S.M.A.R.T Youth Centres

Project Result 3

Introduction

About the Project & Project Result 3

About S.M.A.R.T.

"Support Mobility Activities Running through Tech - S.M.A.R.T. Youth Centers" project is a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2 – KA2) of the Erasmus+ Programme funded by the Hellenic National Agency INEDIVIM (The Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation). The project started on December 2021 and will run for 24 months under a consortium of 8 partnering organizations from 6 different European countries.

S.M.A.R.T. is the continuation of 2 previous Strategic Partnerships projects of I.R.T.E.A. (STEPS Youth Centers and the VR in School Education and Civic Participation) under the general topic of introducing and integrating new technologies in youth work. The project is lead and coordinated by the Institute of Research & Training on European Affairs (I.R.T.E.A.) based in Athens, Greece.

I.R.T.E.A. is a leading youth-led training provider organization in Greece specialized in EU policies and EU funding opportunities. We aim to raise awareness, educate, and train stakeholders with interest in EU affairs and Institutions, fostering civic participation and contributing to the development of the European citizenship and common identity.

S.M.A.R.T.'s main objectives are the following:

- The development of digital skills and competences of youth workers
- Ensuring the inclusive nature of learning opportunities
- The development of e-learning, mixed and distance learning skills
- The development of digital pedagogical skills of youth workers
- Empowering youth workers to provide high-quality, digital, non-formal inclusive education

Target Group

Participants in this process were youth workers and their main feature is that they wish to develop their digital skills in the field of Digital Youth Work (DYW). As a result, people with or without much experience in the field of Youth will be sought who are interested in gaining a background in digital tools and methodologies that will allow them to adapt their work to the new trends of digital activities in the youth field.

The expected results of the project are identified in empowering and educating youth workers to be able to understand how digitization shapes societies, including its impact on education and the youth sector in general, to take into account the 'digital culture' of young people, to foster a more flexible culture in the adoption of digital tools in education, to design DYW actions in line with the needs and hopes of young people and to encourage the participation of young people in all phases of DYW.

Project Results

Project Result 1
The development of MOOC courses and their attendance by participants on various aspects and tools of DYW and Digital Training (lead DYPALL NETWORK)

Project Result 2
The creation of VR environment for the implementation of activities aimed at young people, (lead BOLT)

Project Result 3
The pilot implementation of youth activities by the participants themselves (lead I.R.T.E.A.)

Project Result 4
The creation of a Digital Toolbox containing tools, methods and applications useful in the field of Digital Education and Training based in the field of DYW (lead Cinisello Balsamo)

PR1: MOOC Courses

The MOOC Courses (PR1) practically empowers and trains youth workers so that they can further develop any existing digital skills and competences, but above all be able to develop new ones, become familiar with the use of innovative digital tools, and eventually be able to develop and use creative educational methodologies making the most of the available online resources that will be concentrated in the Digital toolbox. The use and exploitation of these open source and free courses largely ensures an educational process that does not exclude anyone due to geographical, cultural, social, or economic constraints.

In addition, the nature of these online courses and the structure of educational content are such that they do not require the physical presence of the user at certain times and days. Users are free to formulate their own monitoring and participation schedule in the various course chapters of MOOC, in their own free time, and even at the end of each chapter have the possibility of repetitions, self-evaluation of their progress through special tests and questions to the instructors.

Find out more about the MOOC Course in the CEREBRUM.gr Platform.

Scan Me

PR2: Virtual Reality Platform

The Virtual Reality Platform (PR2) for the implementation of digital activities emerges as an evolution after the end of the MOOC training process and offers learners the possibility of simulating an environment that provides a high degree of interaction and direct contact of the user with it. The VR environment acts as a safe field of experimentation on the knowledge and theory gained by the trainees in the first stage of the project. Within the platform users are able to simulate electronic, mixed, and distance learning and learning environments, safely, and with the help of modern technological tools, thus developing the corresponding digital and pedagogical skills and competences described in the project results section.

PR3: Pilot Application

The Digital Activities Pilot Application (PR3) is the general rehearsal for the implementation of the planned results of the project, into which this call for participants contributes. Through its implementation, the consortium will have the opportunity to better evaluate the results of the first 2 PRs in an "experimental" phase, to respond to any problems that may arise, and to resolve them using the method of back-testing. This means that the consortium will carry out evaluation actions of the first two PRs using evaluation methodologies that are rigorous, systematic, and continuous.

PR4: Digital Toolbox

Finally, the Digital Toolbox (PR4) that will be created, will be open and free of charge, accessible to all, ensures the continuity of the project beyond its official ending date, as it will continue to be enriched with material from all partners. The Toolkit provides learners with the most innovative and up-to-date digital applications for the development of new pedagogical methods and the implementation of digital interactive workshops.

Naturally, the Toolbox will also include the activities proposed during the implementation of Project Result 3, but also a set of other activities proposed by the partners based on their experience in digital youth work field.

Impact

S.M.A.R.T. project focuses on achieving a triple impact. First, it seeks to create opportunities for organizations, trainers and youth workers to innovate. Secondly, it aims at the increased use of Open Educational Resources, ensuring that educational materials produced with European or public funding are free, open and available to all for use or reuse. Finally, it seeks to improve the infrastructure of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and connectivity in youth centers.

Consortium

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C.Y.L.N.

AMICUS
CERTUS

MaMa
Mladinska Mreža

KEKS

Quality and competence in cooperation

COMUNE DI
CiniselloBalsamo

DYPALL

DEVELOPING YOUTH PARTICIPATION
AT LOCAL LEVEL

bolt virtual

Project Result 3

Pilot Application of Digital Activities

Description of Activities

The Consortium released a Call for Participants, aiming to identify 5 youth workers per partner' country (Greece, Slovenia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Sweden) interested in developing and enhancing their digital skills and knowledge on digital youth work. Selected Youth Workers will have to follow 4 webinars (preparatory meetings) aiming to get trained on digital youth work and their aspects and engage into online meetings for the Pilot Application, of the material developed under PR1, PR2 and PR3 up to this point.

The activities contributing this Project Result included:

- **Phase 1:** Attend 4 Webinars (preparatory meetings), 3 hours total duration each, to help the youth workers' smooth introduction to the project and understanding of its objectives and aims as well as the Project Result's 3, which they will participate to.

During these, the youth workers were introduced to the CEREBRUM.gr Platform for attending the MOOC Courses (Project Result 1) and the VR Application (Project Result 2) which will be the "implementation site" for their activities.

- Phase 2: Participate at the Pilot Application 3 online sessions, 4 hours total duration each, in a 1-month duration.

The youth Workers were divided in 3 international groups and were called to develop their own digital youth activities, based on what they learnt in the MOOCs, to be implemented in the VR Game developed by BOLT Virtual.

The results produced during the 2 phases of this Result, were gathered, and will be reflected in the next pages of this Report, serving as the main deliverable of the Project Result 3.

Overall 30 youth workers were engaged in the result, but about 20 were actively engaged in the development.

Timeline

Phase 1: 4 Webinars (preparatory
meetings)

09 until 20 January 2023 (2 first
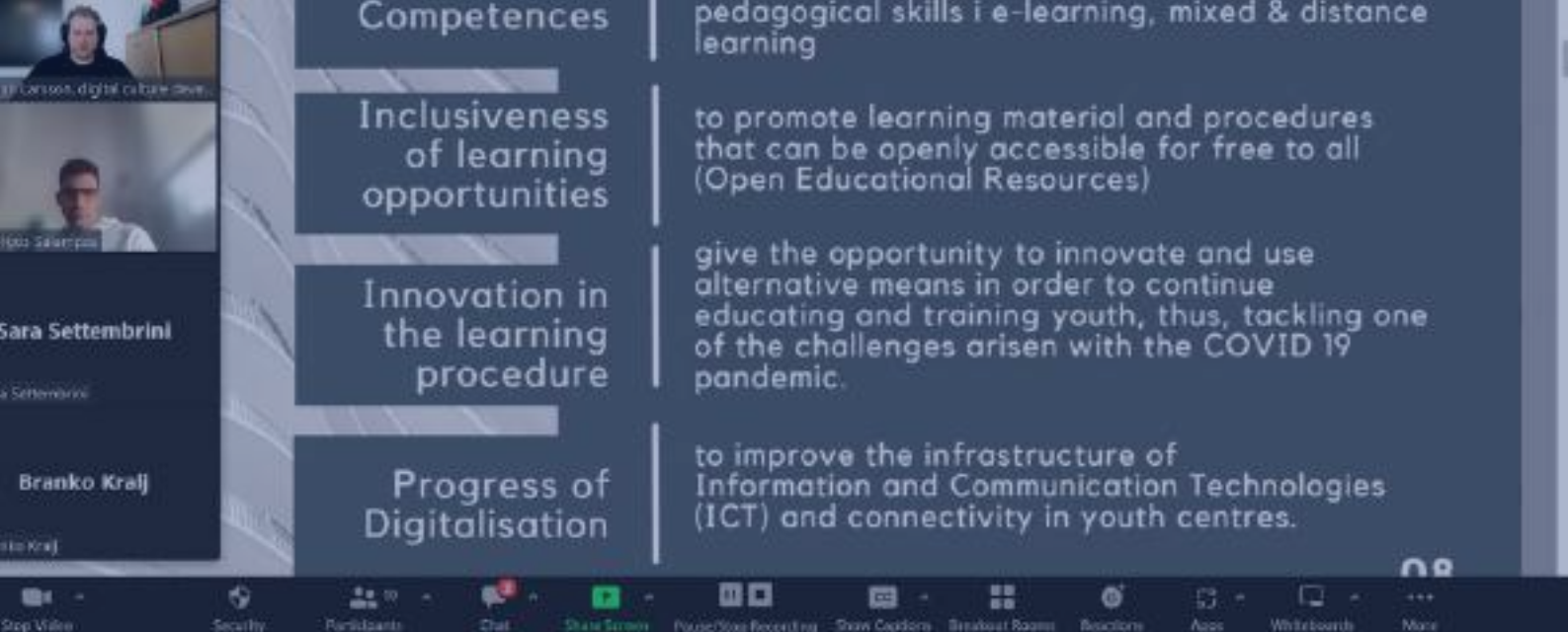Webinars, 3-hours total duration
each)

*23 January 2023 until 10 February
2023* (Attending MOOC in
Cerebrum.gr)

06 until 17 February 2023 (2 last
Webinars)

Phase 2: Pilot Application

From 20 February 2023 until 17
March 2023 (1 month)

Webinar #1

On the 27th of January, the youth workers joined the first Webinar of the process in order to get introduced to the topic and the course of action for this Project Result development. The facilitators presented the project and its timeline, as well as the developed material so far. Additionally, a presentation of the CEREBRUM.gr Platform took place, where the youth workers would train on the necessary material.

Webinar #2

On the 2nd of February, the second Webinar took place and the youth workers delved deeper into the topic of Digital Youth Work. Through presentations, open debates, and some extra audiovisual material, the youth workers received a full background on the topic, and also got the opportunity to exchange their experience on the field, their opinion and knowledge further on. Seeing how we had participants from large geographical coverage of Europe, the interactions were rather interesting and beneficial to all members. Since the majority of the participating youth workers had experience with the field from the COVID-19 pandemic as well, it was also interesting to address how they got introduced to the field of digital youth work and how they explored the different opportunities.

On the second part of this Webinar, the youth workers took part in a set of two small activities which aimed to enhance their cooperation and make them feel more comfortable with each other, as a setting the ground for their designing the activities later on.

CEREBRUM Session

Following the predesigned flow of activities, they would have a period to attend the MOOC Course on CEREBRUM.gr where they would receive a more proper, spherical and inclusive learning experience on the topic.

Naturally, the digital element of the platform also reinforced the importance of the topic, as the youth workers themselves got the chance to train in a different digital platform and explore the options that exist for e-learning.

You can find out the MOOC Course of CEREBRUM.gr here

Webinars 3 & 4

After the MOOC Training on CEREBRUM.gr the youth workers had the chance to meet in 2 webinar sessions and reflect on the material they received.

Based on this freshly acquired theoretical background, they were called to pass into the practical implementation phase and design their own digital activities.

Webinar #3 & 4

Webinar #3, on the 20th of February, started with a short introduction in the activities' designing. Seeing how most of the youth workers were experience on this part, the goal was to set a background on how a digital activity was to be properly designed in order to ensure its efficiency and the maximization of its impact in the target group. Naturally, we also took into consideration the importance of creating a clear background for the process not only for the youth workers to gain knowledge and expertise, but also to safeguard that the designed activities later on would be easily understood and applicable for implementation by other youth workers.

After identifying and clarifying all the necessary information an activity should include as well as the steps of designing an activity while also trying to safeguard its success, the youth workers split into teams and began identifying their ideas of activities, the digital aspects thereof and the general concept. In assistance of this process, and to help them focus on the process of designing the activity, the facilitators offered a set of topics and target groups for teams to choose from and from that point on start their process, as well as a Template for the youth workers to develop their ideas and ensure that they add all the necessary information.

Webinars #3 & #4

This process was followed in the fourth webinar as well, on the 24th of February, where the youth workers received feedback on their original ideas, and guidance for the facilitators to lead into a more complete and spherical result. The groups were also encouraged to meet and exchange opinions aside from the time of the Webinars, if they felt they needed extra time to further structure and enrich their ideas.

In the next chapter of this Document, you will find the groups' ideas as they were developed, formatted and implemented in a pilot environment.

Digital Activities

Team 1 – D(emocracy) day

- Needs identified: People with disabilities are often excluded from activities with other young people as well as from the active civic life in their local communities

- Target Group: young people with physical disabilities

- Goal/Aim of the Activity: to inspire young people with physical disabilities to get more engaged in the democratic and civic life at their local and national level and to get the understanding that their voice matters

- Needed digital tools/skills/context: Computer and use of Internet

- Expected Impact: To make young people more interested in democracy and more active in the democratic events, such as voting procedures etc.

D-Day - Needs Identification

According to a Publication of the Council of Europe, there are between 180 and 220 million young people with disabilities globally, and approximately 80% of them reside in developing nations -based on estimates.

There is a severe lack of study on the impact and effects of impairments among young people. The information that is available indicates that young people with impairments encounter a lot more obstacles than their peers without disabilities. Their involvement, self-determination, and inclusion in society are frequently hampered by discrimination and/or unfavorable sentiments.

The EU has taken measures and attempts to enhance the life situations of people with disabilities and especially young people in that minority, such as setting the foundation for the European Disability Forum, a place for the representation of all people with disabilities and of their interests, wishes and needs as well.

Active participation in our modern society is considered an important aspect in the lives of young people. Youth's engagement and their contribution is important as any other citizen's, as we consider that they are important factors in the development of the society, especially since they will be the ones to live in it in times to come.

D-Day - Needs Identification

In our activity, we have chosen to focus on people with physical disabilities as a social group that is often underrepresented in the civic and democratic life and combine it with the need to empower and inspire them to be active citizens and help shape their daily lives, their communities and our European society in general.

Exactly, due to the aforementioned underrepresentation, young people with physical disabilities often lack incentive to be active citizens exactly since they feel that they are not heard and often treated as if they have no political identity or stance in the society. Naturally, the EU core values of equality and solidarity and the activities and plans around this topic, add an extra value in this activity since we aim for young people with disabilities to feel them and instill them in their peers as well.

Target Group:

Young People with physical disabilities, eager to use digital technologies in their daily lives

D-Day

Objectives:

- Raise Awareness about the perks and values of active participation,

- Inspire young people into activating their stance in civic and democratic affairs,

- To support them in developing their knowledge and skills about the democratic activation and engagement,

- Reach young people with different physical disabilities to help them organize their own activities or events,

- Enable young people with physical disabilities into meeting online and expanding their meetings in the virtual world,

- Create a safe space for young people with physical disabilities to meet, discuss and address issues that affect them in the democratic representation and civic engagement

Digital Aspect:

- Use of computer

- Use of an Online Platform which enables communication and contact in a creative interface designed by the user

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D-Day

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Digital Aspect:
Use of computer

Timeline

5 min.	**Instructions and inviting to gather town, create avatar etc. – helpful link <u>here</u>.**
5 min.	**Give some time to familiarize with the interface, the settings and abilities as players.**
5 min.	**Icebreaker: stand in line with avatar based on different aspects (e.g. from youngest to the oldest; from the person who is living in the Southern to the Northern part of EU, based on how many times you were voting in the last 365 days)**
15 min.	**Play "the Line". The space is split in 2 sides: the right side is for those agreeing, and the left for those who disagree. All the players make a line and listen to statements made by the facilitators and have to state if they agree or disagree by moving their avatar in the space.** **Statements' examples: "EU is important to me"," EU is important to my country", "Feminism isn't necessary", " Democracy exist everywhere", "You can't affect the EU", " I have the same opportunity to influence my future" .**
15 min.	**Watch relevant informative videos available on youtube (e.g. Watch Is the EU Democratic? Does Your Vote Matter?)**
5 min.	**Transition to the next activity & Division of Groups**

Timeline

5 min.	**Instructions for the following activity**
30 min.	**Discussed the following Questions in groups and take notes. You can set up your group anywhere you like on the interface of our gathertown.** **"What is your opinion on the EU?"** **"You as a youth, can you affect the decisions today that will affect your future."** **"How can youth workers help with spreading the importance of democracy?"** **"Do you feel like you have the same opportunity as everyone else?"** **"What is the best about democracy in your opinion?"**
15 min.	**Teams' Presentation**
15 min.	**Open discussion and reflection**
5 min.	**Discuss Future Activities & Closing of the Event**

Team 1 – D(emocracy) day

Tips to remember

- Speak simply and concisely with your instructions to ensure that everyone is on the same page

- Be familiar with the GatherTown platform! Set up the space to your liking and considering any activities you may want to add

- Not every young person is good at new digital tools, so be ready to help them if needed. Scribe (https://scribehow.com/) is a useful tool to create online guides.

- Keep in mind that each person with a disability is different and faces their situation differently. Try to ensure that the atmosphere is supportive or you could need to be prepared to do an intervention

- Diversity and pluralism are important for our society but young people may overstep the line and become offensive. Be prepared to intervene if the discussion gets off hand.

Team 2 - Hybrid Intercultural Event

- **Needs identified:** Support the young migrants into integrating in the society - Promote non-formal education as means of integrating migrants with the receiving community

- **Target Group:** Young people with a migrant background

- **Goal/Aim of the Activity:** Social inclusion

- **Needed digital tools/skills/context:** Google maps, Padlet, Jamboard, Miro, WhatsApp, Mentimeter

- **Expected Impact:** young people with a migrant background are integrated and empowered in society.

Hybrid Intercultural Event - Needs Identification

The number of youths with migrant background in Europe has been really increasing in the last few years. Especially after the migration shock of 2014-2015, European countries have been trying evermore to improve their capacity at receiving as well as properly acclimatizing and integrating young migrants. Aside from the practical issues and the basic needs that need to be covered for a migrant (access to healthcare, access to housing, family reunification etc.) it is important to keep in mind the need for an individual to properly join a new community, be integrated and included as member of it while also get acquainted with the new environment. This is especially important for younger people since they are more easily affected by the changes in their lives and especially such big ones.

Proper integration process affects a lot more than just the community of receiving young migrants. Their lives and their potential contribution to this new society they join depends on how well, timely and properly they are to enter the community and become a part of it.

It has become apparent that if they become a part of that community, without having to shed-off their national heritage and culture but instead try to adopt and accumulate new features from this "new society", young people with migrant background are more likely to feel this as part of their identity, contribute to the society and take active part in the civic and democratic life.

Hybrid Intercultural Event - Needs Identification

Additionally, it is also important for the receiving society to be ready to welcome and host, following the principles of acceptance, equality and solidarity among each other. Understandably, differences may sometimes block the process, and the general rise of right-ist political governments in Europe, thus reflecting the people's minds, also seems to affect the situation when it comes to this issue.

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind the values upon with our Europe is built and make sure that we support young people to the best of our abilities, especially as they are offered a new chance at a new life. It is important to include them in society, first of all, to give them a sense of welcome in a new country, and also because the mix of cultures can be really important for a nation and its progress and evolution.

Hybrid Intercultural Event

Target Group

Young people with a migrant background have migrated from one country or cultural context to another. These young people may have different experiences and challenges compared to those who were born and raised in the country where they currently reside. They may face language barriers, cultural differences, discrimination, and other challenges that can impact their ability to integrate and fully participate in society.

General Goal:

Supporting young people with a migrant background to overcome these challenges and become included in their new communities is an important aspect of promoting diversity and inclusion.

Objectives:

- Increase young people's social and cultural awareness and understanding

- Encourage young people's participation in local community events and activities

- Provide opportunities for young people to develop new skills and interests

- Promote cross-cultural communication and understanding

- Develop strong relationships between young people and their peers, mentors, and community members

Hybrid Intercultural Event

Digital Aspect:

Young people will communicate, express their ideas and experiences as well as connect, using social media and digital platforms apart from physical interaction as a way of enhancing and improving their experience in getting to know each other.

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Timeline

5 min.	**Setting the scene**
5 min.	**Presentation of the project**
5 min.	**Ice breaking (2 trues and 1 lie about your culture/country - the participants guess which one is the lie) - jamboard**
5 min.	**Setting the rules by the group - jamboard.**
5 min.	**Speed dating chat edition (firstly chat without video) - Google docs / Zoom (2 minutes per round)** **Questions:** **Tell 3 facts about yourself, that the one is a lie. Then guess the lie.** **What is your biggest fear?** **For what are you really proud of?**
5 min.	**Name game / knowing each other games - write down on padlet.com your name and the word from the same letter, which somehow is related to your culture/country, while pinpointing the region you are from.**
5 min.	**Expectations, fears, findings - Solutions (mirò / jamboard)**
5 min.	**Presentation of each country - Storytelling using VR (google maps)**

Timeline

5 min.	**Break**
5 min.	**Informal intercultural dinner**
5 min.	**Opportunities of local communities for active participation - empowering youth with a migrant background - (e.g. padlet - already participated, would like to take part, any ideas for future events? What's App - to join the participants to the community)**
5 min.	**Reflection - Mentimeter** **Questions: How do you feel now? What do you find new/interesting to you today? How will you implement what you learned today in your daily life? Did you enjoy using digital tools? Do you prefer using those digital tools or traditional means?** **3 key takeaway things.**

Hybrid Intercultural Event

Tips to remember

- Speak simplified language for the activity to avoid task confusion.

- Pick a Head translator out of the migrant group who is more advanced in both languages to help you hold the activities and avoid confusion.

- Not every young person is good at new digital tools, so be ready to help them if needed. Scribe (https://scribehow.com/) is a useful tool to create online guides.

- Remember that culture/person's identity/past could be very sensitive, so make sure that the atmosphere is supportive or you could need to be prepared to do an intervention

Let's stay in touch!

Find out more about the project:

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🌐 https://smart-youthcenter.eu/

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