on equal terms, in a homogeneous way throughout the region and with suitable technologies, removing obstacles of an economic nature and society which limit knowledge and determine discrimination on a social, economic and cultural level.

Both consider internet access a right for all citizens as a fundamental tool for human development and economic and social growth above all in South Salento.

by Solution

1. Country background

Digital exclusion takes two forms: there is exclusion by equipment, that is to say, 8 million people in France who do not have the means to access digital tools due to lack of equipment or because they are in a white zone (500,000 people). And then there is the exclusion by skills, which is even wider. Today, 13 million French people are not at ease with digital tools. 24% of French people were unable to find any information on the Internet last year, for example, according to INSEE.

The consequences of this exclusion are both personal and professional, with the impossibility to access one's rights, finding a job, a house, or just keeping in touch with one's relatives.

The people affected are much more diverse than one might imagine. At Emmaus Connect - an association working for digital inclusion - most of the support is provided to people aged between 31 and 54, who need to master digital skills to find a job and get back into society. They represent 47% of their beneficiaries since 2013. Then come the seniors (30%) and finally, the young people under the age of 30 who we imagine are all connected because they use smartphones, but in reality, many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have never learned to use a computer and to make professional use of digital technology, with basic software.

2. Methodology

2.1. Questionnaire
A questionnaire has been drafted by the coordinator and seemed adapted to the target population of SOLUTION. SOLUTION staff converted it online, using Google Forms, and asked beneficiaries from the organization's activities to fill it in and provide inputs on the topic.

2.2. Participants
20 answers were collected. Age repartition was the following:
- 35% aged 18-24
- 30% aged 25-34
- 25% aged 35-44
- 5% aged 45-54
- 5% aged 55-64

A majority of respondents were female (60%), 35% were male and 5% were non-binary. 95% of the respondents were living in an urban area and only 5% were in a rural area. Respondents are highly educated and own a job as illustrated by the figures below (fig. 2.2.1.; fig. 2.2.2). None of them have a disability or health condition limiting everyday life activities.
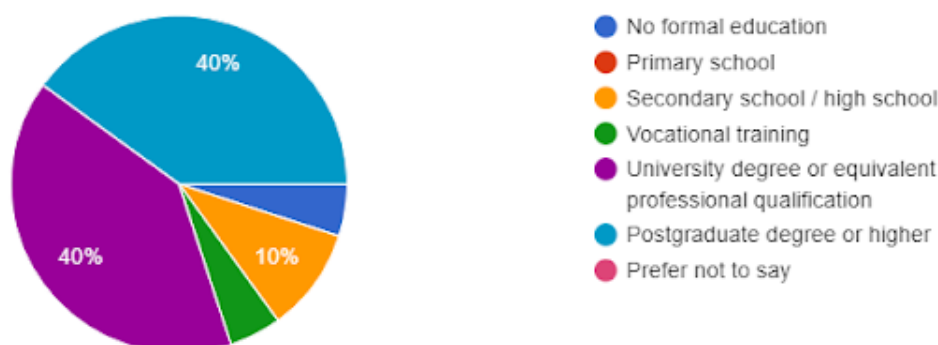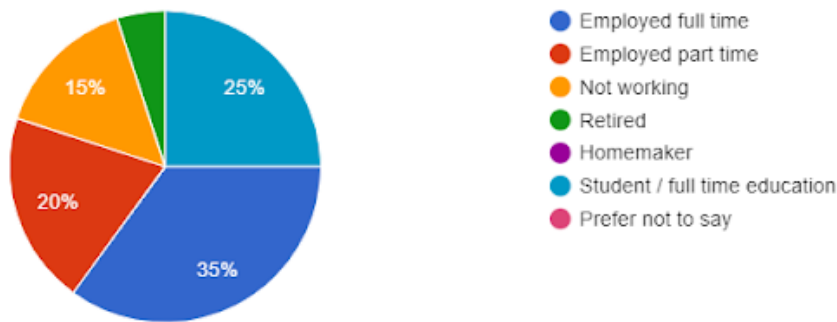

Fig. 2.2.1

Legend:
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Not working
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Student / full time education
- Prefer not to say

Fig. 2.2.2.

2.3. Translation

The questionnaire was not translated and submitted in English.

2.4. Limits

We didn't manage to reach very young people (below 18 years old) because this is not SOLUTION's target population; however, a partnership with a school would be a great way to overcome this issue. The same goes with senior respondents (aged 65+); maybe the electronic way to fill the form in or the fact that it was offered in English were limitations for their participation.

3. Key findings

Only one respondent doesn't have Internet access at home. According to Eurostat (2021), 95% of French households have access to the Internet.

All respondents have consistent and reliable access to a device that can connect to the Internet (phone, tablet, computer). In 2018, the rate of cell phone ownership among households continues to rise, with 93% of households equipped. The rate of computer equipment (fixed, laptop, tablet, or netbook) continues to rise, reaching more than 82% in 2018, compared to 45% in 2004. Younger people are more equipped than their elders: 93% of 16-24 year old have a computer compared to 67% of those aged 60 or over (Eurostat, 2019).

All of the respondents have access to Internet data (3G or 4G) on a portable device and all of the respondents can access the Internet as much as they like. In 2018, every day, 24.3 million users consult the Internet on a smartphone, while 32.7 million use mobile applications daily. 12% of the websites consulted on mobile are generalist portals, 9% are social networks and 8% are news sites.

Reasons why using the Internet are the following: for work, research, information, entertainment (movies, music, traveling). It is well-balanced between personal entertaining use and professional use of the Internet.

65% of the respondents are very confident to use the Internet by themselves while the rest are moderately confident. This can be explained by the fact that in 2017 and 2018, more than half of the scams found were committed online (Vie Publique, 2020).

Use is very regular as illustrated (fig. 3.1.; fig. 3.2.)

Several times a day
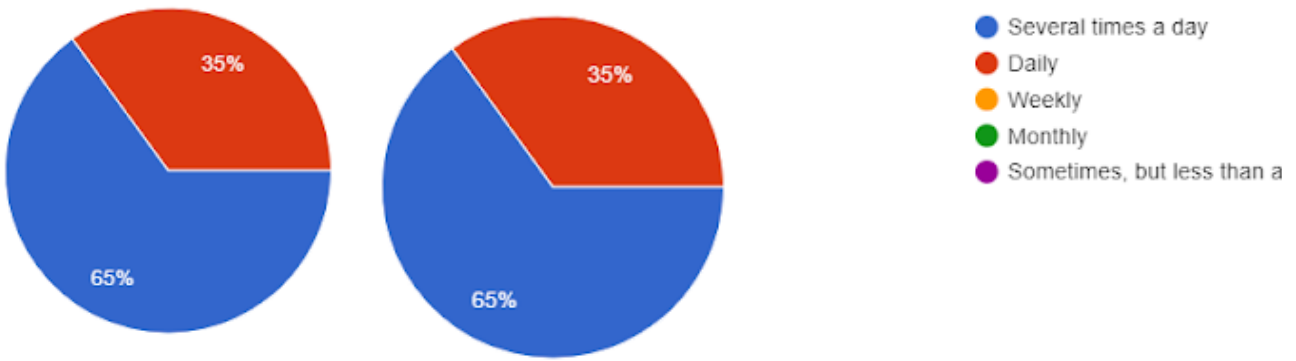Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Sometimes, but less than a

Fig. 3.1.   Fig. 3.2.

90% of the respondents predicted that the Internet will play a major role in their future. As mentioned before, 100% of the respondents use the Internet for social media and emails. 95% of them use the Internet for News and information research, watching movies, and traveling, while 90% of the respondent use the Internet for listening to music and online banking (fig. 3.3.).
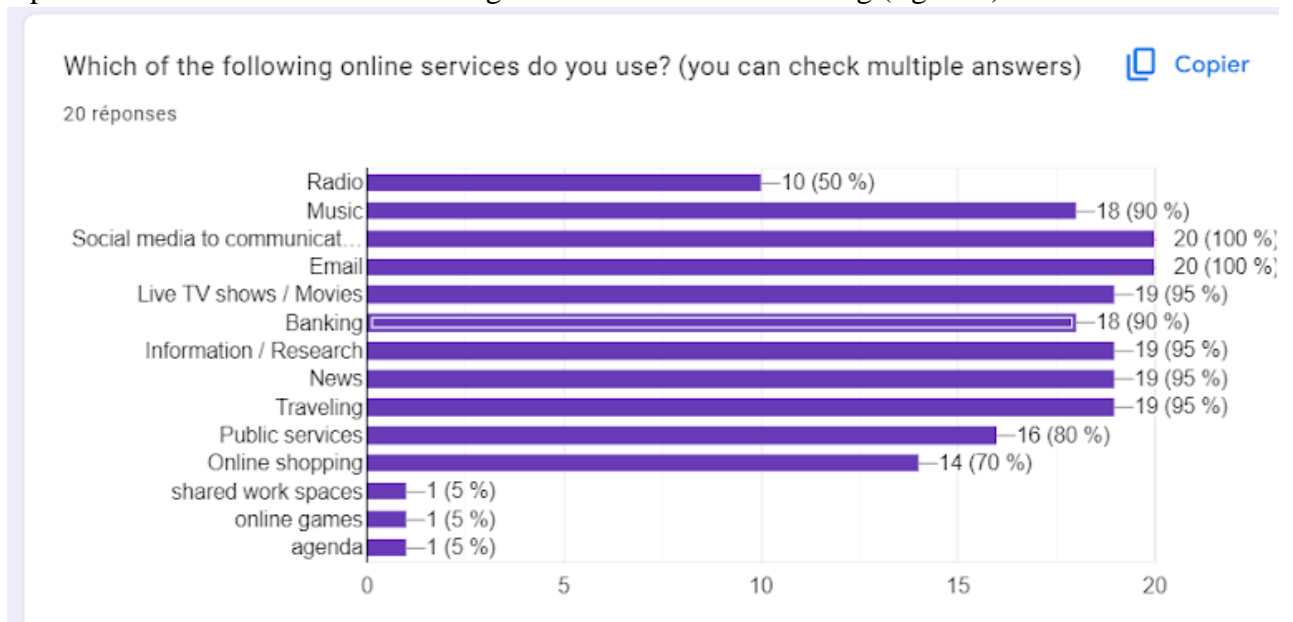

Which of the following online services do you use? (you can check multiple answers)   Copier

20 réponses

Radio	10 (50 %)
Music	18 (90 %)
Social media to communicat...	20 (100 %)
Email	20 (100 %)
Live TV shows / Movies	19 (95 %)
Banking	18 (90 %)
Information / Research	19 (95 %)
News	19 (95 %)
Traveling	19 (95 %)
Public services	16 (80 %)
Online shopping	14 (70 %)
shared work spaces	1 (5 %)
online games	1 (5 %)
agenda	1 (5 %)

Fig. 3.3.

4. Conclusions

France has implemented the *Plan France Très Haut Débit* which is a strategy adopted on February 28, 2013, by the French government to cover the entire territory at a very high speed initially planned for 2022, then postponed to 2025 or before 2030 in some regions like Brittany (Wikipedia, 2023). So there is a real commitment by the government to equal access to the Internet for all.

Due to its urban location, SOLUTION has mainly reached, in its survey, participants inserted in the digital society. The study conducted in France shows that the balance between personal and professional Internet use is maintained. Respondents all agree on the need for Internet access to ensure active participation in French society. On the solutions envisaged to guarantee this equal access to life in society, it emerges that digital learning must be done from the youngest age or, when it is a question of educating adults to digital, during face-to-face workshops with a human interlocutor to whom to ask questions.

12

Greece

by Institute of Research and Training on European

1. Country background

Transitioning to a digital economy and society is an evolving process in all the countries around the world. On the one hand, it is fuelled by the stealthy diffusion of digital technologies and, on the other, by targeted policies that recognize the significance of this transition in terms of economic competitiveness and social modernization. The COVID-19 pandemic and mandated social distancing have rendered the need for digitalization when communicating with companies, human capital, and public services even more imperative. Since 2014, the European Commission has been consistently monitoring the digitalization process through the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The DESI is the most reliable and comparable point of reference as to the digital readiness of the European Union Member States, providing reliable data on the progress of each country overall, and regarding 5 individual dimensions of digitalization: connectivity, human capital, use of internet services, integration of digital technologies by businesses and digitization of public services (European Commission 2020).
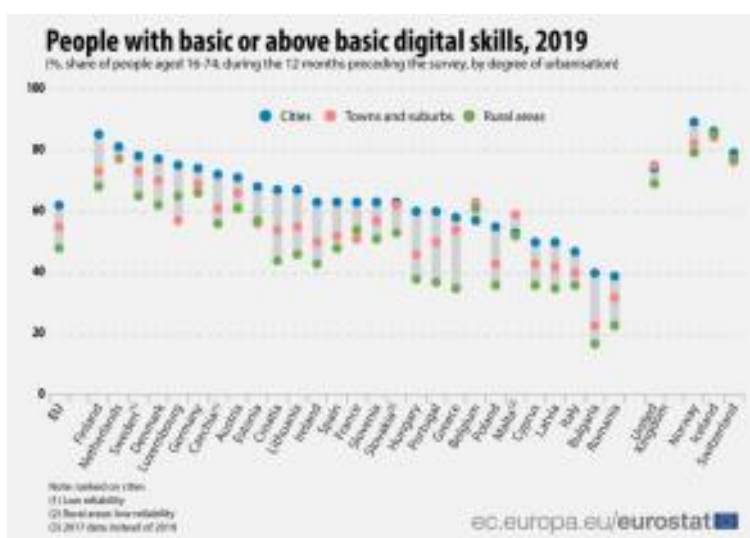

Fig. 1.1.

General ranking Based on the DESI overall index for 2020, Greece is significantly lagging behind the European Union countries, ranking 27th, marginally ahead of only Bulgaria *(Given that the data relating to 2019, the United Kingdom continues to be included in the DESI 2020, and the EU averages have been calculated for 28 Member States)* Specifically, Greece is ranked 28th in connectivity, 25th in human capital and use of Internet services, 24th in the integration of digital technologies by businesses, and 27th in digital public services (Figure 1.1).

Digital skills and human capital As to the DESI 2020 for human capital, as evidenced, Greece is ranked 25th with a score of 34.8 as compared to 49.3 for the EU-28 average. According to the individual indicators for the human capital dimension, in 2019, 51% of individuals aged 16-74 had at least basic digital skills in Greece (58% in the EU). The percentage of individuals with at least basic software skills was 56% (61% in the EU-28).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists as a percentage of total employees in Greece was low compared to the EU-28 average (1.8% as opposed to 3.9%). The percentage of female ICT specialists in Greece came to just 0.5%, three times lower than the EU-28 average (1.4%), while ICT graduates made up 2.9% of all degree holders (3.6% in the EU-28) (Table 1.1). The level of digital skills differs depending on the degree of integration in the labor market. In Greece, 64% of the employed have at least basic digital skills, as opposed to 53% of the unemployed and 51% of the (economically inactive) population aged 16-74 (Paidousi & Efstratoglou, 2020). There are no significant gender-specific differences. Gender disparity is significant only when it pertains to individuals without digital skills, where men are proportionately fewer, as well as individuals with advanced digital skills, where men are ahead – both in Greece and in the EU 28. With regard to the age distribution of individuals in relation to digital skills, which demonstrates to a large extent the future image of a country, very large differences are recorded. In the 16-24 age group, there are only a few individuals without digital skills, with the number of individuals increasing as the age group increases. In the 65-74 age group, 72% have no digital skills in Greece (41% in the EU-28), while just 7% have basic digital skills in

Greece (19% in the EU-28). In addition, among individuals in the 16-24 age group, proportionately more individuals in Greece compared to the EU-28 have at least basic digital skills (47% as opposed to 23%), even if the EU-28 is ahead in the percentage of young people with advanced digital skills (59% as opposed to 45%). In contrast to the age distribution of individuals without digital skills, there are more individuals with advanced digital skills at younger ages, which decrease as age increases: 45% of people in the 16-24 age group in Greece and 59% in the EU-28 have above basic digital skills, while the corresponding rates for the 65-74 age group are just 2% in Greece and 8% in the EU-28.

The latest data released by Eurostat, suggests considerable digital skills divide in the EU between those living in the city and those in rural areas, with Greece experiencing the highest divide along with Bulgaria, Croatia, and Portugal.

According to the latest data, in 2019, the gap in digital skills between city-dwellers and people living in rural areas was, on average, 14 percentage points (pp) in the EU (as measured by the difference in relative shares of adults possessing basic or above basic digital skills). This digital divide in overall skills reached over 20 pp in seven EU Member States — Ireland (20 pp), Lithuania (21 pp), and Hungary (22 pp) – peaking at 23 pp in Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, and Portugal.

Digital skills are considered essential for global competitiveness, boosting jobs and growth, while the internet can also play a vital role in terms of providing high-quality education and training.
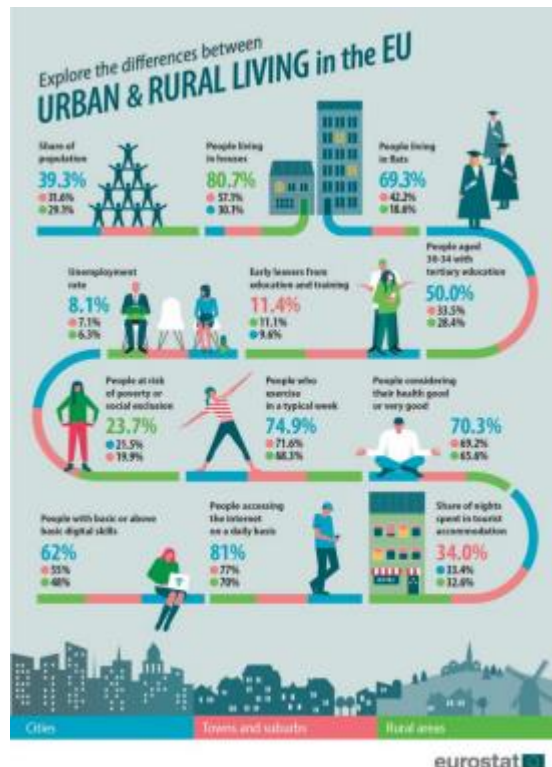
2. Methodology

2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted by adopting the provided survey template by the project coordinator. The questionnaire was conducted online by using "Google Forms". The questionnaire was shared on social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn) and the website of IRTEA.
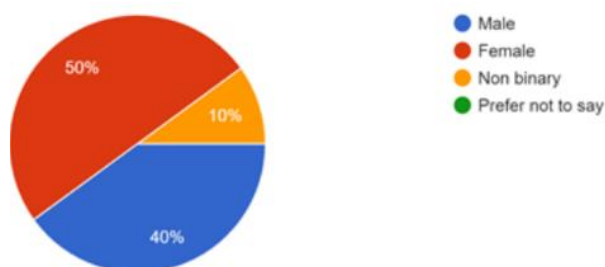
2.2. Participants

Fig. 2.2.1.

Demographic data could also be provided through the questionnaire individual where they came from, what age they have, and also whether they live in urban or rural areas, which will also correlate with other factors to provide a more complex analysis.

50% from the 30 people have participated from different age groups. Most of them are from Attica Region. Almost half of the respondents were female (fig. 2.2.1) and all of them were highly educated. Particularly, 80% of the participants hold a university or a Postgraduate degree (fig. 2.2.2).
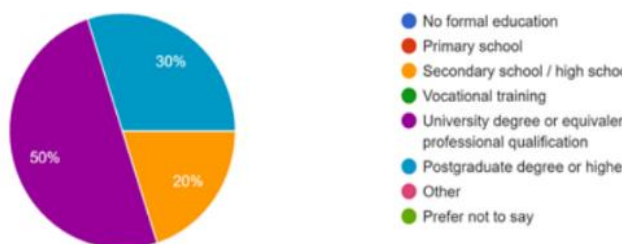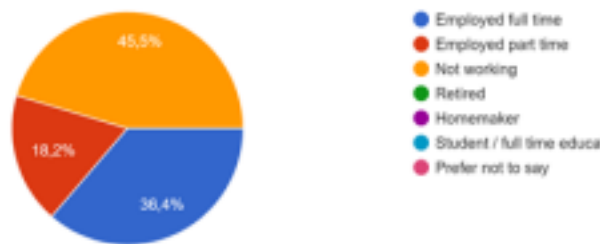

Fig. 2.2.2.

Fig. 2.2.3.

81,8% of the participants are living in urban areas (Athens) and the rest 18,2% live in rural areas. Also, none of the participants faced any disability or health or non-physical disability or health condition.

We can see in the survey the impact of the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic influencing the unemployment rates, especially among young people. 45,5% of the respondents currently not working and part-time employment reaches 36,4% (fig. 2.2.3).

2.3. Translation
The questionnaire was not translated and submitted in English.

2.4. Limits
The time frame to conduct the survey was limited during the Easter holidays. Most people use the internet at home and for this reason, it was decided to conduct research online and in English, but it was predicted that if some part of the research would have been done by the printed version of the questionnaire especially with the elder people, might have more people who have not internet access at home, especially it applies for social risk families. IRTEA didn't manage to reach elder people because this is not IRTEA's target group.

3. Key findings

From this survey with 30 participants, results have shown that all respondents have an internet connection at home and reliable access to a device that can connect to the internet.
Also, all respondents use internet data (e.g. 3G or 4G internet) on any portable devices such as a phone or iPad and can access and use the internet as much as they would like.

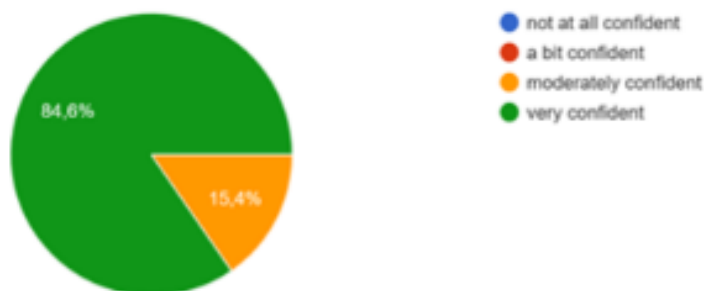*How confident do you feel using the internet on your own?*

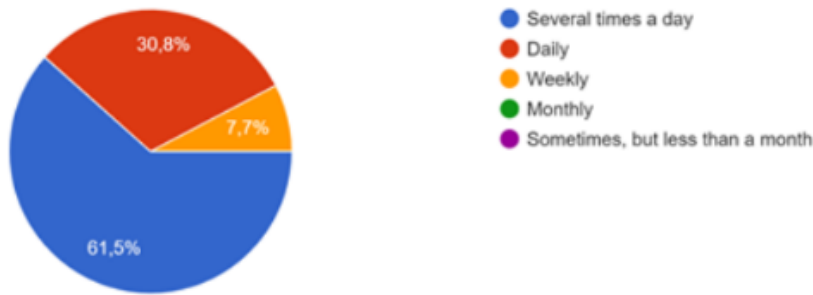Fig. 3.1.

The use of internet data on a portable device

Several times a day 61,5%
Daily 30,8%
Weekly 7,7%
Monthly
Sometimes, but less than a month

Fig. 3.2.

Using the internet at some point in the future

Very likey 92,3%
Fairly likely
Fairly unlikely
Very unlikely
Don't know 7,7%
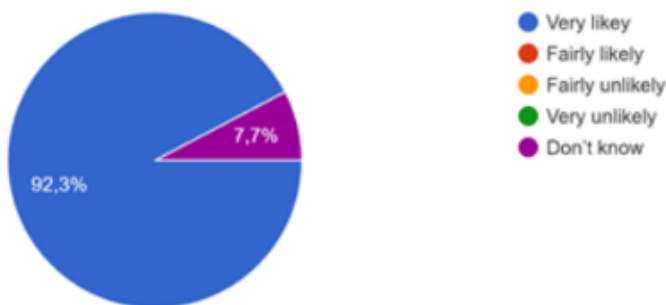
Fig. 3.3.

Online services used

Service	Value
Radio	11 (84,6%)
Music	13 (100%)
Social media to communicate…	13 (100%)
Email	10 (76,9%)
Live TV shows / Movies	10 (76,9%)
Banking	6 (46,2%)
Information / Research	10 (76,9%)
News	11 (84,6%)
Traveling	7 (53,8%)
Public services	5 (38,5%)
Online shopping	11 (84,6%)
Other	0 (0%)

Fig. 3.4.

4. Conclusion

The study conducted in Greece shows that the balance between personal and professional Internet use is maintained. It can be noticed that most young people above 24 years old are unemployed and using the Internet seeking for jobs. Most of the respondents agree on the need for efficient Internet access and enhance digital skills to ensure active participation in Greek society.

Greek government launched the Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2025 of Greece, called also the 'Digital bible' is the main strategic document, which sets priorities for the digital transformation of the country, as well as goals to develop the digital skills of Greek society - at all levels and ages. The Greek Bible outlines the guiding principles, strategic axes, and interventions on a horizontal and vertical level that aim to enhance and support the digital transformation of Greek society and economy.

Belgium

by Inclusive Europe

1. *Country Background*

Wherever you are in the EU, you should be able to access good quality electronic communications services at an affordable price. The recent Coronavirus crisis has made us realize its significance more than ever now. In 2020, to a greater or lesser extent, the use of basic digital services increased under the pressure of the Covid-19 crisis, which has led to the unprecedented use of technology for education and training purposes.

Here is the situation in Belgium: According to a 2020 study by Eurostat and Statbel, 91% of Belgian households has an internet connection at home. Internet access has improved significantly in low-income households (81% in 2020 compared to 71% in 2019).

Statbel, the Belgian statistical office, reveals that 22 % of people living alone in Belgium have no Internet at home, according to the figures of Statbel. These are mainly slightly older people: among people aged 65-74, the figure is even 31%. At regional level, the high percentage in
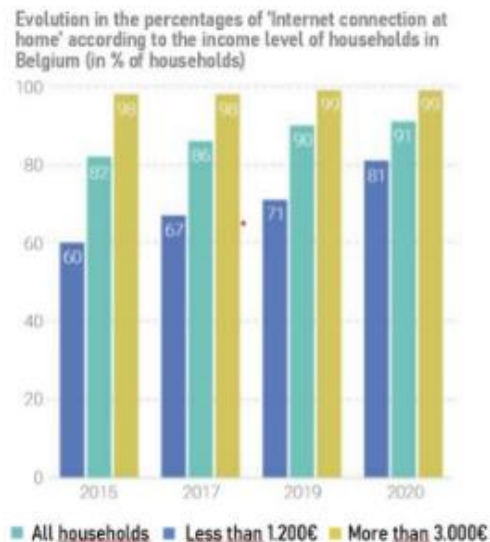
Wallonia is particularly striking: 27 % of people living alone have no Internet at home. The percentage amounts to 19 % in Flanders and Brussels.

Age, level of education and socio-economic situation are also determining factors for digital isolation. A total of 31% of older people (age group 65-74) do not browse the digital world. Low-skilled people are also much less active in the digital world. More than 20% rarely or never use the Internet. This figure amounts to 20% in Flanders and 26% in Wallonia.

Taking online lessons at the time of the Coronavirus does not seem possible for all pupils, or at least not at home. 2% of children attending school do not have access to the Internet at home, and are therefore unable to take online lessons at home. This figure amounts to 6 % in Brussels.

The increasing digitization of our society offers many opportunities, but also means a great risk of marginalization of people who are far from the digital world. According to the new European definitions and standards, 54% of Belgians (aged 16 to 74) today have at least a basic knowledge of digital skills. Men score slightly better on average than women (57% versus 52%).

The digital gap is significant between people with low education level (26%) and the highly educated (77%). This gap is almost equally wide between people from a family with the lowest income quintile (Anon, 2022): (32%) and those from the highest quintile (79%). When dividing by socio-economic situation, we see that students have the most digital skills (75% with at least basic knowledge), while this is 64% for workers. The unemployed (42%) and pensioners (31%) are less digitally literate. A comparison between the regions in Belgium shows that Brussels scores best (62% with at least basic knowledge) compared to 54% in Flanders and 51% in Wallonia.

Evolution in the percentages of 'Internet connection at home' according to the income level of households in Belgium (in % of households)

Legend: ■ All households ■ Less than 1.200€ ■ More than 3.000€

The first quintile group represents 20% of the lowest-income population and the fifth quintile group represents the 20% of the highest-income population.

2. Methodology

2.1. Questionnaire
Inclusive Europe has prepared the questionnaire and translated it into Turkish and Dutch, which are common languages among our outreach group. The questionnaire was circulated via social media applications such as Whatsapp as well as Google Forms.

2.2. Participants
A total of 20 participants took part in the survey. The average age is 33; 14 of them are females. The majority of the participants reside in or close to Brussels. The majority of the respondents have university degrees. There is one senior respondent who is aged 67.

2.3. Translation
The questionnaire was translated into Turkish by the Inclusive Europe staff. After the questionnaires were filled out in the translated language, they have been re-translated back to English by a different translator to ensure quality assessment.

2.4. Limits
The demographics of the respondent's group are not as diverse as we aspired. For instance, the number of senior respondents (aged between 65-85) is much less than aspired as this group is less reachable. Our questionnaire involves only one senior respondent. Also, it was difficult to find respondents from remote regions in Belgium since our organization's network is largely based in and around Brussels.

3. Key findings
All respondents have access to the internet at home; all have consistent and reliable access to a device that can connect to the internet; all have access to mobile internet data on a portable device and access the internet as much as they like.

Only one respondent has a health condition that limits her/his day-to-day activities. Reasons for using the internet include work, socializing, online shopping, and travel bookings. Almost all the respondents are 'very confident' to use the internet by themselves; only one respondent chose 'a bit confident' and one chose 'moderately confident'.

The majority of the respondents opted 'several times a day' for using fixed internet as well as internet data on a portable device. The others chose the 'daily' option.

4. *Conclusion*

Access to the Internet has become a sine qua non of everyday life. From e-government initiatives and global communication to free and fast access to information and e-commerce, internet services have become so integral to modern life that access to it is a necessity.

Considering that a great deal of essential services has been digitalized, it is safe to say that digital inequality leads to social exclusion. Some 57% of Belgians with a low level of education, for example, have never used the Internet to submit essential documents to the government. At a time when digital tools are becoming increasingly important, the digital divide is a major barrier to social integration among the most vulnerable.

According to the survey, respondents spend a considerable amount of time online. They use the internet for a variety of reasons such as work, socializing, education, administrative tasks, leisure, travel, online shopping, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic has made digital interactions even

more pervasive and excessive. One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic is the high and sudden growth and adoption of education technology. The survey underlines the need that all children and young people should have access to the digital world for the purpose of

education, and they need to be taught and given accurate information on how to use digital technology in a responsible and positive manner, the survey shows. Certain remarks made in the survey highlight that there is a strong need for policymakers to agree on minimum standards when it comes to children's and young people's digital media experiences and to make sure that the rules are being enforced.

Digital skills are necessary in general to study, work, communicate, access online public services, and find trustworthy information.

According to the respondents' insights and suggestions, there are several ways to improve Internet access and bring the benefits of a robust Internet to people in Belgium. This includes steps such as reducing telecommunications access costs, improving network efficiency, strengthening digital literacy, and enabling affordable services. Each of these actions helps to reduce the gap between Internet users and non-users and works to maintain the freedom, openness, and diversity that are the cornerstones of the Internet.
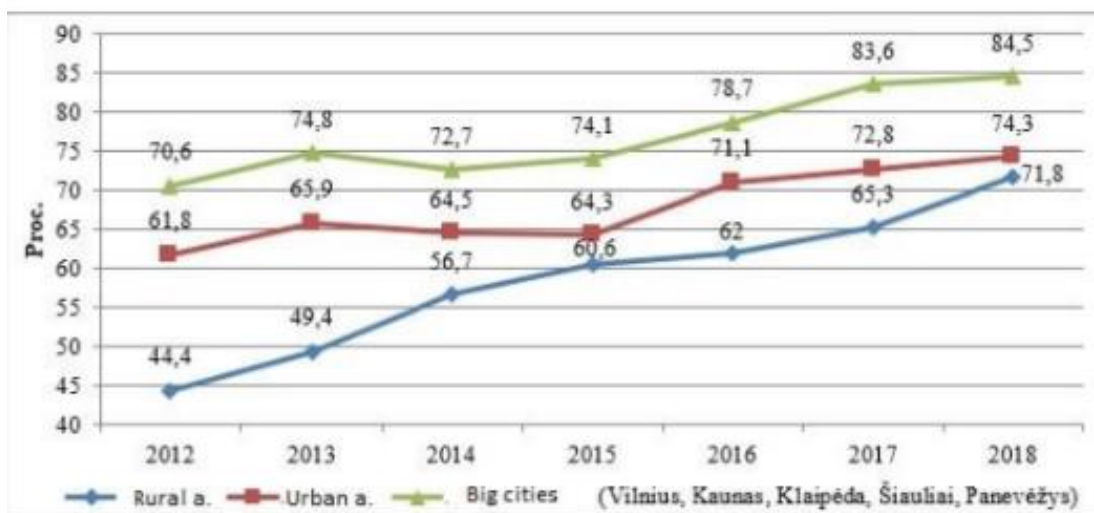
Lithuania

by Musninkai Rural Community

1. Country background

In Lithuania, the Internet connection appeared only after regaining independence. It has developed rapidly and today we can be glad that Lithuania is among the "top" countries in terms of Internet accessibility. However, this was not always the case.

Although the Internet was available to almost everyone in urban areas, those living in rural areas still had limited access. However, with the implementation of the RAIN, RAIN-2, PRIP, and PRIP-2 broadband deployment projects, the digital divide between urban and rural areas have narrowed significantly (Anon., 2021).

Households with broadband Internet access in 2012–2018, per cent
(Source: Lithuanian Statistic Department)

Although broadband internet coverage in Lithuania is not bad, the European Commission aims to provide broadband internet services to households at a speed of 100 mb/s. According to this indicator, Lithuania is average in the European Union, and in terms of only rural areas, Lithuania is still lagging. In 2020, 82 percent of households in Lithuania had access to the internet. This meant that household access to the internet in Lithuania had not increased since 2019. The overall share of households in Lithuania with internet access was nine percent lower than the average of the European Union (EU-27) in 2020 (Anon., 2023).

Moreover, studies on the development of information society and digital exclusion show that attention is being focused on reducing digital exclusion, but there is a lack of detailed analysis of the measures applied, the results achieved, and the impact on specific social risk groups (https://ojs-dev.mruni.eu/ojs/public-policy-and-administration/article/view/4791/4397).

The most visible and consistent solution to digital exclusion in Lithuania is the physical availability of ICTs (information and communication technologies) in the regions. Significantly less is the problem of the digital exclusion associated with motivation, ability, and opportunities to benefit from ICT disparities. The priorities and directions of the Government and non-governmental organizations are very different in this area (https://ojs-dev.mruni.eu/ojs/public-policy-and-administration/article/view/4791/4397).

2. Methodology

2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted by adopting the provided survey template by the project coordinator. The questionnaire was conducted online by using "Google Forms". The questionnaire was shared in the social group (Facebook) of members of the Musninkai rural community, other social groups of Musninkai town and surrounding villages, Sirvintos municipality district, and youth organizations. Besides it, the link to the questionary was sent via emails to NGOs that work in the Sirvintos area.

2.2. Participants

In the survey, 31 people participated. All of them are from Sirvintos district municipality in the place where Musninkai rural community is established. 72,4 % of them are living in rural areas and the rest 25,8 % live in urban areas (fig. 2.2.1.). The urban area is considered Sirvintos town as it is the only urban area in Sirvintos district municipality.
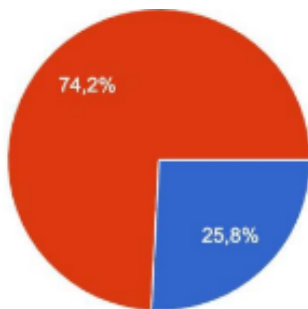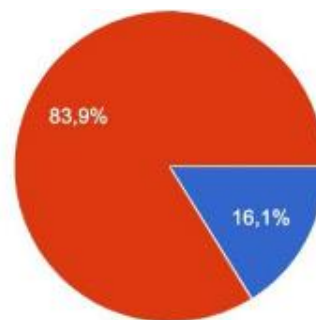

Fig. 2.2.1.

Fig. 2.2.2.

Regarding gender, in the questionnaire more active were females who make up 83,9% and minority respondents were males who make up 16,1 %. None of the respondents indicted themselves as 'non-binary' or 'prefer not to say the gender' (fig. 2.2.2).

According to the age, less than 18 years old, groups age 35-44, 45-55, and 55-64 make up the same percentage in all groups which is 16,1%. The next two groups of the aged 25-34 and 65+ were the second biggest groups which make up 12,9 % and the smallest group of respondents were from the group age of 18-24 which make up 9,7 % (fig. 2.2.3).
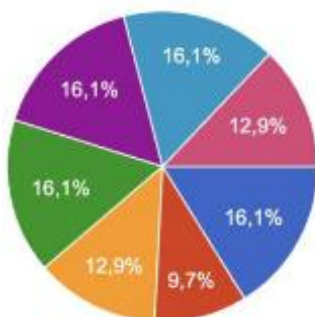
Fig. 2.2.3.
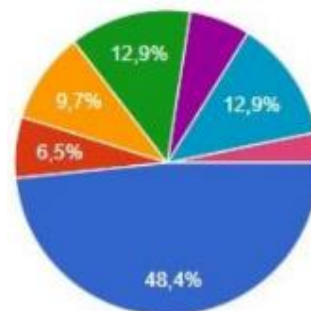
Fig. 2.2.4

Regarding the education level almost 43 % of the respondents acquired a University degree or equivalent professional qualification, the second largest respondent group almost 26 % are from secondary school or high school, and 22% acquired postgraduate degrees or higher. Only 9% of the respondents are graduates/or studying vocational training.

Regarding occupation almost 49% of the people are full-time employed, the second biggest groups who took part are students and retired people who make up 12,9 % each. The following group is

21

unemployed people who make up 9,7 % and the last group is respondents who work part-time, making up 6,5 % (fig. 2.2.4.).

Moreover, 16, 2% of respondents indicated facing any kind of disability or health condition that limits their day-to-day activities.

2.3. Translation

The provided survey was translated into the Lithuanian language as many people do not understand the English language. The conducted results are translated and all information for this research is provided in English.

2.4. Limits

Most of the respondents have an internet connection at home and for this reason, the research was conducted online. But, if the research would have been done using the pencil-paper method, the results might have been different, because elder people or families at social risk, for example, do not have an internet connection.

3. Key findings

According to the official statistic of Lithuania in 2020, 83 percent of persons aged 16–74 used the Internet (in 2019, 82 percent). The Internet is less often used by older persons than the youth. In the 16–24 age group, persons using the Internet accounted for 99 percent, and in the 65–74 age group – 46 percent. Technologies gain in popularity in all age groups. Compared to the previous year, the number of persons aged 65–74 using the Internet grew by 6 percentage points.
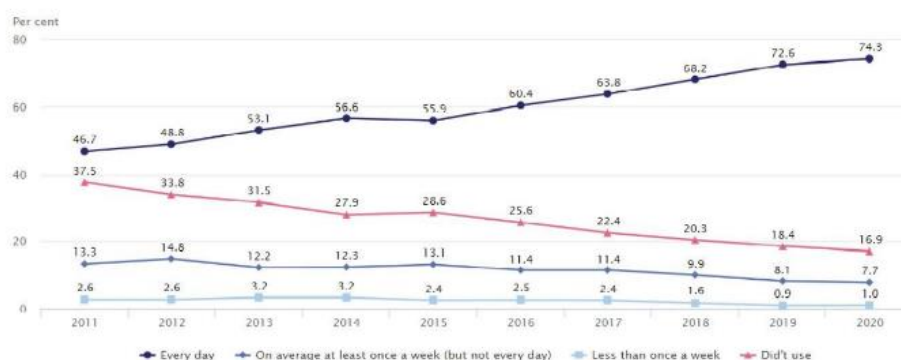
Fig. 3.1. Persons who used internet 2011 – 2020 in Lithuania (Statistic Department of Lithuania)

In the research made by Musninkai rural community, it is observed that all respondents (100%) have an internet connection at home and have consistent and reliable access to a device that can connect to the internet such as a phone, tablet, or computer.
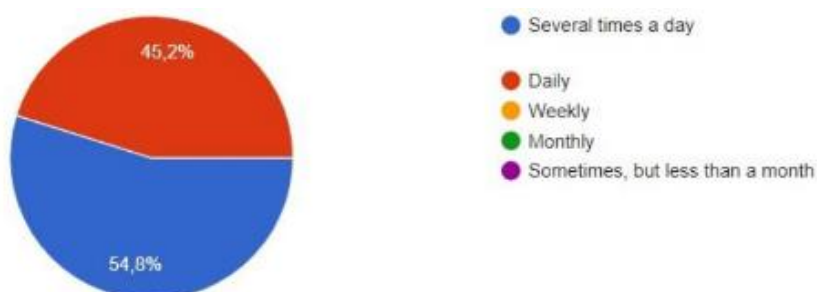
Fig. 3.2. Usage frequency of the internet connection

From the collected data it is observed that respondents use an internet connection daily or even several times a day (Pic. No. 7). In comparison with official data of Lithuanian statistics (2020), 74 percent of persons aged 16–74 used the Internet daily (90 percent of internauts in this age group), 8 percent

– at least once a week but not daily (12 percent of internauts in this age group). Thus, persons using the Internet at least once a week accounted for 82 percent of the population aged 16–74, or 99 percent of internauts in this age group (fig. 3.3.)
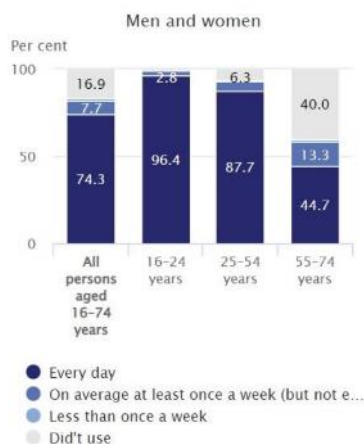
Fig. 3.3. Persons who used the Internet by sex and age group, 2020 (Statistic Department of Lithuania)

90,3 % of the respondents indicated that are able to access and use the internet as much as they would like and only 9,7% said that they do not have such a possibility because of a lack of knowledge, IT tools, have not enough financial funds to purchase unlimited internet connection and poor internet connection in the living area.

In relation to confidence in using the internet a bit more than half of respondents (51,6%) indicated that they are moderately confident about using the internet on their own, 35,5 % indicated that they are totally confident about using the internet and 12,9 % said that they are not very confident using internet on their own.

In the research, the respondents could choose a few options for which reasons they are using online services. The most used one is for checking emails (93,5 % of persons choose this option the most times), 87,1 % of people use the internet for social media and communication with friends and relatives and information search. 77,4 % of respondents use e-banking services, and 67,7% for watching movies, and videos online (fig. 3.4.)
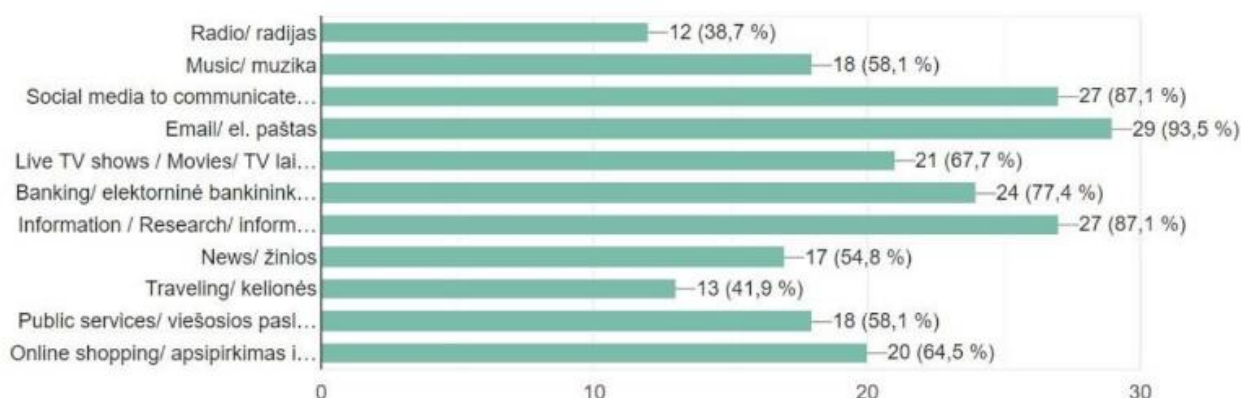
Fig. 3.4. Online services

According to Lithuanian official statistic data (2020), the Internet was mainly used for search for information, communication, entertainment, and banking: 79 percent of persons aged 16–74 (95 percent of internauts in this age group) used the Internet for communication, 74 percent (89 percent

of internauts) – for reading news, 71 percent (85 percent of the internauts) – for leisure (watching movies or TV shows, listening to music, playing or downloading games), 68 percent (81 percent of the internauts) – for the Internet banking services. 27 percent (33 percent of internauts in this age group) used the Internet for learning, upskilling, or self- education purposes (fig. 3.5.)
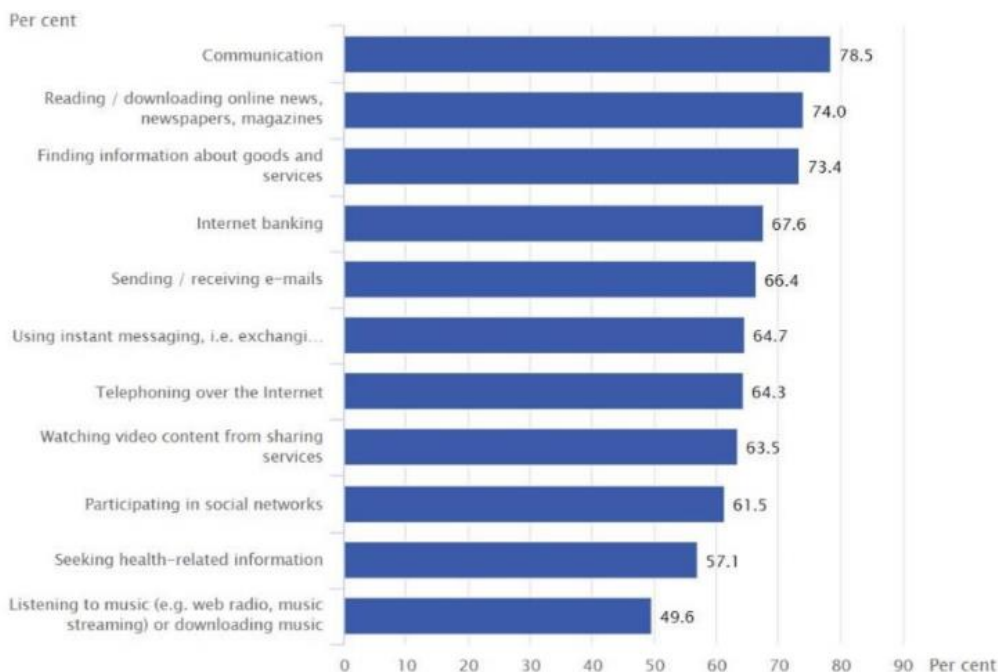

Fig. 3.5. Persons who used the Internet for personal purposes, 2020 (Statistic Department of Lithuania)

4. Conclusion

There were 2.35 million internet users in Lithuania in January 2022. Lithuania's internet penetration rate stood at 88.0 percent of the total population at the start of 2022. The analysis states that internet users in Lithuania increased by 82 thousand (+3.6 percent) between 2021 and 2022.

For perspective, these user figures reveal that 321.1 thousand people in Lithuania did not use the internet at the start of 2022, meaning that 12.0 percent of the population remained offline at the beginning of the year (Kemp, 2022).

The search implemented by Musninkai rural community has shown that most of the respondents are using an internet connection and have access in the household. Most of them use an internet connection for social purposes, communications, information search, and for checking emails. Although most of them are quite confident while using an internet connection they would like to improve their digital skills and receive constant consultations.

Regarding the internet connection in the research, it was indicated that internet connection is poor in some parts of rural areas and for this reason, people are not able to use online services fully.

Romania

by Asociatia Nameless Art

1. *Country background*

According to the DESI Connectivity Index (2021), Romania ranks above the EU average and 10th out of 27. The internet connectivity gap has narrowed sharply over the past five years. The percentage of those who have never used the Internet decreased by 10% between 2018 and 2021. The situation is quite different in the area of digital skills.

As presented by the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index, Romania ranks 26th out of 27 EU countries on Human capital, and its ranking stagnated in comparison to the previous year. Basic digital skills and basic software skills levels rank 27th among U Member States. Less than one-third of people aged between 16 and 74 have basic digital skills (58% in the EU as a whole).

Despite these numbers, Romania does not have a digital inclusion/education strategy, nor any task force or agency which is in charge of developing such strategies.

The most recent studies have shown that (Eurostat, 2021 and Index of the digital economy and Society, 2020)

- 1 out of 5 Romanians has never used the internet
- 11% of Romanians use online banking services versus 66% average in the EU (among internet users)
- 29% of Romanians shop online versus 71% EU average (among internet users)
- on the other hand, 82% of Romanians access social networks versus 65% of media in the EU (among internet users)

It is visible that digital skills in Romania are not well developed:

• 72% of Romanians do NOT have even minimal digital skills versus the 46% average in the EU
• only 6% of companies offer ICT training versus the 20% average in the EU

All these numbers place Romania in 27th place out of the 27 EU member states according to Eurostat. The reality is that Romania has really good connectivity, internet speed, a high number of smartphones, as well as the number of IT graduates and software specialists but, there is still a very large gap compared to European countries in terms of the number of those who have a minimum of digital literacy.

Having internet access in this new digital era must be open to every individual, no matter their background, age, or physical and/or intellectual disability.

At the national level, no strategy seems to be crystallized so that no one would remain an outsider. Digital Literacy has been supported through various initiatives by some NGOs, but no approach unites all these projects, to result in a coherent national digital inclusion strategy.

The COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the need for digital skills in areas such as education, health, social services, and public services. Not having and/or acquiring these skills would lead to social inequalities. A strategy must be supported by the Romanian government and regulated at the legislative level. The low level of digital skills for a large number of Romanians must become a major concern in the next period, at the national level.

2. *Methodology*

2.1. Questionnaire

The mixed-methods design was used, that is, a combination of collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative survey data. The answers were collected by using google modules and pencil-paper.

2.2. Participants

A sample of 36 individuals participated in this research. The participants did not require any selection criteria because different views and opinions were needed. In terms of demographics, 75% of the respondents are women and 25% represent males, with a high representation in an urban area (94,4%). Regards age, 33,3% are between 45-55 y.o., 25% between 25-34 y.o., 19,4% between 35-44 y.o., 8,3% from 18-24 y.o. and 65+ y.o., and 2,8% from 55-64 y.o. and under 18 y.o.

The majority of respondents have higher levels of education: university degree (52,8%), master's degree (19,4%), and high school diploma (16,7%). The rest of the respondents finished a professional school (5,6%), 2,8% finished the secondary school and only one respondent finished the Ph.D. Regarding employment status, a high percentage of 66,7% of the respondents are full-time employed, followed by 11,1% students, 8,3% retired, 5,6% do not work, 2,8% entrepreneur, 2,8% part-time employed, 2,8% chose not to mention their status.

2.3. Translation
Due to the fact that the original questions were in English, a translation into the Romanian language was necessary for reaching a wider respondent category. The process followed three steps. First, a translation from English into Romania, second, the "back-translation" process and third, discussions of the occurred translation differences.

2.4. Limits
The first limit regards the survey translation. Even if an equivalent translation was provided, it does not guarantee that all the items have a metric equivalence to the other cultures.
A second limit refers to the number of respondents, and it is hard to generalize the conclusions at the national level. A wider sample and more homogenous it's a criterion to be taken into consideration for further studies. Moreover, the majority of respondents are coming from urban areas where technology access is more accessible than in the rural area.

3. Key findings
It has to be mentioned that 94,4% (fig.3.1.) of the respondents do not have a disability or a mental disorder that could affect their daily life.
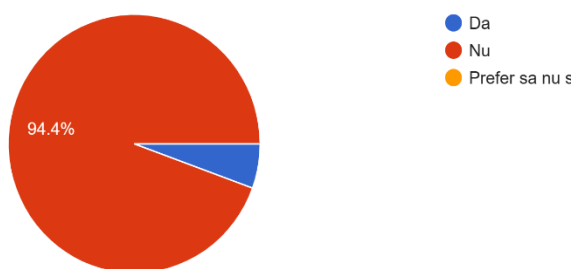
Fig.3.1 .   Fig. 3.2.

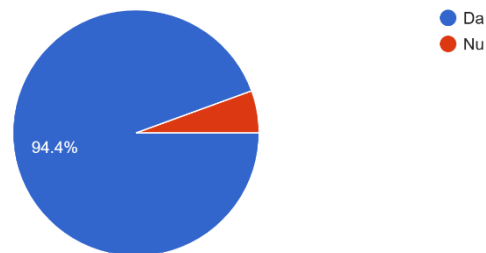Of all the respondents own an internet connection at home, 94,4% of the respondents (fig.3.2.) have constant access to a device that can connect to the internet, and 91,7% use internet data on their portable devices. When asked "How often do you use the internet" (fig. 3.3.), 52,8% of the respondents mentioned "several times a day" 38,9% "daily", 5,6% "sometimes, but less than 1 month" and 2,8% "never".
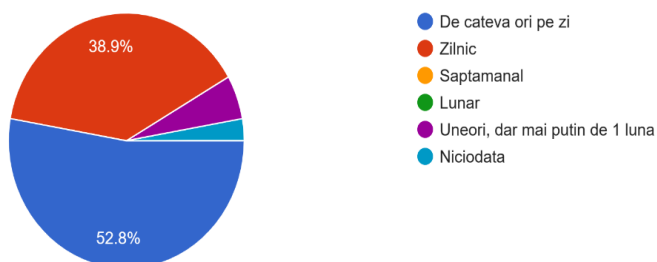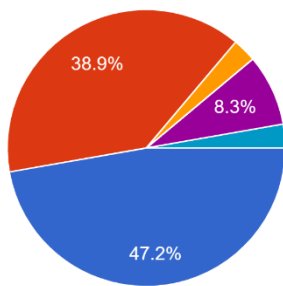

Fig. 3.3.

47,2% of the respondents mentioned that use 3G or 4G "several times a day", 38,8% use "daily", and 8,3% "sometimes, but less than 1 month".

Fig. 3.4. *How often do you use internet data on a portable device (eg 3G or 4G internet)?*

In regards the digital literacy (fig. 3.5.), 91,7% of the respondents have the necessary skills for accessing the internet. The rest of the individuals mentioned that *"costs", "weak signal", "not owning a device", and "not understanding the technology"* are the main reason for not accessing the internet.
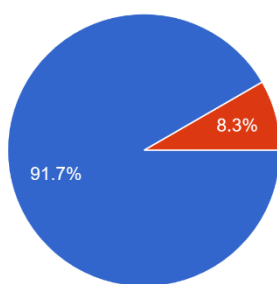
Fig. 3.5.
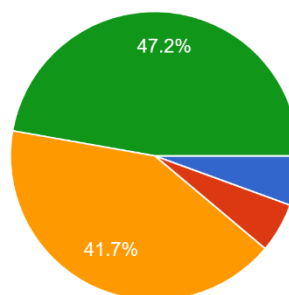
Fig. 3.6.

Even though almost the respondents are using the internet, only 47,2% (fig.3.6.) of them feel confident in using it, and 41,7% are moderately confident. Also, 5,6% of the respondents feel less and not at all feel confident in using the internet. Moreover, 83,3% of the respondents agreed on the fact that it is highly probably to start using the internet in the future.

When it comes to the online services, the respondents uses the internet for email (86,1%), being followed by research and information (72,2%) and online shopping (72,2%), 69,4% for banking, 63,9% for social media, 61,1% news, 55,6% for music, 52,8% travels, 47,2% for public services, and 44,4% for live shows and/or movies.

4. Conclusion

Romania has a digital infrastructure that positions it above the EU average, but the quality indicators of this infrastructure are declining. This, coupled with the development of cutting-edge technologies, increases the risk of digital exclusion or superficial digital inclusion in the future.

It can be concluded that people from urban areas are more focused on digital and have more opportunities to be digitally included. There is not so much data that could help the research in discovering whether the 65+ y.o. individuals and people from rural areas have the same opportunities.

As society and the economy become more digital, the digital divide will have an increasing impact, leading to social exclusion, poverty, difficulty in finding or keeping a job, lack of access to public and health services, etc.

Digital exclusion is not just about lack of access to the internet or digital skills training, but also about incomplete digital inclusion, which leaves various groups vulnerable and isolated.

It can be noticed from the recommendations, that there is a lack of collaboration and collective efforts in the field of digital literacy education. So, there is a need to develop an ecosystem with strong common strategic thinking.

Developing a strategy to bridge the digital divide can be a process in which all stakeholders can come together and benefit from a common space to get to know each other better and collaborate.

The wide range of the investigation conducted allows to trace challenges and needs on a vast social immersion.

Portugal

by Associacao Juvenil da Ilha Terceira

1. Country background

Digital exclusion in Portugal refers to the lack of access to digital technology and the Internet among certain segments of the population. While Portugal has made significant progress in terms of internet connectivity and digital infrastructure in recent years, there are still many individuals who do not have access to these resources.

In particular, low-income families, the elderly, rural communities, and individuals with disabilities or limited education may face barriers to accessing digital technology and the Internet. These groups may not have the financial resources to purchase devices or pay for internet service or may lack the skills needed to use digital technology effectively.

Digital exclusion can have significant consequences for individuals and communities, including reduced access to information, limited job opportunities, and reduced social and economic mobility. As a result, there are ongoing efforts in Portugal to address digital exclusion and ensure that all individuals have access to the resources they need to participate fully in today's digital world.

In Portugal, the numbers of digital exclusion are still quite significant. According to Eurostat, in 2020, around 27% of the population aged 16-74 had no or low digital skills. This means that many people may have difficulty using basic digital tools, such as email or online banking.

Additionally, there are still areas of the country where access to high-speed internet is limited, particularly in rural regions. This lack of internet access can further exacerbate digital exclusion, as it makes it difficult for people to access online resources and services.

However, the Portuguese government has been working to address these issues through a variety of initiatives, such as investing in broadband infrastructure and providing digital training programs for citizens. These efforts are helping to reduce digital exclusion and ensure that all Portuguese citizens have access to the benefits of the digital age.

In the Azores, maybe due to the fact that we live on islands, some indicators are better than the average in Portugal.

Utilização de Internet por regiões (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Portugal	19,4	25,7	29,3	32,0	35,6	39,6	41,9	46,5	51,1	55,3	60,3	62,1	65,0	68,6	70,4	73,8	74,7	76,2	78,3
Norte	16,1	22,7	24,5	27,4	29,9	34,2	36,3	42,9	47,5	49,8	55,7	56,3	59,0	63,9	65,2	69,1	69,2	69,8	74,3
Centro	18,4	21,3	27,8	31,1	36,6	38,5	37,6	43,7	45,5	50,7	54,9	57,5	60,0	63,7	65,9	69,9	72,9	74,6	74,8
Lisboa	26,1	32,3	39,2	41,3	44,8	49,7	54,7	55,0	62,5	68,2	72,7	74,9	76,0	79,4	81,8	83,9	84,0	86,5	86,1
Alentejo	16,6	22,5	25,6	27,4	33,6	36,7	37,6	41,5	44,2	49,1	54,1	56,1	60,0	64,5	66,3	70,2	71,0	71,3	76,1
Algarve	17,2	22,8	27,9	30,6	29,4	38,6	43,8	52,0	56,0	58,7	63,7	64,2	69,0	72,3	71,4	72,2	75,1	78,0	81,2
R. A. Açores	20,8	19,7	22,5	26,3	28,1	30,5	35,5	36,8	44,6	50,3	58,5	63,1	67,0	71,0	71,4	75,4	75,9	78,8	78,2
R. A. Madeira	12,8	21,4	26,3	29,1	32,6	37,1	40,6	44,3	47,3	51,5	57,4	59,6	63,0	67,9	71,4	75,9	75,9	77,4	80,0
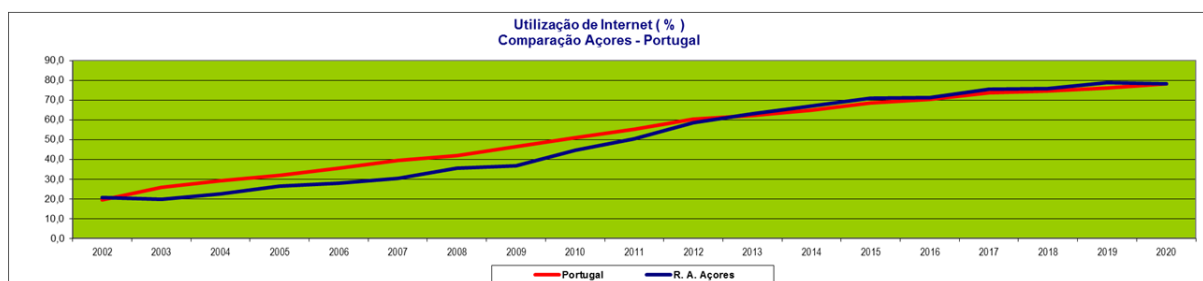
Fig.1.1. The use of internet

Posse de computador por regiões (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (a)	2017	2018	2019	2020
Portugal	26,8	38,3	41,3	42,5	45,4	48,3	49,8	56,0	59,5	63,7	66,1	66,7	68,0	71,1	71,1	71,5	x	x	x
Norte	24,1	35,4	36,9	39,6	42,0	45,1	47,6	56,9	58,4	62,8	64,6	65,3	67,0	68,3	68,3	68,3	x	x	x
Centro	24,3	34,7	38,6	41,4	45,2	46,7	43,7	49,9	53,8	58,7	61,1	62,1	63,3	68,2	68,2	69,1	x	x	x
Lisboa	34,8	44,7	50,2	48,6	52,8	55,8	57,9	62,4	67,7	71,4	74,8	74,8	74,7	78,7	78,7	79,2	x	x	x
Alentejo	21,2	31,1	37,3	34,9	35,0	38,6	43,2	43,0	47,1	53,6	54,6	55,7	57,4	61,9	61,9	61,9	x	x	x
Algarve	22,4	36,8	41,6	44,1	41,7	47,7	54,4	57,1	61,7	63,1	64,4	64,4	68,2	69,2	69,2	69,0	x	x	x
R. A. Açores	23,6	31,5	35,8	41,0	45,5	50,0	51,6	56,0	61,2	64,8	67,3	67,5	71,5	75,5	75,5	75,8	x	x	x
R. A. Madeira	17,2	32,9	38,2	41,6	46,5	48,9	52,6	58,3	59,9	61,5	64,2	66,1	69,9	74,4	74,4	74,3	x	x	x

(a) Valores de 2015
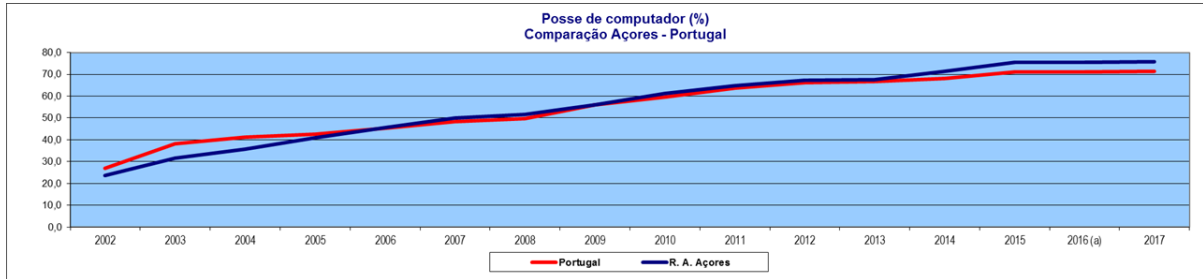
Fig.1.2. Having a computer

2. Methodology

2.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted by adopting the provided survey template by the project coordinator. The questionnaire was conducted online by using "Google Forms". The questionnaire was shared in the social groups (Facebook) on the Terceira island of AJITER and also shared on the AJITER social media page (Facebook and Instagram). Besides it, the link to the questionnaire was sent via email to lots of contacts in Terceira.

2.2. Participants

17 answers were collected. The ages distribution was as follows (fig. 2.2.1.):

- 29,4% aged less than 18
- 11,8% aged between 18 - 24
- 35,3% aged between 25 - 34
- 23,5% between 35 - 44
- 0% aged between 45 - 65+
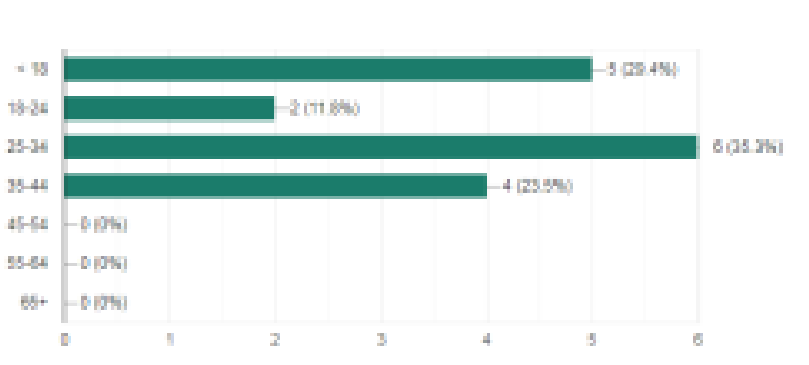
Fig.2.2.1. Age distribution

The majority of responses were by females (58,8%) and 41,2% were male (fig.2.2.2.). 58,8% mentioned that they were living in rural areas compared with 41,2% that replied that they live in urban areas (fig.2.2.3.).
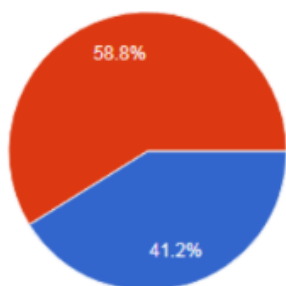
Fig. 2.2.2.
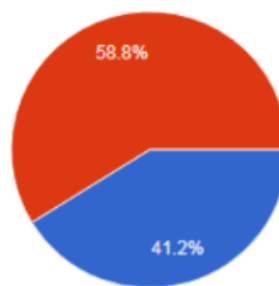
Fig. 2.2.3.

In terms of education, the majority replied (76,5%) that their highest level was high school (fig.2.2.4). 58,8% answered that they work full-time jobs, while 41,2% replied they were students (fig.2.2.5.). Only 11,8% have a physical disability or health condition. 88,2% have none (fig.2.2.6.).
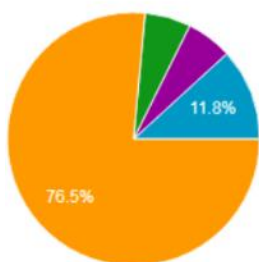
Fig. 2.2.4.
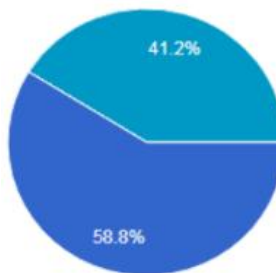
Fig. 2.2.5.

2.3. Translation
The items were translated into Portuguese because you don't need to understand English to be able to use the internet and new technologies.

3. Key findings

100% replied that they do have an internet connection at home. The results of the Survey on the use of TIC by families carried out between June and August 2022, indicate that 88.2% of households in Portugal have an internet connection at home and 84.6% have a broadband connection. 93.0% of households have at least one fixed telecommunications service at home and for 85.6% of fixed services existing services are integrated in a package with other telecommunications services (fixed or mobile).
TV by subscription is the main service, mentioned by 87.9% of all families and 80.4% of families with integrated services in the package (Anon, s.d.).
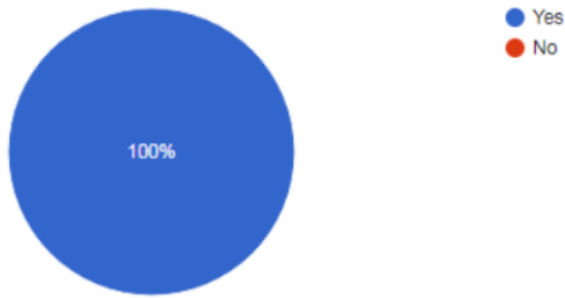
Fig. 3.1. Do you have internet connection at home?

All respondents also do have consistent and reliable access to a device that can connect to the internet such as a phone, tablet, or computer (fig. 3.2.). 94,1% answered that they have access to internet data (3G and 4G), on a portable device and that they are able to access the internet as much as they like, while 5,9% replied they don't (fig. 3.3.).

Fig. 3.2.
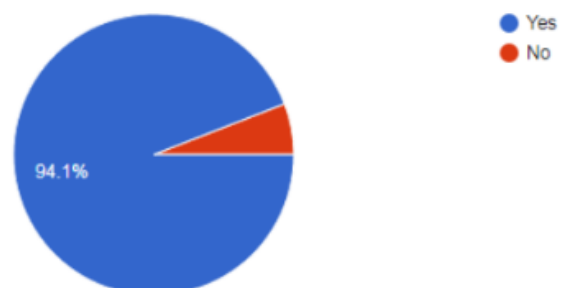
Fig. 3.3.

Also could be understood from this research that people have access to the internet mostly to socialize, work, research, and for entertainment and that they use it several times a day, daily.
These were the replies collected:
1. Work and socializing
2. Work, social life
3. Yes
4. Shopping, studying, movies
5. Yes, to socialize
6. Socialize, news, researching
7. Work, socializing, school searches
8. Research
9. Socializing, work
10. Working ant to socialize
11. Research, socializing
12. Working, socializing, entertainment
13. Work, socializing, gaming, streaming
14. Socializing, movies, and searches
15. Work, socializing, reading news, streaming
16. Entertainment (streaming, gaming), school and other works, chatting, searching all kinds of things
17. Knowledge
47,1% feel very confident using the internet by themselves, 35,3% moderately confident, 11,8% only a bit confident and 5,9% replied that they were not at all confident.
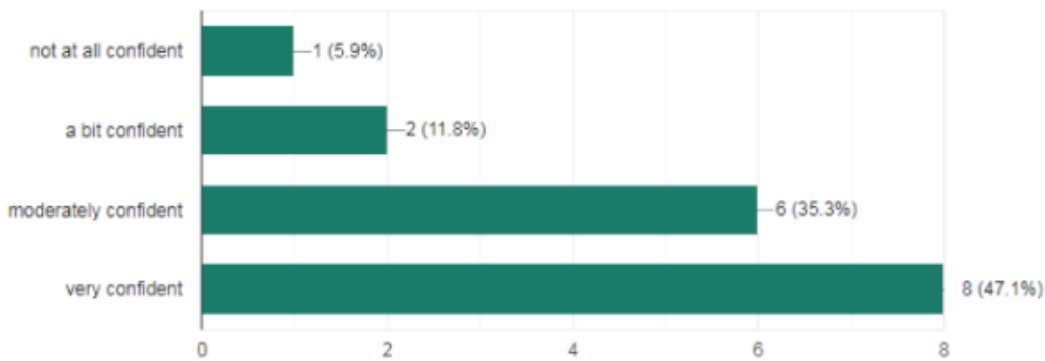
Fig. 3.4.

When they were asked which online services they used these were the answers collected:
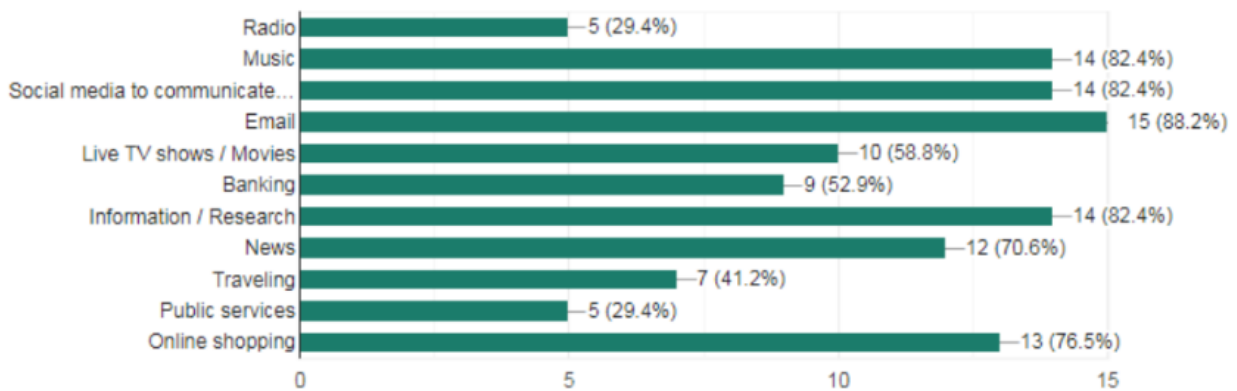
Fig. 3.5.

Clearly can be understood from this data that the majority of the respondents use the internet mostly to listen to music, social media, and emails, to research/have information, to do online shopping, and to catch the news.
Also all the respondents agreed that the internet will play a big role in the future (fig.3.6.).
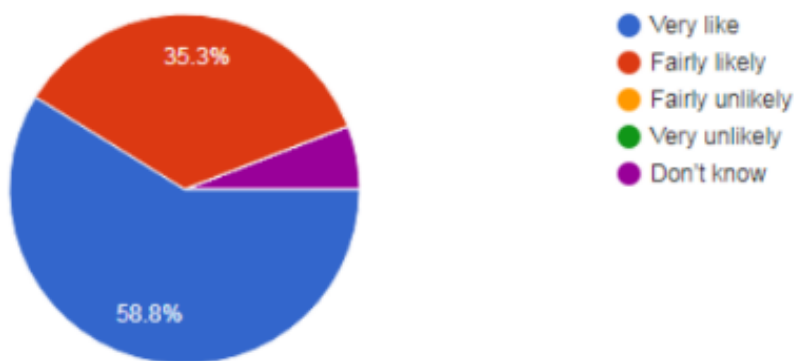
Fig. 3.6.

4. Conclusion

From all our knowledge and also considering all the data we collected, for sure, the internet takes one of the most important roles in our day life.
The use of the internet is now generalized and people use it for almost all purposes. Mobile devices are in the hand of almost everyone and almost everybody owns a device.

Albania

by Institute of Albanian Municipalities

1. Country background

Albania, located in Southeastern Europe, has made significant progress in its digital landscape in recent years. Internet penetration in Albania has seen substantial growth, with increasing numbers of people accessing the Internet. As of the latest available data, approximately 84% of the population had access to the Internet in 2021.

Mobile connectivity plays a crucial role in Albania's digital landscape. Mobile subscriptions have surpassed the country's population, indicating a high level of mobile adoption and usage.

Albania has invested in improving its internet infrastructure, including expanding broadband connectivity. Efforts have been made to extend connectivity to rural and underserved areas, although challenges still exist in achieving universal coverage.

The Albanian government has recognized the importance of digital transformation and has implemented various initiatives to foster digital development. These include strategies to promote e-governance, digital literacy, and the use of technology in education. Enhancing digital skills and education is a focus area in Albania. Efforts have been made to integrate digital literacy programs into schools and provide training opportunities for individuals to improve their digital competencies.

E-commerce is gaining traction in Albania, with an increasing number of businesses adopting online platforms for selling products and services. Online banking, e-government services, and digital payment systems are also becoming more prevalent.

Albania has seen the emergence of a start-up ecosystem, with a growing number of tech start-ups and innovation hubs. These ventures contribute to the country's digital transformation and economic growth. Despite progress, digital exclusion remains a challenge in Albania. Disparities in internet access, digital skills, and resources exist, particularly among marginalized communities, rural areas, and disadvantaged groups.

Limited internet infrastructure and coverage in rural areas hinder access to the internet for many Albanians. Unequal distribution of resources and affordability issues further exacerbate the problem, leaving marginalized communities behind. A significant portion of the population lacks the necessary digital skills and literacy to navigate online platforms, effectively use digital tools, and maximize the benefits of the internet. This skill gap hampers educational opportunities, employment prospects, and economic growth. While the internet offers vast information and resources, language barriers exist for Albanian speakers. Limited availability of online content in the Albanian language restricts access to vital information and educational materials, hindering digital inclusion.

Socioeconomic disparities contribute to digital exclusion in Albania. Low-income individuals and families struggle to afford internet services, devices, and computer literacy training, widening the digital divide.

To combat digital exclusion in Albania, a multi-faceted approach is required. It involves expanding internet infrastructure to underserved areas, providing affordable access and devices, implementing comprehensive digital literacy programs, and fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors. Supporting initiatives that promote gender equality, language diversity, and inclusive policies are also critical.

By addressing these challenges and embracing digital inclusion, Albania can unlock the immense potential of its population, enhance educational opportunities, drive economic growth, and foster a more equitable and connected society. It is crucial to prioritize digital inclusion as a fundamental pillar of Albania's development agenda.

2. Methodology

2.1. Questionnaire

Institute for Albanian Municipalities prepared the questionnaire in the English language. The questionnaire was circulated on WhatsApp and Facebook with Google Forms.

2.2. Participants

The participants were 21 from Albania. The average age is between 25-34 years old (fig. 2.2.1), 52,4 % are female and 81% of the people live in urban areas (fig. 2.2.4).
Around 57.1% of the respondents have a university degree or higher (fig. 2.2.3.).
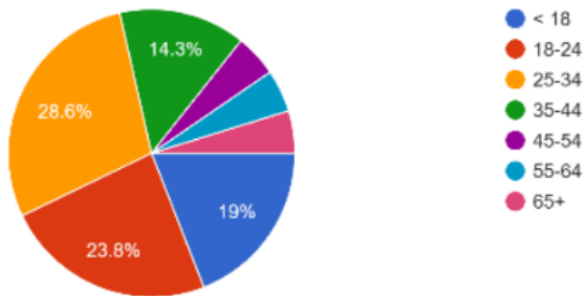
Fig. 2.2.1. How old are you?
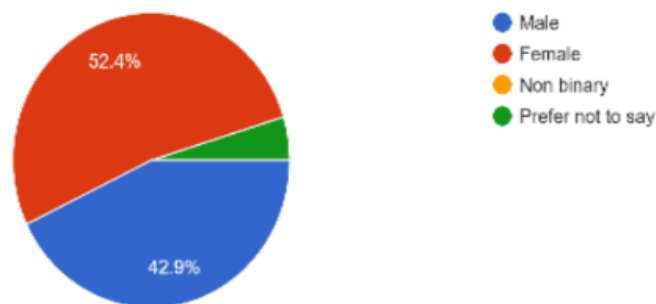
Fig. 2.2.2. Gender
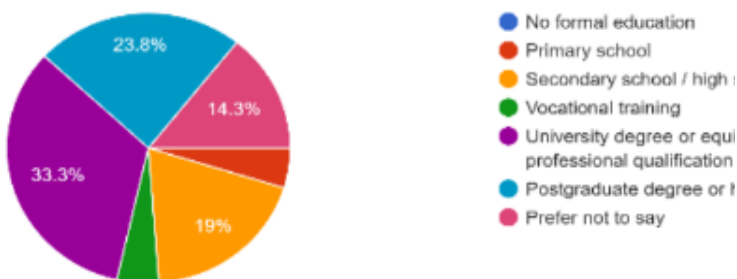
Fig. 2.2.3. Education status   *Fig. 2.2.4.*
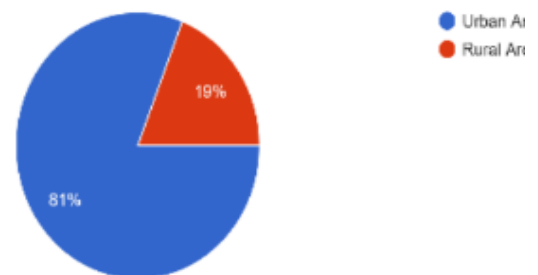
2.3. Translation

It was not necessary to translate the items in Albanian language.

2.4. Limits

Time constraint was a limit for our organization and another limit stand in the response options that responders did not found in this survey.

3. *Key findings*
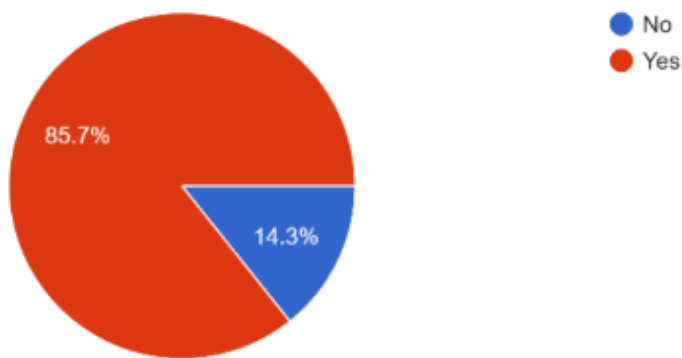
The majority of respondents (85.7%) have access to the internet at home; only 3 people don't have Wi-Fi at home, and only 2 don't have internet in mobile phones and portal devices.

Fig. 3.1. Do you have an internet connection at home?

They use the internet for work, social media, and research mostly. The usage of the internet is so wide they use it either daily or several times a day.
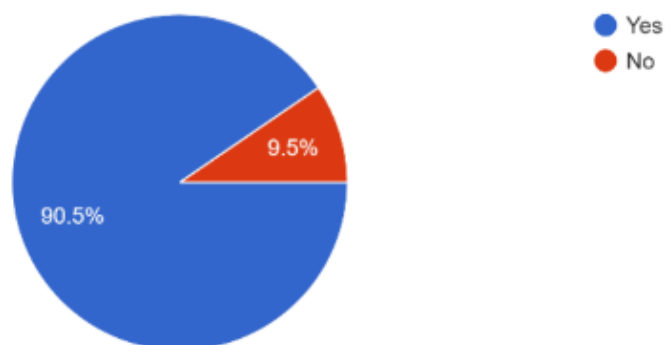
Fig. 3.2. Do you use internet data on any portable devices such as a phone or iPad?

4. Conclusion

Albania has made progress in improving internet access, but there may still be disparities in connectivity between urban and rural areas. Efforts should be made to expand access to reliable and affordable internet infrastructure across the country.

While digital literacy levels are increasing in Albania, there may still be a significant portion of the population lacking essential digital skills. Enhancing digital skills training programs and promoting digital literacy initiatives could help improve overall digital inclusion.

Access to digital devices, such as computers and smartphones, could be a barrier for some individuals in Albania. Addressing device affordability and ensuring access to affordable technologies can contribute to greater digital inclusion.

Specific attention should be given to promoting digital inclusion among marginalized groups, such as low-income individuals, rural communities, elderly populations, and people with disabilities.

Tailored initiatives and support programs can help bridge the digital divide for these groups.

The availability and accessibility of digital government services can enhance citizen engagement and promote digital inclusion. Continued efforts should be made to expand and improve digital platforms for accessing public services.

Digital entrepreneurship and innovation can play a significant role in driving economic growth and digital inclusion. Creating an enabling environment for digital startups and providing support for entrepreneurs can contribute to a more inclusive digital ecosystem in Albania.

Recommendations

Nowadays, online connection is one of the most important tools for having a social, political, and economic life, enhancing personal and societal well-being. Having an internet connection allows you to exercise your rights by accessing basic services such as health care, economic and personal development initiatives, skills development, and education.

The digital transition brought new and exciting opportunities that unfortunately not everyone has equal access to these opportunities. For people to embrace and feel confident with the new technologies, they must see them as inclusive, useful, and trustworthy. As seen in the responses (annex 2), the digital world is not fully accessible, or affordable, and individuals do not have the necessary skills to fully participate.

Digital inclusion is defined as "equitable, meaningful and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere" (Nations, s.d.) and so, digital inclusion takes into account the various barriers that individuals are experiencing. For not leaving anyone behind human rights needs to be promoted, protected, respected, and expressed also in the online environment.

As reflected in the I-PLAY findings, an internet connection is a great tool used for working, accessing information, social communication, education, and entertainment (streaming platforms, music, travel, etc.).

The results of the 9 national reports identify 3 barriers to digital inclusion (annex 2): ACCESS, DEVICES, AND DIGITAL LITERACY. These three pillars were approached in all 4 topics discussed during the project's lifetime (annex 3): DIGITAL SOLIDARITY, DISTANCE LEARNING AND WORK, DIGITAL COMMUNICATION, E-CITIZENSHIP.

DIGITAL SOLIDARITY

 ACCESS

- free access
- connectivity
- low costs and sufficient digital education
- improving access to social and recreational services
- more understanding and help for individuals in needs
- more funds addressed to education, healthcare and digitalization

DEVICES

- cheap devices
- establishing public access - computer station
- schools should have well-equipped computer labs so children can benefit on internet
- learning to communicate through digital devices
- aggregation centers

DIGITAL LITERACY

- increased training to achieve safe navigation
- information campaigns
- Digital skills training programmes for all ages
- free tutorials and workshops on ICT
- school lessons'

DISTANCE LEARNING AND WORK

ACCESS

- offer free Wi-Fi in public spaces
- using e-public services
- to connect people to each other and to acquire knowledge for free and for all
- low internet price, free of charge
- help desk for those who do not have access to a mobile phone or internet
- greater and wider access to the internet, the opportunity for elders to learn and get trained on Digital tools and online devices

DEVICES

- keep making affordable devices for everyone
- cheaper internet and gadgets to use internet
- funds for young people from rural area with a low income
- lower prices at devices for people with low income

DIGITAL LITERACY

- political moves to close the digital gap among citizens should be further promoted and encouraged
- multiply computer teaching classes for older people
- school should train digital skills since the first years
- use social network to promote digital education and risk about use of them
- private and public entities should collaborate and implement free workshops

- promote the correct use of internet in every school

- trainings for improving digital skills

- seek for ways to familiarize the senior citizens with the digital world and include them into this world

- free seminars that teach the wonders and the perils of the internet

- awareness campaigns

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

ACCESS

- reduce internet costs

- ensure public network infrastructure

- ensure reliable and safe use of social media

- offer free access to Wi-Fi in public areas

DEVICES

- ensure the financial participation having the finances to buy a computer in school for each students

- providing professional phone contract at work

DIGITAL LITERACY

- encourage public education on digital communication, cybersecurity and use of social media in the young ages

- provide free classes of digital communication for everyone but especially for older people and people with disabilities

- free tutorials about digital communication

- use social network as a mean to transmit digital knowledge, taking advantage of the fun format of social media to deliver digital communication classes

ACCESS

- benefit from the same social treatment
- right to education and non-discrimination
- inclusion of children at risk of poverty
- free Wi-Fi in public areas
- feel part of a society
- free internet access
- promotion of not only local but European activities
- offer social funds for people that are facing diverse obstacles

DEVICES

- funds for purchasing devices for people from rural areas in order to be an active member of the society also at the online level
- helpdesk for individuals who do not own a mobile/computer

DIGITAL LITERACY

- information campaigns
- free tutorials
- ICT trainings
- digital literacy classes in school
- funds for digitalization and education
- guidelines and/or programmes to teach individuals the usage of internet

So, the main recommendations that the I-PLAY Networks brings to the policy-makers and the stakeholders interested in making a change are:

1. *Establish a DIGITAL CITIZENS' ACADEMY to offer online learning courses on the topic of digital skills through a user-friendly online platform.*

2. *Organize face-to-face digital workshops to support e-excluded people to acquire the basic ICT skills needed to be inserted in the digital society.*

3. *Launch training programmes for all ages, social backgrounds, and professionals from a variety of sectors via a lifelong learning approach with a focus also on cybersecurity*

4. *Use social networks as a means to transmit digital knowledge. Taking advantage of the entertaining format of social media to deliver content.*

5. *Promote the correct use of the Internet in every school*

6. *Offer free Wi-Fi in public spaces*

7. *Funding opportunities for disadvantaged individuals for purchasing digital devices*

8. *Consider the potential implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and virtual reality on digital inclusion efforts.*

When it comes to inclusion it is visible that not everyone has the same opportunities, and that some communities are left behind. So, in order to offer the same rights to everyone, it must be guaranteed availability, access to the internet, digital devices, services, education, safe participation, discrimination-free online spaces, and safe content.

Another barrier noticed within the *access pillar,* refers to LANGUAGE ("*Also knowing English or any other languages helps a lot. If using the internet only in Lithuanian it limits the accessibility of things that can be reached using the internet. The more languages the person knows the easier is to use the internet").* "There are 24 official languages of the EU and more than 60 regional and minority languages. No single language can address all EU citizens at once, and the Internet must reflect this (Commission, s.d.).

It has to be mentioned that often, the responses got from all 8 countries, indicate that internet access is considered as a HUMAN RIGHT that allows equality.

Digital transformation has offered us so much potential and endless possibilities for knowledge both in formal and informal education and training as well as in terms of making our lives easier. The fact that some social or generational groups are excluded from this type of capability is simply not acceptable.

Conclusion

"Everyone should benefit from the opportunities offered by the internet and
fully participate in the digital society"
- *Andrus Ansip, Former Vice President of the European Commission*

Digital access has come critical to our life that needs a synergic commitment from all the actors of a community, increasing digital literacy among all citizens and creating links between generations.

There is a need for digital inclusion policies at all levels. For example, in Romania, over the past years, any funding for digital skills has been directed towards developing higher-level skills, for example - software development, artificial intelligence, or cloud technology. There is virtually no political interest to tackle the overall issue of low levels of digital skills among the general population.

By taking into consideration that a large part of the people that are digitally excluded are senior citizens, it is important to focus on this particular target group and seek ways to familiarize them with the digital world and include them in the digital world. Also, it is stated in all relevant research papers that the lower people's income is, the lower their involvement in the digital world is. Thus, policy recommendations will be effective and helpful to call on governments to reduce the digital divide. For instance, the Flemish Christian-Democrat Party (CD-V) in Belgium has recently submitted a bill to inscribe internet access in the constitution to make it a fundamental right for everyone. Such political moves to close the digital gap among citizens should be further promoted and encouraged.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated that having an education and training system which is fit for the digital age is essential. While COVID-19 demonstrated the need for higher levels of digital capacity in education and training, it also led to the amplification of a number of existing challenges and inequalities between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not, including individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Finally, awareness campaigns will significantly help to highlight the importance of digital inclusion.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Digital Inclusion Survey

Information

Digital exclusion is defined by a lack of internet access or a low level of digital literacy. The impact of digital exclusion increases as more and more aspects of our world moves online. With the lockdown and social/physical distancing rules, many services or parts of life that were once accessible in person or via phone, now only exist digitally. This can have enormous impacts on those who experience digital exclusion.

The information you provide by answering these questions will help us to campaign for digital inclusion.

Consent

By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate and allowing us to use your answers to create a more effective campaign.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may stop participating at any time and exit the survey.

We will not collect any personal information and your answers will remain anonymous.

1. Where are you from?

_____

2. How old are you?

☐ < 18
☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ 65+

3. Do you identify as:

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Non binary
☐ Prefer not to say

4. Are you living in:

☐ Urban area
☐ Rural area

5. What is the highest educational level that you have achieved to date? If you are still in full time education, please give the educational level that you are currently working towards.

☐ No formal education
☐ Primary school
☐ Secondary school / high school
☐ Vocational training

☐ University degree or equivalent professional qualification
☐ Postgraduate degree or higher

☐ Other _____
☐ Prefer not to say

6. Which of these best describes your own working situation?
☐ Employed full time
☐ Employed part time
☐ Not working
☐ Retired
☐ Homemaker
☐ Student / full time education
☐ Prefer not to say

7. Do you have any disability or health condition that limits your day-to-day activities? It could include a physical disability or health condition (e.g. affecting your movement, balance, vision or hearing) or a non-physical disability or health condition (e.g. affecting thinking, remembering, learning, communications, mental health or social relationships).
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

8. Do you have an internet connection at home? (e.g. WiFi or broadband)?
☐ Yes
☐ No

9. Do you have consistent and reliable access to a device that can connect to the internet such as a phone, tablet, or computer?
☐Yes
☐ No

10. Do you use internet data (e.g. 3G or 4G internet) on any portable devices such as a phone or iPad?
☐Yes
☐No

11. Are you able to access and use the internet as much as you would like?
☐ Yes
☐ No
If no, please mention why (eg. Costs, lack of devices, no/poor signal, misunderstanding technology)
_____
_____

12. Do you currently use the internet for? (e.g. work, job searches, socializing, streaming)
_____

13. How confident do you feel using the internet on your own?

☐ not at all confident

☐ a bit confident

☐ moderately confident

☐ very confident

14. How often do you use internet?

☐ Several times a day

☐ Daily

☐ Weekly

☐ Monthly

☐ Sometimes, but less than a month

15. How often do you use internet data on a portable device (e.g. 3G or 4G internet)?

☐ Several times a day

☐ Daily

☐ Weekly

☐ Monthly

☐ Sometimes, but less than a month

16. How likely or unlikely are you to start using the internet at some point in the future?

☐ Very likey

☐ Fairly likely

☐ Fairly unlikely

☐ Very unlikely

☐ Don't know

17. Which of the following online services do you use? (you can check multiple answers)

☐ Radio

☐ Music

☐ Social media to communicate with family/friends

☐ Email

☐ Live TV shows / Movies

☐ Banking

☐ Information / Research

☐ News

☐ Traveling

☐ Public services

☐ Online shopping

☐ Other _____

18. Why is digital inclusion important to you?

19. What are some solutions to help people become more digitally included?

Annex 2

"Why is digital inclusion important to you?"

ITALY
"To feel part of the society"
"Giving everyone the same "basic" opportunities (education, healthcare, internet access), regardless of social class and geographical area, is very important in a modern society. Training, healthcare, culture cannot be the prerogative of a few, not even of the majority, but of all. Having the same opportunities allows people who live in difficult situations to change their condition (not without commitment)"
"It helps to get rich by sharing knowledge and experience in general with others"
"Fight the loneliness of living"
"In order to not feel excluded and belonging only to a minority who are denied opportunities"
"To enhance not only the territory but the people through music"
"Because only through social inclusion will it be possible to achieve a truly egalitarian society, with equal rights for all"

FRANCE
"Because we are living in a digital world and we cannot be left behind"
"It is necessary today; we need it for everything"
"Because we are very lucky to have access to infinite knowledge"
"Because Internet is needed in all aspects of our lives"
"I have been initiated to Internet by my kids and I feel that we do not all have same situation."
"For some people it can be difficult to access to it"
"Because without it you cannot even book a train ticket"
"Because it's something useful and is growing with us"
"To connect people to each other and to acquire knowledge for free and for all."
"Because the internet offers lot of possibilities, in terms of job and social inclusion"
"Not important but necessary"
"Make everyone at the same level"
"Because It allows easily communication"
"Because we can do everything on the web!"
"Because it's an important means of social inclusion
"Because it helps people in a lot of fields, it facilitates their lives
"To promote inclusion of everyone, for instance through online courses
"It allows people to be connected
"Because it is a great opportunity to do a lot of things that we can't do without the Internet
"It helps me in a lot of things in my life
"Because today it is essential to be able to use digital tools and Internet

LITHUANIA
" To connect with friends from abroad, to socialize in social media, to know news in the world;
"It is a part of lifestyle;"
"It is necessary for job;"
"It is important for communication with relatives who live abroad and also for using e-banking and other e-public services;"
"Because I can connect with friends, find information;"
"Because it broadens our view about life and about the world;"
"It reduces social exclusion"
"Many things possible to do online without leaving home;"
"It's the 21st century, everything is connected through digital devices and Wi-Fi, and you want it or not;"

"Cause in 21st century everyone should be able to connect and participate in social platforms;"
"I grew up with internet;"
"I am disable and it allows me to work from home;"

ROMANIA
"Because I believe that any person, regardless of whether they suffer from disabilities or not, has the right to feel included in society."
"Social inclusion is important for any individual, any person wants to be accepted as they are, with good and bad, no one is perfect."
"Social inclusion is important to support the idea of equality in society (regardless of social status, the environment they belong to, people have the right to have access to information)"
"It's something democratic"
"A good information"
"To give all people their due rights"
"Because we live among/with people"
"Humans feels part of a community"
"For mutual respect"
"Because it ensures our active participation in all cultural, social and economic aspects of society"
"We live in the year 2023, almost everyone does."
"For socializing"
"At the present time, it is vital to respect human rights"
"Communication"
"To take advantage of opportunities"
"... To have a normal life"
"for new information"
"The future belongs to responsibly used technology."
"for personal development"
"Because it's the distance and I have no other way to communicate"
"Because I want an equal environment, without discrimination of any kind."
"Social inclusion can help the harmonious development of a society.2
"You are aware of what is happening around you."
"A healthy society is built on inclusion, so every individual is healthier in an inclusive and healthy society"
"I would like to be able to be in contact with family and relatives who live in another region of the country."
"I would like to be able to use online payment services so that I don't have to leave my home, as the payment points are far from home."
"To respect the status and rights of people, to have equal treatment with others"
"Even if I belong to the category that has the necessary resources and many young people, I have noticed that they own a smartphone/laptop, but the problem is that they do not know how to look for real information on the Internet. These tools are used only for tiktok, chat, and rarely for academic or purely informative purposes."
"Because we all have to benefit from the same social treatment"
"It is the future"
"Because we must respect the status and rights of all people in a society, who must have the opportunity to participate meaningfully in its life and enjoy equal treatment with others."
"To have a better society"

PORTUGAL

"It is important in the technological days of days. It would be important to include people with more learning difficulties. To the greater "control" of children in the online world. For older people or people with more difficulties, there will be more training."
" Nowadays we see only digital things."
"Very important because made my life."
"It helps in our development."
"Digital inclusion is important to integrate a unite us in a fast, practical and digital world."
"It makes easier the communication between persons."
"I feel more connected to the whole world and able to search for whatever I want."
"Because everyone should have access to the internet."
"Because i tis the future."
"Simplify my daily routine; maximize your time and your potential."
"Because it embraces people's differences and can be an army against exclusion."
"Because, nowadays, the world is also digital."
"Everything is digital or going to be."
"Because i am connected to the world."
"Because everybody should have the same opportunities."
"Bring people together."
"I think, as a big tool in our lives, for equality, access to free entertainment and knowledge in a easy and global way is not only achievable but necessary."

ALBANIA

"Because it promotes equality, provides access to education and learning opportunities."
"It helps me to communicate and work."
"Fast information at any time."
"Prevent the creation of disadvantaged populations."
"So, anyone can benefit from the internet and technology."
"Education is no more limited just to physical presence."
"Extends job markets."
"Educational opportunities."
"Enabling digital rights."

"What are some solutions to help people become more digitally included?"

ITALY
"Free Internet access, plus promotion of not only local but European activities"
"Increased training to achieve safe navigation"
"Support schools and all those sporting, artistic and associative activities that create communities"
"First of all, the State would have to initiate a profound review of its public spending. Less bonuses, less money spent on pensions (spending amounts to 18% of GDP) and more money on education, healthcare and digitalisation. The problem is primarily political. But a political problem is nothing more than the mirror of a poorly educated population (Italy, for example, ranks last in Europe) and little accustomed to dealing with certain issues.Despite this, it should be a moral obligation for each of us to spread certain ideas and make sure that everyone can understand them. Working in the territories, organizing meetings with experts, starting a constructive dialogue especially with the new generations are some of the solutions to start a healthy and serious internal debate on certain topics and problems."
"Solutions such as welcoming and listening to pupils with special educational needs in order to encourage their growth in a serene atmosphere and to enhance their potential"

"Aggregation centers"
"Use technology tools to support it, not replace it"
"More information, strengthening of services to support families in difficulty, social assistance services at home for the elderly"
"Social orchestras MusicainGioco with the Abreu method aimed at including children, teenagers and adults with special needs but not only"
"Internet access for everyone. Increase in personal services. Increase in voluntary and third sector initiatives."

FRANCE
"Offer free Wi-Fi in public spaces, free ICT trainings, increase digital literacy at schoolS"
"Cheap devices and education"
"Implement digital education since early ages"
"Tutoring for elderlies"
"Offer more digital workshops in community centers"
"Free tutorials"
"I think keep making affordable devices can be a good think"
"Make it free, open source and rid of advertising."
"Connect with local associations working with citizens"
"Easier and faster"
"By making some workshop, through associations"
"Classes, workshops"
"To create more ICT classes"
"To multiply computer teaching classes for older people"
"Provide Internet access to all"
"To give ICT classes, I am thinking about older people"
"Teaching how to use the computer and the Internet"
"Classes teaching how to perform specific tasks"
"To make sure that many people have access to Internet"
"To give free access to WIFI connection"

GREECE
"free access"
"free wifi, training on digital skills"
"connectivity"
"While it can mainly be a fund problem, meaning whether you have a device or an internet connection, I guess there could be free seminars that teach the wonders and the perils of the internet"
"School lessons"
"training digital skills from primary school"
"Greater and wider access to the internet, the opportunity for elders to learn and get trained on using digital tools and online devices"
"training on digital skills, free internet access"
"free internet access"
"Low internet price Free of charge or lower prices at devices for people with low income."

BELGIUM
"Giving more trainings, workshops; Ensuring cybersecurity"
"Reducing internet costs"
"Providing internet infrastructure to all corners in the country; offering free workshops and lectures on how to use computer and internet; having strict control on the issues of cyberbullying, cybersecurity and online hate speeches."
"Reducing its price."

"Low costs and sufficient digital education."

"It is crucial that Internet services are accessible and affordable, as well as secure, and reliable. Media literacy education, encouraging digital skills from an early age, including informatics and coding in the school curricula is also important."

"Workshops on the usage of internet can be carried out; internet cost might be reduced and it might be provided for free to those with insufficient income; internet kiosks could be set up; contests that encourage digital literacy could be organized; contests in which contestants get points when they contribute to society through NFT tokens could be organized."

"Provide lectures and workshops on digital literacy and coding starting from young ages."

"Establishing public-access computer stations; offering free internet to under-waged; offering free internet to disabled people since they need internet services even more than others; improving internet infrastructure in rural areas; encouraging internet usage among senior citizens with free workshops etc."

"Providing free Wi-fi to all and providing lectures on using internet in an efficient and safe Way"

LITHUANIA

"Trainings, on how to use online platforms i.e. Facebook, IG, e-banking, public services."

"Computer literacy training"

"Faster internet connection"

"Training on how to use certain digital services, especially for the elderly."

"I think some people find it costly to use technologies or internet and also lack the knowledge of how to use it. So the best way would be to maybe make social funds which help to include people living in rural places and also maybe some guides or programs to teach them the usage of internet."

"Free of charge internet access"

"Training for digital competences organized in community"

"Improved internet connection in rural areas and lower prices which would be suitable for retired people"

"Maybe they can start by learning to communicate through digital devices."

"Provide the access to the places that are more difficult to reach"

"Cheaper internet and gadgets to use internet. Also knowing English or any other languages help a lot. If using internet only in Lithuanian it limits accessibility of things can be reached using internet. The more languages person knows it is easier to use internet."

"Computer literacy training and ongoing consultation with professionals who know how to solve problems more efficiently and quickly."

ROMANIA

"People should be more aware that regardless of whether a person has health problems or not, he deserves to be involved in social activities and that this does not determine whether the person in question has social skills or not."

"Information campaigns."

"Let's continue the process of changing individual and social attitudes"

"To learn to accept that some people have disabilities and we need to create an atmosphere for them to help them benefit from services that help them"

"help desk for those who do not have access to a mobile phone or internet"

"digitization groups" - meetings to teach people to use search engines

"financing for young people from rural areas who do not have funds for the purchase of digital materials"

"Informing and educating citizens in this regard"

"Availability to access the Internet for free for those who have limited possibilities in this regard"

"Education and awareness"

"Combating prejudice and discrimination"

"Government policies and programs"
"Socialization"
"Let's invest more trust in our children and support relaxed learning. Rather, let's take into account a person's abilities, not their disabilities, and let's not forget that there are still undiscovered solutions, not problems"
"Much information"
"Integration of children at risk of poverty and disabilities!"
"make it free"
"Let's have an open mind to the new"
"Let there be equality and no discrimination between people"
"More understanding and help for needy people."
"communication"
"New activities"
"Promotion of voluntary activities in schools. Campaigns to promote people from disadvantaged backgrounds/people with motor disabilities who function in the same way as people considered normal."
"Development of a social inclusion program starting from primary school level to university level."
"Accessible psychoanalysis for agents of change, the formation of moral values in university and pre-university education"
"Learning to use the devices"
"A program where seniors can acquire minimum skills in this field."
"The right to education, non-discrimination"
"It is necessary for the educational program to be adapted to the current situation and for young people to have the necessary skills to distinguish between a true and a false news. The Internet is a very useful and beneficial tool, but you must know how to use it, otherwise it can bring "destruction"."
"And for seniors, all schools in partnership with local associations could carry out trainings to convey the minimum skills."
"Promoting social inclusion, improving access to social and recreational services, supporting the regeneration of disadvantaged communities."
"DIGITIZATION"
"We must respect the rights of all people"

PORTUGAL

"Doing some workshops to older people."
"In the previous answer."
"Voice connection."
"It depends on each person, more information and more help."
"Have lectures about the internet and correct way to use."
"Expand internet connection to areas that connection isn't good as it may be. However, I think that, despite internet being useful for so many things, we need to use it exclusively to important things for our life and know how to work with it, because it could be (and actually is) a bad thing for human relations and consequently for the entire world."
"Making the access to tic more easy for people."
"More accessible prices in internet acquisition."
"Make access to technologies easier and cheaper."
"Workshops, videos, universities for the older people."
"We need more lectures about it."
"TIC Education."
"All public spaces have Wi-Fi."
"Start education at school earlier."

"Actions of Digital inclusion are just like social inclusion so if the people using it are just not educated then nothing can work properly. So, firstly, teach people how to use the internet in school, and how to, safely, enjoy all its benefits. And then make digital developers more aware of how simplicity in software could be not only beneficial but prettier, so anyone can enjoy it in a joyful way."

"More information, more help."

"Access to Tic easier and cheaper internet prices."

DIGITAL SOLIDARITY

ACCESS

DEVICES

DIGITAL LITERACY

Free access(Fr, Gr Lt,It)

Connectivity (Gr)

Low costs and sufficient digital education(Be))

More understanding and help for needy people (Ro)

Improving access to social and recreational services(Ro)

More money on education and healthcare and digitalisation(It)

Cheap devices and education(Fr)

Maybe they can start by learning to communicate through digital devices(Lt)

Establishing public access computer station (Be)

Aggregation centers(It)

Schools should have well-equiped computer labs so children can have access to the internet (Ro)

Increased training to achive safe navigation(It)

Training on digital skills(Gr)

Free tutorial, workshop (Fr,Be)

Information compaignes (Ro)

School lesson's (Gr)

Launching training programmes for all ages(Gr)

Informing and educating citizens in this regalo (Ro)

DISTANCE LEARNING AND WORK

ACCESS

DEVICES

DIGITAL LITERACY

France: Offer free wifi in public spaces, free ICT trainings, increase digital literacy at schools

France: To connect people to each other and to acquire knowledge for free and for all.

Lithuania: using e-public services

Greece: low internet price free of charge

Greece: greater and older access to internet, opportunity for eldest to learn and get trained on using Digital tools and online devices

ROMANIA: help desk for those who do not have access to a mobile phone or internet

ROMANIA: A program where seniors can acquire minimum skills in this field

France: Keep making affordable devices for everyone

Lithuania: Cheaper internet and gadgets to use internet.

ROMANIA: financing for young people from rural areas who do not have funds for the purchase of digital materials

Greece: lower prices at devices for people with low income

Inclusive Europe: Political issues to close the digital gap among citizens should be further promoted and encouraged.

France: To multiply computer teaching classes for older people

France: Tutoring for elderlies

France: By making some workshop, through associations

Greece : School lesson's

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa: to use social network to promote digital education and risk about use of them

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa :To promote the correct use of the internet in every schools

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa: meetings to improve digital skills

Greece: training digital skills from primary school

Inclusive Europe : seek for ways to familiarize the senior citizens with the digital worldand include them in the digital world.

Greece: There could be free seminars that teach the wonders and the perils of the internet

Inclusive Europe: awareness campaigns

Inclusive Europe ,Belgium

I.R.T.E.A, Greece

ASOCIATIA NAMELESS ART, Romania

Solidarité & Inclusion ,France

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa, Italy

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

ACCESS

reducing internet costs

ensuring public network infrastructure

ensuring reliable and safe use of social media

offer free access to wifi in public areas

DEVICES

ensure the public financial participation to acquire a computer in school for each student

providing professional phone contract at work

DIGITAL LITERACY

encourage public education on digital communication, cybersecurity and use of social media in the young ages

provide free classes of digital communication for everyone but especially for older people and people with disabilities

free tutorials about digital communication

use social network as a mean to transmit digital knowledge, taking advantage of the fun format of social media to deliver digital communication classes

E-CITIZENSHIP

ACCESS

benefit from the same social treatment

right to education and non-discrimination

integration of children at risk of poverty...

free wifi in public areas

feel part of a society

free internet access plus promotion of not only local but european activities

social funds help include people in rural places

it is not fair if the citizens are left out from this service and network

DEVICES

finanancing for young people from rural areas

helpdesk for those who dont have access to mobile phones

DIGITAL LITERACY

information campaigns

free tutorials - trainings

increase digital literacy at school

spend more money on digitalisation and education

Guides or programs to teac them the usage of internet

consulting eoth profesional who know how to solve problems in this regards

Castrignano del Capo, Italy 2023
This output has been realized in the frame of the project
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