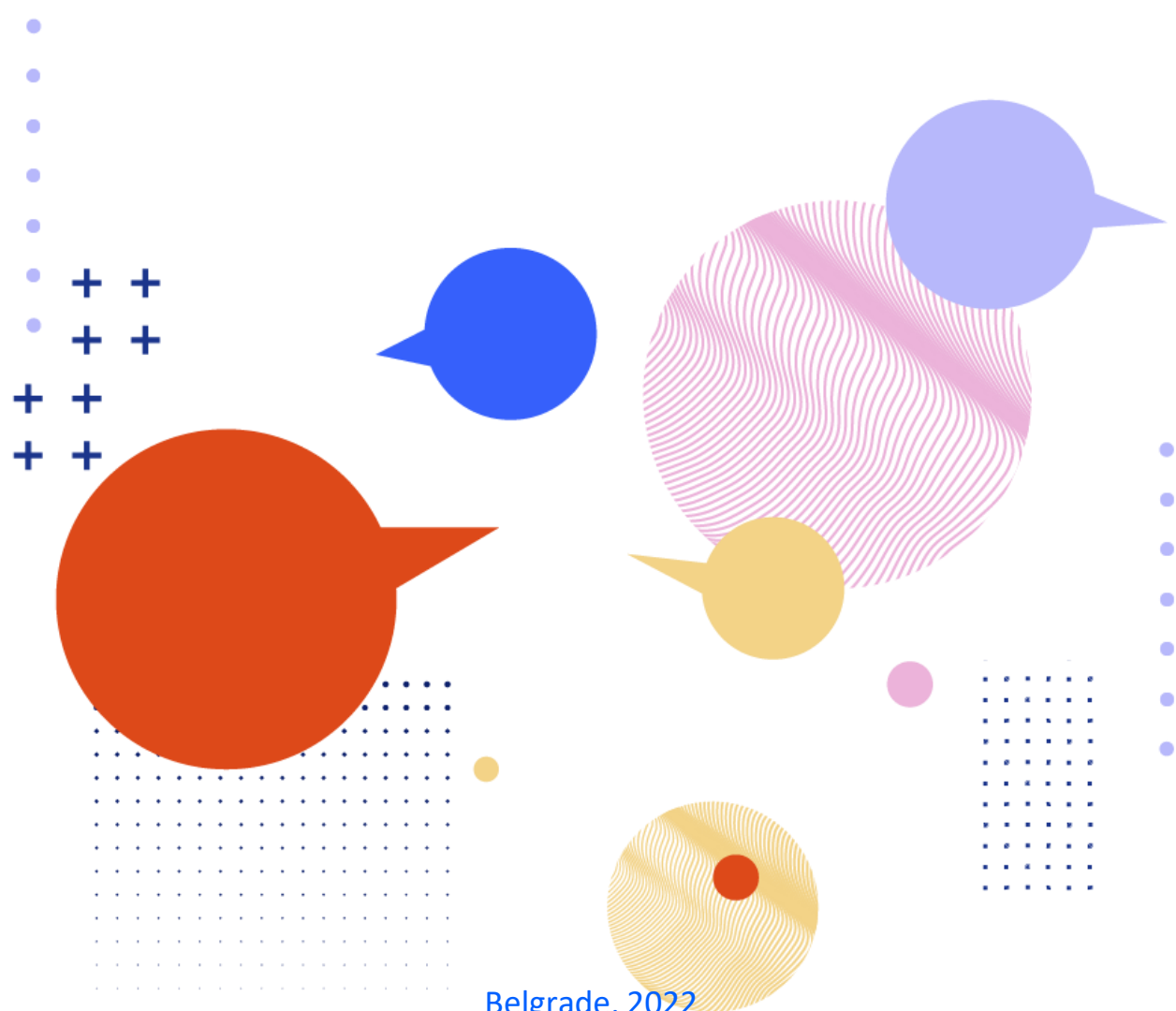


IO1

A REPORT ON DIALOGUE-BASED PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES



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WEBIN



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Executive Summary

Youth activism and activism in general have been a major factor in bringing crucial changes in societies around the world by challenging questionable policies, promoting human rights, protecting the environment, giving voice to the deprived and underprivileged, and fighting for the greater good.

The era of digital technologies opened a new door for activism to expand its reach and resort to various Internet resources to give voice to those whose primary focus has always been equality and equity for all. However, this newly identified space for activists and activism requires new sets of skills in order to keep developing and produce results. It is the aim of the Erasmus + DigiSMARTS project to equip youth organisations and youth workforce in general involved in activism, as well as potential young activist with useful and innovative tools to keep being engaged in a creative, inclusive and skilled manner in online activism with the purpose of bringing about necessary positive changes which could improve the quality of life of entire generations.

This report aims to present the results of research conducted within the Erasmus + DigiSMARTS project to understand the levels of digital skills in youth workers and areas of interests in youth when it comes to online activism with the idea of further building on those skills and interests to equip the youth workforce and the young activist with new tools, and fresh and creative ideas and approaches to digital activism.

The report consists of four sections directly related to research results: Introduction to the Report, a Short Overview of Youth Activism Practices in Partner Countries (namely, the UK, Turkey, Italy, Serbia, Finland and Cyprus), Dialogue-based Practices and Experiences, and the Conclusion. The report also contains the Reference Literature and the Annexes which comprise the research tools used to collect the necessary data.

In the first section, *Introduction to the Individual Report*, one will become familiar in more detail with the purpose and nature of this particular research, as well as with a brief overview of its contents.

The section *A Short Overview of Youth Activism Practices in Partner Countries* will provide the reader with the general state of affairs of youth workforce practices and youth activism in partner countries participating in this project since the same research has been conducted in all partner countries with the idea of obtaining the required information of the state of affairs in the field of digital activism.

The core section of this report, the *Dialogue-based Practices and Experiences*, is dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of research results conducted within the first intellectual output of the Erasmus + DigiSMARTS project. This section of the report will introduce the reader to the overall research methodology, the research sample and the profile of



respondents, and the main findings followed by discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

The last segment of the report is dedicated to an overall *Conclusion* referring to specific recommendations with respect to possible further actions.





1. Introduction to the report

The main purpose of this report is to present the findings of a quantitative research conducted within the DigiSMARTS project - Digital, Social Media, Activism, Rights, Training and Skills (Ref. N°: KA227-C33AB596-EN). The main research tools were two questionnaires created exclusively for the purpose of this research and intended for two different groups of respondents, namely for the youth workforce (youth organisations, NGOs, activists and youth workers) and potential young activists and young users of digital technologies in all project partner countries.

The Erasmus + DigiSMARTS project addresses the priority of supporting youth workers in the broad European youth workforce context through providing online open access, free, educational resources, taking them through the steps required to run a successful online activism project, working with youth in co-producing change in an area such as environmental concerns, employment and skills, crime levels or social inclusion/equality issues.

In the light of new digital practices which have increasingly been resorted to in different spheres of life, the DigiSMARTS project aims to establish the current level of digital skills and digital practices among the European youth workforce and young activists to offer some fresh insights into the world of online activism, open new, creative and innovative alcoves and perspectives on activism and suggest new paths and solutions to enrich the current face-to-face activism with suitable and effective online approaches. This is to be done by devising some innovative tools and open educational resources which are to be based to a large degree on the findings of this particular research.

In order to produce the most effective results, the consortium strives to understand the current needs and practices, as well as the challenges encountered by youth workers and the young alike in relation to the use of digital technology for digital activism understood as individual and/or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general by resorting to digital technologies or by using them as an important part of their engagement.

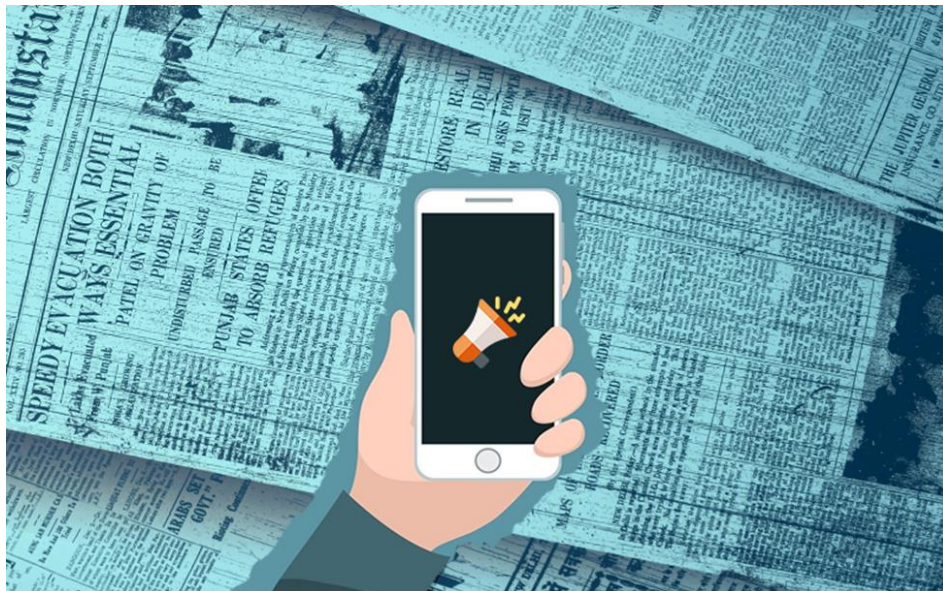
To obtain the most relevant responses the project consortium tried to address the questions to young users and youth workers engaged in various youth organizations, institutions and non-government bodies, as well as young people to provide feedback by completing the questionnaires.

The first questionnaire created as a part of the first project output (IO1) is intended for various non-government and youth organizations, youth workers, and different kinds of activists, while the second questionnaire is intended for young people who use different sorts of digital tools on a daily basis. As the findings of this research were planned to be a strong basis for the subsequent project outputs it was the consortium's idea to investigate



into current digital practices and activities of various activist organisations and individuals, as well as into their needs and challenges they encounter. On the other hand, the consortium also needed to understand in what manner and to what extent young people use digital tools, how much time they spend browsing the Internet, which places they find most interesting and why, what kind of content attracts their attention and why, how they understand the concept of activism and its purpose, etc. With such valuable findings the consortium will have a good foundation to suggest some further options and actions that will help the young become engaged in shaping their own societies according to their needs and wishes, and for the benefit of all.

The report presents the results of the feedback obtained from both afore-mentioned respondent groups. The findings have been analysed and discussed and some practical recommendations have been offered to inform the upcoming project activities. Some possible steps towards further research into the topic have also been suggested.



2. A Short Overview of Youth Activism Practices in Partner Countries

2.1 The United Kingdom

Countless youth are civically engaged and involved in movements outside of traditional political groups such as trade unions and political parties. Youth are actively participating as social change agents in a very concrete way (Terruelle, 2012). The literature on youth activism has been heavily focused on face-to-face interactions, even though other literatures, such as scholarship on youth civic engagement have taken a substantial digital turn (Earl et al., 2017).

One of the most prominent tools with the potential to facilitate youth civic engagement and activism is the internet, which has evolved into a medium of interactive communication and participation, as well as young people's favoured space for networking and socialization (McMillan & Morrison, 2006). Technological applications create considerable opportunities for the empowerment of disenfranchised teenagers and young adults; however, as technology on its own cannot bring social change, realising potential depends on the extent to which civic organizations utilize the medium to its maximum extent (Rainsford, 2017).

Gerodimos' (2008) research findings raised a number of issues, such as the need to involve young people in the evaluation of existing sites, and in the development of new online initiatives. It is only through an in-depth understanding of young users' civic motivations and online preferences that youth organizations will manage to produce online material that is successful in attracting and empowering youth.



2.2 Turkey

The Republic of Turkey is a transcontinental country located at a crossway of South-eastern Europe and Western Asia. Ankara is the capital city of the Republic of Turkey. According to recent estimates derived from the 2021 Turkish Statistics Institute's (TÜİK) reports, the population of the country is approximately 84 million, and 15% of the population are young people between the age of 15 and 24 (49% are female). It was postulated that the proportion of young people in the country's population is higher than in any other EU country with an average rate of 10,6% of young people. According to the official statistics, 97% of young people age between 16 and 24 go online, and the rate of the Internet usage went up from 93% to 97% between 2020 and 2021. These rates were 95% and 98%, and 91% and 96% for young men and women respectively from 2020 to 2021 (TÜİK, 2021). The above summarised statistics emphasises the importance of digitalisation for Turkish youth which comprises one of the largest youth communities in the European region.

The involvement of Turkey's youth in activism has been stigmatised in contradiction to being so-called apolitical generation (Bee & Kaya, 2016). Turkey's youth still participate in activism as significant players in the future of the country and Europe.

Below are a few examples:

- *Preventative youth healthcare:* Fundraising for free HPA vaccination for youth - <https://ahbap.org/haber/hpv-asilarinin-ilk-dozu-uygulandi>
- *Online sign language training:* Training developed by a youth-led organisation aiming to increase accessibility, use of sign languages and employability of people with speech and hearing difficulties via digital tools - <https://bukalemun.co/>
- *Digital information production:* An association established to sustain engagement with digital content development for wider internet users. It aims to create active involvement in digital information building for all, rather than being passive recipients of online contents <https://dijital-bilgi-dernegi.netlify.app/about>

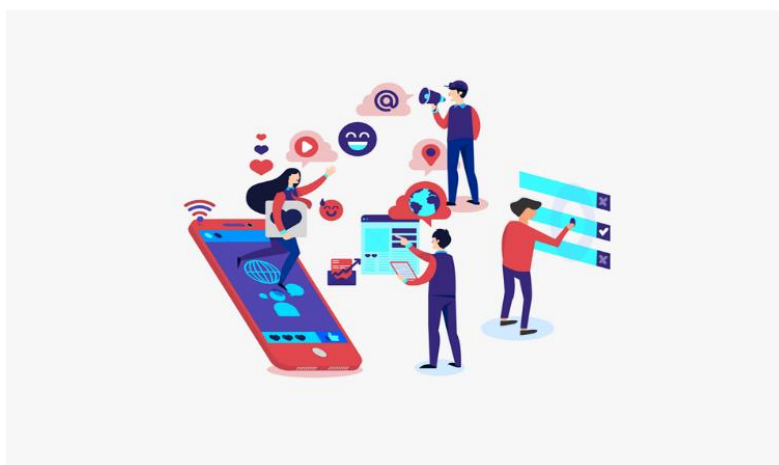


2.3 Italy

Prior to discussing youth activism in Italy, it is crucial to give a short sociological analysis. In Italy young people suffer from particularly adverse social and economic conditions, due to 23.9% youth unemployment rate (ISTAT, 2022), and 23.1% NEET conditions (Eurostat, 2022), with Greece and Spain closely behind. Given such a general condition, young people leave their families much later than the rest of Europe, which is connected to a transversal condition of uncertainty and complex stability transition (Cuzzocrea V., Bello B. G., Kazepov Y. 2020; Cuzzocrea, Gook and Schiermer, 2021).

A few main trends are important to underline:

1. The presence of NEETs does not bring lower degrees of political participation (Andretta and Bracciale, 2020) as there is a much more nuanced way of participation compared to the massive students' movement of the 60's (ibid.)
2. The citizenship law barriers have politicised the so-called 'new Italians' participation to ask for political change (Riniolo e Ortensi, 2020). Despite being born and raised in Italy, attending Italian schools, and spending their whole lives with Italian peers, young Italians born from non-Italian parents are not given access to the same opportunities as peers of native Italians.
3. Youth work is not institutionalised (Milan, 2018), and there is a huge cultural difference between the Italian regions. At the end of the day, programmes like Erasmus+ have improved and made youth work easier to perform owing to the available funding, even though youth work is still very much dependent on youth projects grants. Church institutions are still the ones that have the widest presence in terms of youth work, mostly based on activism. In this sense, youth work as an enabler of youth participation is possible when social and economic conditions make it feasible.



2.4 Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is a country located in the Western Balkans, in the heart of the European continent. Its capital city is Belgrade.

Although it can safely be asserted from the standpoint of someone who was born in Serbia that the people living in this country have always had a strong activist fervour, the actual number of movements and organisations oriented towards different activist causes has significantly increased in the last couple of decades, mainly owing to Serbia's opening towards the EU and its values after a decade of isolation. The process of accession to the European Union has gradually been removing a veil of ignorance from people's eyes with respect to human rights, environmental issues, and social, economic and political trends and developments and people felt the need to take the matters into their hands, and to become empowered through action and commitment to causes for the benefit of all.

Hence, one encounters various activist groups, NGOs and youth organisations which dedicate their time and energy to various causes, such as the following:

1. *Environmental activism:*

- *Odbranimo reke Stare planine (Let's Defend the rivers of the Mountain of Stara planina):* <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1925328764350247/>
- *Ekološki front Novi Sad (Novi Sad Ecological Front):* <https://www.facebook.com/ekoloskifrontns/>
- *Ekološki ustanak (Ecological Uprising):* <https://www.facebook.com/ekoloski.ustanak/>
- *Ne davimo Beograd (Do not let Belgrade down):* <https://nedavimobeograd.rs/>

2. *Activism for human rights, social justice and environmental protection*

- *Kreni-promeni (Stand up and make a difference):*

3. *Activism for human rights of LGBTQ + persons:*

- *Geten:* <https://www.transserbia.org/>
- *Gej-strejt alijansa (Gay-Straight Alliance):* <http://gsa.or>

4. *Development of democracy and civic activism:*

- *CRTA:* <https://crt.rs/o-nama/>



2.5 Finland

In Finland, the citizens' abilities and possibilities for making an impact are recognized as basic rights and the political system is based on representative principles. Even young people tend to have a rather conservative and traditional view of politics, for example rank voting as the best way to influence politics (Myllyniemi, 2014). Civic activism in Finland is widespread, and there are long traditions of being oriented towards official organizations and associations, even though certain new and more informal forms of activism have also come about (Allaste & Saari 2020).

Young people can influence official instances, such as student associations in schools, student organisations in universities, and as members of local councils and youth councils in municipalities. There are also plenty of social associations related to some specific issues, such as animal rights, environmental matters and LGBTQ+ rights. Political youth organisations are a quite an important part of the Finnish political system, and joining these also provides a channel to participate in the decision-making. By and large, youths are encouraged to be societally active in social media, and to participate in different organisations.

Youth work is carried out as a municipal service, and in non-governmental organisations. In addition, parishes have their own youth work activities. According to research, youths' activity, and their willingness to influence and do voluntary work have grown in Finland. The reasons behind this are mainly globalisation and digitalisation. Youth work actors actively utilize digital means, and consider the reinforcement of youths' digital skills as one of their main tasks. Finnish youth work actors consider youths brave and broad-minded and find young people's media literacy skills to be well developed. Youth workers appreciate youths' active participation in the society and their willingness to make an impact. On the other hand, they are concerned about youths' increased usage of social media (Verke 2021).

In Finland, 40% of Finnish young people between 10 and 29 years of age feel like a part of a community on social media. Most often, (64%) they read and watch content produced by others, rarely producing public content themselves. Moreover, social media also work as an important information and news resource (Merikivi et al., 2016). Another study in Finland concluded that Internet participation tends to supplement rather than replace traditional political activities, and that negative attitudes towards the formal political system were not a major driver for Internet participation (Christensen, 2012).

One example of youth activism is the *Fridays for Future* (FFF) movement, which has spread to Finland as well as to a vast number of other countries. It seems that even though the FFF participants have become politically active in a global protest movement, it does not necessarily mean that they want to see major reforms of the representative democracy towards a more participatory system. Instead of more participatory possibilities, the Finnish

young climate activists want a better-functioning representative system with politicians who listen to their demands (Huttunen 2021).



2.6 Cyprus

The Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus), is an island country in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, to the south of the Anatolian Peninsula. Its capital is Nicosia. From a geographical standpoint, the country is located in Western Asia, and geopolitically it is a part of the Southeast Europe. It is the third largest as well as the third most populous island in the Mediterranean (after Crete and Majorca), and it is located south of Turkey, east of Greece, and west of Syria.

During the past few decades, various activist efforts have been set in motion on the island targeting different groups of peoples, purposes etc. The efforts were oriented towards promoting, impeding, directing or intervening in social, political, economic or environmental reform of Cyprus, as well as towards promoting changes in society toward a perceived greater good. Some of the efforts were as follows:

- *Activism actions regarding political issues:* [Successful Activism & the Cypriot Issue | Structured Dialogue Conference – Cyprus Youth Council \(cyc.org.cy\)](#)
- *Activism actions regarding climate change:* <https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/03/22/young-climate-activists-call-for-political-action/>
- *Activism actions regarding social initiatives (inclusion, equal rights):* <https://unficyp.unmissions.org/all-cyprus-“-inclusive-society-empowered-women-and-youth-way>, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/cyprus-lgbt-pride-marchers-seek-equal-family-rights-2022-09-25/>
- *Activism actions regarding animal welfare:* <https://www.cyprusalive.com/el/animal-welfare-in-cyprus>

Furthermore, various activism movements are present and active in Cyprus:

- Social movement regarding LGBTQ+ community
- Social movements regarding animal rights (Anonymous for the Voiceless - AV and Animal Rights - AR)
- Social movements regarding political issues (United Cyprus)

3. Dialogue-based practices and experiences

3.1 The United Kingdom

3.1.1 Methodology

We distributed the questionnaires through LinkedIn, our social media, and social network using a multiple-channelled strategy.

We have:

- Contacted youth centres which are in contact and partnership with us
- Contacted and shared the questionnaire with local youth organisations

We sent the e-mail to contact persons in these organisations and asked them to forward it to any acquaintance or any person active or involved in digital activism.

3.1.2 Findings

3.1.2.1 Findings from the youth organisations and NGOs questionnaire

We collected data from fourteen youth workers. Seven participants preferred not to state their gender, the remaining were three males and four females. The 21.4% of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years of age, with 14.3% being 24-35 and 14.3% being 36-45. Twenty-one percent stated that they were members of staff, 21.4% were directors and 21.4% were volunteers. Participants' organisations are equally funded by the state, private funding, and donations. Fifty percent of the participants are formally qualified in youth work with 14.3% responding that they are not and the remaining not selecting a response. Participants who responded that they are formally qualified are also registered with a national youth and community body. Twenty-one percent of participants stated that they work for a non-government organisation, 21.4% for a governmental organisation and 21.4% for a youth service organisation (associations, clubs, movements). Half of the participants reported that the number of employees in the organisation is less or equal to 25 and the other half more than 25. Equally, half of the participants reported that the number of volunteers in their organisation is less than 25 and the other half more than 25.

When participants were enquired about their primary field of interest of their organisation, their responses were equally distributed to issue-based and identity-based activism. More specifically, they reported the following areas as their primary fields of interest in their organisation: BAME development, community work, general youth work service, place-based activism (east-Birmingham) and sanitary work.

Twenty-nine percent (28.6%) of the participants reported that their organisation has a strategic plan for using digital technologies for online engagement, 7.1% that they don't and 28.6% that they don't know. Thirty-six percent of the respondents didn't select a response.



The 21.4% of the respondents responded that their organisation possesses the necessary equipment (hardware and software) to facilitate the process of online engagement and 50% of the respondents reported that their organisation possesses data protection systems.

Forty-three percent (42.9%) of the respondents shared that their organisation is dedicated to the permanent review and online engagement in order to introduce changes that would raise the quality and positive effects of their actions. Twenty-one percent (21.4%) were not aware and 35.7% preferred not to say. Participants reported that they introduce changes in their approach to topics and issues related to the young and their activism, in the form of addressing the youth and the choice of topics they address. They also added that they always evolve practice in multiple areas and youth work is about constant change and development.

Thirty percent of the participants reported that they have the necessary digital skills, 21.4% stated that they don't have them, and the rest didn't know or didn't select any answer. Fifty percent of the participants can send emails, use tools available on social networks and create simple digital content and twenty-one percent can create complex digital content. In terms of usage of online tools, the most preferred Facebook, followed by WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter.

The main motivations around the use of on-line tools and presence on social platforms are their availability (35.7%), the possibility of reaching young people (21.4%) and because they are user-friendly (21.4%) and last, because they are safe (7.1%) and because of the pandemic of Covid-19 (7.1%). The main activities of engagement online toward young people are raising awareness (42.9%), education (28.6%), event promotion (21.4%), petitions (21.4%), call to action (21.4%) and, last, info on events (7.1%). Participants use text and simple images (35.7%), blogs (21.4%), video streaming (14.3%) and forums (21.4%).

When participants were asked about how they decide on the type of content and form to use, they responded that they use the most available forms and contents, they resort to contents and forms that are easy to make and, lastly, they investigate young people's interests, preferences and online habits.

Respondents reported that they involved young people in their work mostly by assigning them responsible roles (42.9%) and involving them in peer activities (35.7%), or through volunteering (35.7%). Respondents are not explicit about the risks they face during their online activities; they either do not respond or state other with a 7.1% only reporting ghosting, sub-tweeting and rumouring and they use mechanisms that relate to human moderation in order to resolve any issues encountered. Youth workers improve their digital skills via autonomous learning (28.6%) and less through organised courses.



Respondents state that they do not have enough time and resources to improve their online impact, followed by a 28.6% of respondents stating the same lack of time/resources about competencies and knowledge improvement.

Overall, youth organisations are not satisfied with their current online results, and the current feedback and reach and the concrete results they have achieved through online activism.

Interestingly, they are reporting that they have a clear plan and strategy on how to use online tools and platforms in order to increase their reach, though they don't have the means of assessing the effects of their online actions.

3.1.2.2 Findings from the youth questionnaire

We collected data from 12 young people. We have shared the on-line survey with youth networks and young people.

Five of our participants reported that they were female (41.7%), four reported that they were male (33.3%), one participant was non-binary and one person did not disclose any information about their gender. Forty-two percent of the respondents were employed and 33.3% were students and one defined themselves as a volunteer. Regarding their current education level, apart from the 41.7 % who were students, 33.3% had completed Postgraduate studies and 8.3% held a bachelor's degree.

The outstanding majority (83.3%) had continuous access to the internet, with the 58.3% using broadband network. Young people used a smartphone (75%), a desktop computer (50%) and a tablet (41.7%), and regarding the time they spent online, 41.7% spend 3 to 5 hours per day on the Internet, 41.7% more than 5 hours while 8.3% spend less than 3 hours.

The main motivations for using the internet are to communicate with their peers (91.7%), educate themselves (83.3%), share their opinions and attitudes (66.7%), have fun (66.7%), search for the news (58.3%) and do research (8.3%). When young people are online, they use social media, and 50% use learning platforms, 50% gaming platforms, 33.3% news portals and 25% spend their time in chat rooms. Additionally, they reported that when they are online, they study for their postgraduate Courses, shop and buy stuff. They mostly visit YouTube, followed by TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. They also use Moodle, Twitch, the University website, Blackboard, WhatsApp and Linked In.

When they were asked to justify their reasons for choosing the platforms mentioned above, they were because (i) their friends use them, (ii) as a communication tool, (iii) helping them with their studies, (iv) they are used to, (v) they are interesting to use, (vi) linking with family, (vi) they are fun and engaging, (vii) provide quick information and (viii) like them.

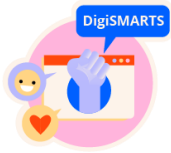
What attracts their interest online is the content (58.3%), the interactivity (50%), the presentation of the content (41.7%) and the usability (25%).

The main ways of expressing themselves are by posting text messages (50%), blogging (41.7%), creating video content (25%), using memes (25%) and through art (8.3%). A 66.7% of the respondents track daily social and political events, and the 75% are informed on the internet, 41.7% on TV channels and only 25% by the newspapers. Fifty-percent of the respondents are active listeners and analyse the message and try to think of the implications; 16.7% identified themselves as passive learners and a 25% reported that they do not react to the news. The vast majority of young people have had the desire to act in order to change something in their environment, had actively advocated for a cause or an action, such as: campaigns for student mental health, climate change, environmental issues, and community events to bring people together, against High Speed2, anti-Trump rallies, LGBTQ+ issues and support Ukraine actions.

Their active engagement was manifested by signing online petitions (75%), calling to action (58.3%), information sharing (66.7%), posting a comment (41.7%), changing their profile image (33.3%), and participation in protests (16.7%).

Regarding their digital competences, 100% of young people can use social media and emails, and can communicate and collaborate online. When respondents were asked how their knowledge has been acquired, most of them stated that they have learnt at school, with the help of their peers, online and on the job. Young people trust the materials they find online on reputable websites, and websites by renowned authors, and they also trust the information that has been cross-checked with other sources or sent by people they know.





In terms of online risks, young people have listed cyberbullying (41.7%), hate speech (16.7%), rumouring, ghosting and sub-tweeting (25%) and trolling/sexual assault (58.3% and 33.3%). However, 25% have stated not to have encountered any risks online. In terms of counteractions, young people directly report to the social platforms (58.3%), withdraw (33.3%), and only 16.7% try to confront attackers. Some respondents have openly stated that “they do not know what to do”, which can be a triggering element of discussion and analysis.

3.2 Turkey

3.2.1 Methodology

The partners from Turkey first approached NGOs, government organisations and higher education institutions in Konya, Turkey. Two separate but parallel surveys had previously been developed in English for youth, NGOs, youth workers, youth organisations, and activists. Both surveys were translated into Turkish. Survey links were disseminated through social media (via WhatsApp) to participants during two distribution periods, 15th of July, and 22nd of August, 2022.

3.2.2 Profile of the participants

There were 31 responses in total to the youth questionnaire. Gender and age information was not available for the majority of the respondents. Out of 9 responses from youth, 89% were women and 11% were male. Out of 10 responses, 10% were aged between 15 and 20, 60% were aged between 21 and 25, 10% were aged between 26 and 30, and the remaining 20% indicated their age range as Other. Out of 27 responses, youth indicated that 44% were students, and 56% were employed. None of the respondents indicated being unemployed or volunteering. Out of 26 responses, the majority (46%) indicated being an undergraduate student, 19% had a Bachelor’s degree, 31% had a Master’s degree, and 4% indicated their answer as Other.

There were 43 responses to the questionnaire developed for NGOs, youth workers and youth organisations. As with the previously mentioned respondents’ group, not all participants answered the complete set of questions. Out of 30 responses, 60% were women, 37% were men and the remaining 3% did not wish to specify their gender. Some 22 youth workers shared their age information with the following distribution: 73% were age between 18 and 25, and each of the remaining categories (between 26 and 35, between 36 and 45 and Other) were selected by 9% of the participants. Thirty respondents indicated their current position in the organisation as follows: 40 % were volunteers, 33% were staff members, 13.33% were Director/President, 10 % were members of the board, and the remaining 3% indicated their occupation as Other.



Some 29 to 32 youth workers responded to the questions about the structure of their organisations. The majority of organisations receive public funding (72.41%) which was followed by other resources (17.24%, funders were not specified), donations (6.90%) and private funding (3.45%). Youth service organisations (associations, clubs, movements) were the most common types of organisations (52%), followed by governmental organisations (41.94%), non-government organisations (3%), and the remaining were indicated as other types of organisations (3%). Half of the organisations' focus is social activism including arts, sports, culture (50%), while almost one-third is primarily focused on issue-based activism including human rights, inequality, ecology (28%), and the remaining 19% are in other category (specified as social innovation, influence and entrepreneurship, and public services), and only a small proportion (3%) is interested in political activism. The majority stated that they had less than 25 volunteers (40%), one-third had more than 25 volunteers (33%), and almost one-fourth did not have that information (27%).

3.2.3 Findings

3.2.3.1. Findings from the youth organisations and NGOs questionnaire

The respondents to the questionnaire targeting NGOs, youth workers and youth organisations indicated that in most cases, using digital tools to increase online engagement is a part of the organisation's strategy (76%), a small portion had no strategic plan to involve digitalisation (14%), and some of the respondents (10%) did not possess relevant information. Similarly, the majority of 71%, had the technological infrastructure to achieve this, 10% did not have the necessary tools, and 19% did not have the information. Half of the organisations had data protection systems (52%), a small number did not (10%), and there was no information regarding the rest (38%). The majority (80%) reported that their organisation supported their online engagement, whilst others noted they had no knowledge of that (19%). They usually suggest changes to their approach to youth activism (40%), but also to the topics (35%), and to how they approach the youth (15%). Reaching out to the youth groups, including the underprivileged, was possible for the majority (86%), a small group said they could not access them (6%), and the remaining did not know (10%). They reach them via face-to-face activism (53%), online activism (26%), through other organisations (11%), and through traditional media (5%). They believe face-to-face activism is the most helpful to reach large groups (65%), followed by online activities (24%), and the media (12%).

Many respondents believe that they have necessary online activism skills (83%), while a small group said they did not possess such skills (6%), and the remaining respondents (11%) did not know the answer. When inquired about their skills, the respondents stated that 36% could make a simple digital content, 33% could use tools offered on social networks, 22% could send emails, and 6% could make complex digital content. The majority said they used online tools to increase

the visibility of their actions (94%), the remaining 6% did not know the answer. All respondents used online tools for work, 61% used them daily, 22% used them once a week, and 17% chose Other as an option.

WhatsApp (24%), Instagram (22%) and Twitter (21%) were among the most common platforms the respondents used. These were followed by YouTube (13%), Facebook (11%), Snapchat (7%), TikTok (1%) and Other (1% such as LinkedIn). They chose these because of the popularity among the youth (40%), availability (26%), the consequences of COVID-19 (14%), safety and for being user-friendly (9% each). 44% said they believe these tools connected them faster, increased the reach and communication with young people (for 33%), and helped them send their messages rapidly (for 22%). When asked about their online actions, the results were as presented in Figure 1.

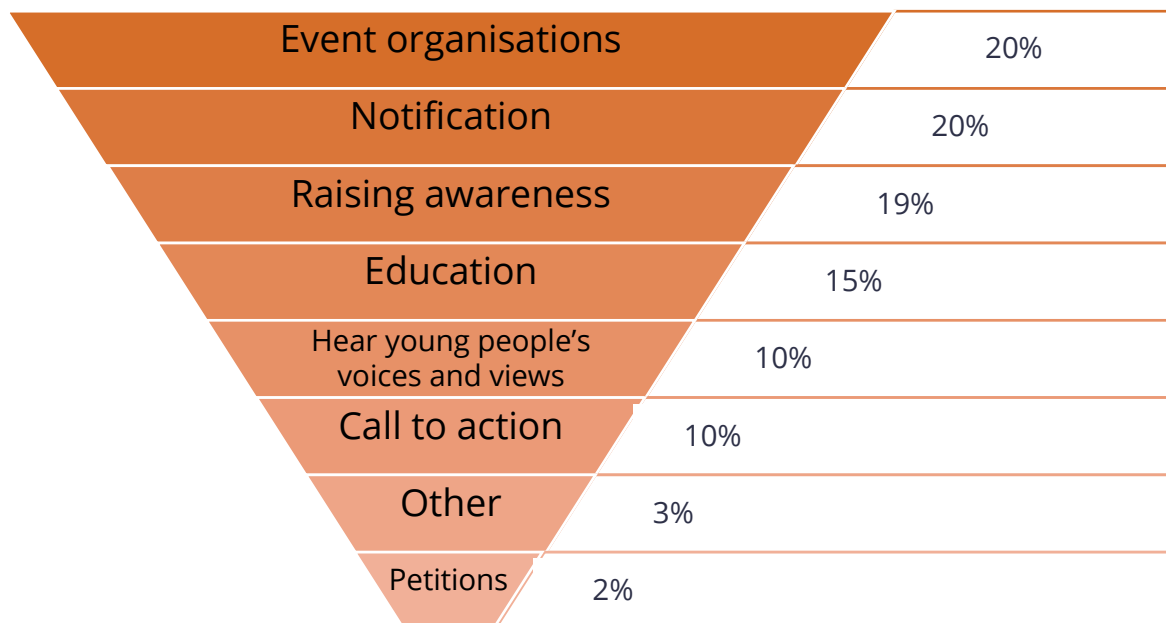


Figure 1. What actions do you engage in online?

The respondents indicated that text and simple media usage were the most common tools (31%), followed by video streaming (27%), forums (15%), blogs (10%), animations (8%), artwork and Other (4% each). Almost half of the respondents said they looked into the young people's online preferences (44%), one-third used the most available tools (31%), and some indicated that they used easy to make and most relevant ones (10% each), and the rest opted for the Other option (3%). Responding organisations involve youth through volunteering (67%), by giving them responsibilities (22%), and through peer activities (11%). Unwanted behaviours were the most common online risks the respondents identified (44%), followed by Other (25% did not specify), exposing youth to unsafe situations like privacy breach (19%), and hate speech (13%). 63% reported having means to cope with these risks,

25% had no mechanisms in place, and 13% provided no answer. When asked about online and offline activism preferences, 78% were resorting to both, 7% were resorting to either online or offline activism, and 7% had no answer. Assistive technologies were used by 29% of respondents, 36% were not using them, and the other 36% had no answer. Autonomous learning was a way to improve digital skills for the majority (64%), followed by organised courses (29%), and Other tools (7%).

The needs assessment revealed that many respondents believe their organisations have resources for improving the effectiveness of online actions (92%), and their digital skills and knowledge (94%). The majority appeared satisfied with the extent of online activities they conduct at work (88%), feedback and reach of them (70%), and results from online activism actions (82%). Many of them have a plan to increase their reach via digital means (71%). When asked about whether they had tools to assess the impact of their online actions, 44% gave an affirmative response, but another 44% said they did not know how to do that, and 13% provided a negative response.

3.2.3.2 Findings from the youth questionnaire

All young people who participated in the survey had access to the Internet, a large percentage (96%) had a continuous access, and 4% had an unstable internet connection. The dominant internet coverage was Mobile Internet (52%), followed by Broadband (44%), and Other (4%). In line with this finding, the most popular devices for going online were smartphones (44%), followed by laptops (38%), desktop computers (10%) and tablets (8%). Youth spent no less than 3 hours online per day, with the majority spending more than 5 hours (56%) followed by those who spent 3 to 5 hours online (44%). They engaged with online activities for the purposes of education (26%), to communicate with friends (19%), search for the news (19%), and have fun (17%), while a small number used it to share their opinions (10%), and for Other reasons such as work (9%). They mainly spent time on social media (39%) and education platforms (29%), as well as browsing (10%), searching through news portals (8%), chat rooms (6%), Other activities (6%) and gaming (2%). Instagram was the most popular social media among Turkey's youth (36%), followed by Twitter (28%), YouTube (26%), and Other media such as WhatsApp (5%), and Facebook – TikTok - Snapchat (2% each). When asked about their interests online, the results were as presented in Figure 2.

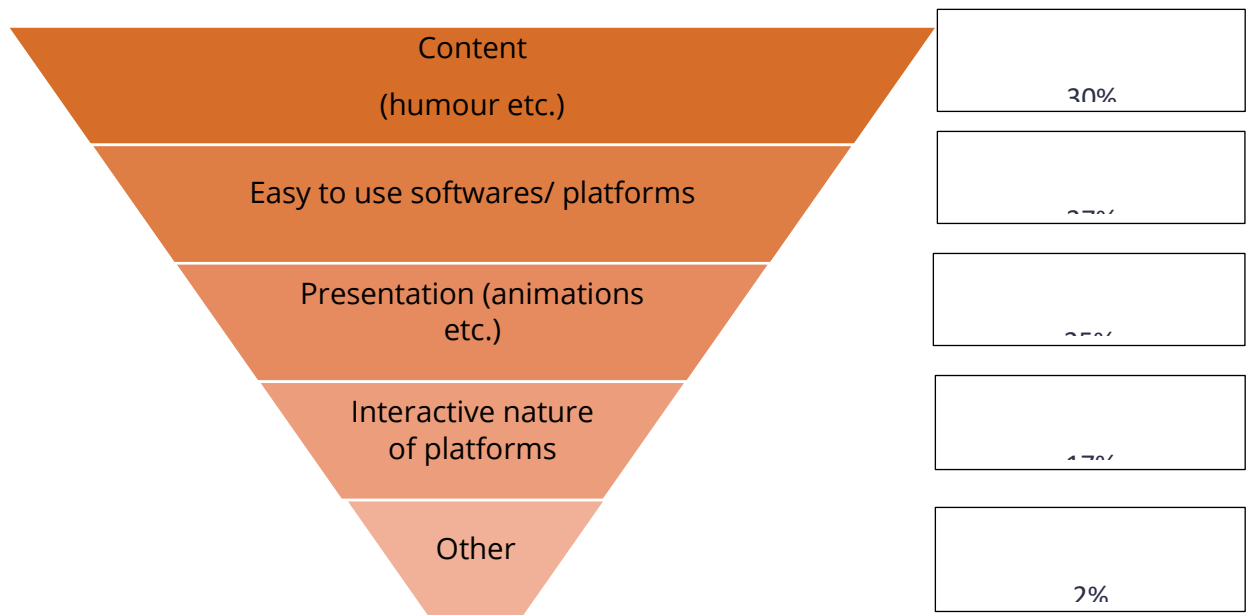


Figure 2. What attracts young people online?

When asked about the ways they express themselves, the most common means of interaction by far was text messages as indicated by more than half of respondents (53%) which was followed by using memes (18%), resorting to art (15%), blogging (9%), and creating video content (6%). A large number of the youth said they followed social and political events on a daily basis (88%), and a small number stated they did not know (12%). They commonly used the Internet for the afore-mentioned purpose (59%), or to watch TV (16%), speak to others (11%), and a small number said they informed themselves via newspapers (3%) or that they were not interested at all (3%), and 8% used all the methods listed. More than half identified themselves as active listeners (64%) when asked about how they reacted to the news, and one-fifth as passive listeners (20%), and the rest stated that they were not interested in any kind of reaction (16%). A large number of respondents said they wanted to create a change in their environment (88%), a small number said they were not interested (4%) and the rest were not sure of their motivation towards creating a change (8%). However, only one-third of youth ever spoke up about a cause and action (28%), the majority did not mention it (44%), and the rest said they did not know (28%). The causes they advocated were related to women’s and minority rights, femicide, recent laws about online restrictions on the press, and legal rights regarding their professions. When asked about which methods they used for advocacy, sharing information (27%) and posting comments (23%) were the most common methods, while signing a petition, changing profile pictures, calling to action, and protesting were choices of advocacy among respondents (9% each), and finally none of the respondents chose to speak to elected politicians about these causes.

When asked questions inquiring into a better understanding of the youth's digital skills, respondents indicated that 25% could send an e-mail, 23% could find information and data, 23% could communicate and collaborate online, 22% could use the tools available on social media, 4% could make a simple digital content, 1% could solve software and hardware issues. None of them was able to create complex digital content such as podcasts, vlogs, webinars, online games, and mobile apps. They were mainly self-taught (43%) or learned these skills online (30%). Learning from peers and at school (11% per each) and attending IT courses (6%) were also among the most common learning methods.

No respondents regarded online information as unreliable. The majority said that they trusted reliable websites (40%), a significant percentage trusted cross-checked information (29%), reliable authors and broadcasters (24%), and a small percentage said they could rely on information sent to their phone by people they knew (4%), and shared by people they followed on social media (2%). On Instagram and comment sections they encountered cyber-bullying (20%), hate speech (16%), unwanted behaviours and trolling (12% each), and other forms of risk (4%) and no one reported encountering sexual harassment. A large number of respondents said they had encountered no such risks as listed above (36%). When they encountered risk, half of them said they reported it (50%), one-fifth did not know what actions to take (22%), they sometimes withdrew (17%), and a small portion engaged in a conflict (6%).





3.3 Italy

3.3.1 Methodology

To share the questionnaires, the Italian team have used a multiple-channel strategy reflected in the following:

- Contacting youth info centres which are in contact with the Italian partner as part of the national network of youth info point centres
- Contacting and sharing the questionnaire with local youth organisations (Lazio Region, especially Latina and Rome counties)
- Channelling the questionnaire through the local newsletter directed toward non-formal young people and youth organisations.

An e-mail was sent to contact persons in the afore-mentioned organisations and asked them to forward it to any acquaintance or any person active or involved in digital activism.

3.3.2 Youth findings

The Italian team got 35 answers in total with regards to the youths' questionnaire, and 30 answers in total from the youth workforce. They shared their interviews with youth networks and youth non-profits.

The youth respondents were mainly women (64%) as compared to men (32%), and one person did not share details in that regard. Most of them were up to 35 years old, 44% were between 18 and 25 years of age, and 44% were between 26 and 35 years of age. The rest of the respondents were older than 35. More than 70% of the youth have a job and are students, and 100% have regular access to high internet speed. The outstanding majority have a computer and a laptop (respectively, 22 and 18), and more than 60% spend more than 5 hours per day on the Internet, while 30% remain online between 3 and 5 hours.

The primary motivation to go online is reflected in need for communication (30%), news and research (more than 40%), and entertainment (17%). Social media take the stage in terms of usage, especially Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Facebook, and the least used is Twitter.

The absolute majority of young people (80%) were keen on supporting a cause, while 15% were not aware whether they were doing so. Most of the explanations were about LGBTQ+ rights, as well as light drug legalisation, or euthanasia law. Many respondents have stated to be actively engaging in environmental causes, and on the public access to water.

The main ways of active engagement were information sharing, online petitions, changing the profile image, calling to action, and participating in protests.

From the digital competences point of view, 100% of young people can use social media, e-mails etc. but not so much when asked about their competencies with respect to media creation or problem solving (fixing hardware or software issues). When asked how they had acquired digital knowledge, most respondents stated that they were learning online or by themselves – websites and reliable magazines are the main sources of online information by interviewed young people.

In terms of online risks, young people have listed hate speech (30%), rumouring, ghosting and sub-tweeting (25%) and trolling/sexual assault (8% each). However, around 20% stated that they had not encountered any problem online. Regarding counteractions, young people mostly avoid online conflicts (25%) or directly report to the social platforms (more than 50%), and only 16% try to confront the attackers. Some respondents have openly stated that “they do not know what to do”, which can be a triggering element for discussion and analysis.



3.3.3 Youth workforce/organisations findings

Youth workers were mainly women (70%) as compared to men (25%), and one preferred not to answer. The main stated positions were staff (almost 40%), volunteers (around 30%), and legal representatives (almost 20%). Apparently, public funds are the main source for 55% of the target group, while the rest is evenly dependent on donations or private funds. Interviewees were either part of non-profits, clubs/movements, or social-theme oriented associations. Some belonged to foundations or benefit corporations. Respondents generally belong to various fields of work – active global citizenship, political activism, sports and arts.



Many others expressed local active citizenship and participatory democracy, philanthropy and social activism.

Almost 60% of the respondents were part of the organisations with fewer than 25 members, and almost 40% had more than 25. Only one respondent stated not to be aware of such information.

The first theme in the questionnaire for youth workers was related to infrastructure, and apparently most of the organisations have a strategy for data protection (certainly, we do not know the different degrees of completeness). As it seems, almost 100% of the organisations dedicate time to review the activities, especially in the modalities of communication with young people. When asked about the types of change, there were three main ways – change in the approach, change in the tone of communication, and eventually change in the discussion topics. Owing to necessary digital skills (70% of the poll stated to have them), they are keen on creating new lively and engaging materials (vlogs, podcasts etc.) through the usage of online platforms to promote youth organisations' actions (almost 85% of the respondents) on a daily basis (almost 70% of respondents). The main platforms resorted to are Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

Such platforms are mainly used due to their user-friendly functions and interface, and because they allow for an easy access to the target group, and help overcome the previous COVID-19 barriers. However, almost nobody selected “safety” as a motivation to use the afore-mentioned platforms, and which means there is suspicion toward them.

The main motivation regarding the presence on social platforms is the possibility of reaching young people (50% of the poll), and quickness in delivering messages (over 30% of the interviewees). There are three main activities of online engagement towards young people, namely: event promotion (28%), awareness (24%), and education (16%).

In terms of usage of online tools, the most preferred ones are certainly social media posts and any multimedia item connected to them (a little more than 45%), video streaming (13%), blogs (13%) and forums (13%).

The youth have been involved in respondents' work mostly by assigning them responsible roles (25%), and involving them within group activities (33%), or through volunteering (25%).

Respondents stated there were different risks present when delivering online activities – the most common being unwanted behaviours (ghosting, sub-tweeting, and rumours), as more than 50% of the interviewees faced such forms of risk. Hate speech and “other” were the least frequently provided answers.

The most common form of risk was unwanted behaviour (ghosting, sub-tweeting, and rumours) (33%), followed by cyber-bullying (23%) and hate speech (19%) and exposing young people to unsafe situations (19%).

However, more than 40% of youth organisations do not have a clear idea on how to react, and even 30% do not have a strategy to react on cyber-attacks. As such, there is a willingness to learn about that (almost 70% expressed this opinion), and a normal strategy depicted is self-learning (a bit more than 30%). By contrast, around 30% of respondents stated that they did not have enough time to look for resources to improve the online impact, followed by a 20% of respondents stating the same lack of time/resources about competencies and knowledge improvement.

By and large, youth organisations are satisfied (70%) with the online results, and the online impact delivery (70%). However, when asked about online activism results, only around 30% of youth organisation express satisfaction and complete satisfaction, while almost 50% are neutral regarding this issue.

When it comes to the implementation of plans for the correct exploitation of online platforms, 45% express satisfaction, while the rest are below the satisfaction line. In fact, with regards to the necessary monitoring tools, more than 50% of youth organisations state that they either disagree about having the right tools, or do not even know if they have them. The most commonly used tools for monitoring are click monitoring, recall strategies, analytics tools and social media insight.





3.4 Serbia

3.4.1 Methodology

For the purpose of the research within the first project's intellectual output (IO1) the consortium created two different, purpose-made questionnaires, one of which was intended for the youth workforce, youth organisations, NGOs, and different kinds of activists, while the second one was intended for the young people in each of our partner countries with the idea of receiving valuable feedback regarding the current digital skills of respondents, and the potentials that they perceive in digital technologies. The questionnaires were translated into all partner languages and uploaded to the Qualtrics platform. There were two distribution periods. The questionnaires were first published and distributed by all partners on July 15th, 2022. The second invitation to potential respondents was sent on August 22nd, 2022. The questionnaires were no longer available for potential respondents after September 15th, 2022.

The invitation to fill in the questionnaires was distributed online, through social media (mainly Facebook), and/or sent to individual mails in case of youth organisations and NGOs, well-known activists, etc. In addition to social media, young people were reached through higher education institutions or secondary school contacts, bearing in mind that the research included sixteen-year-olds or older. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, the consortium decided on the optimum number of respondents to be reached, which is 30 or more.

3.4.2 Profile of the participants

Regarding the questionnaire intended for youth organisations, NGOs and different profiles of activists, there were 42 valid responses out of 44, whereby there were 2 respondents who did not finish the survey. Out of that number, 38.10% (16) were men, 45.24% (19) were women, and 16.67% (7) did not wish to specify. Regarding the respondents' age structure, the largest percentage of respondents belong to the age group between 36 and 45 (30.95%), followed by the age group between 26 and 35 (28.57%), 18 and 25 (21.43%), and OTHERS (19.05%), whereby these answers included 49, 57, 60+, and there was one invalid response.



As to the profiles of respondents, 30.95% were directors or leaders of their respective organisations, 4.76% were members of a Board, 21.43% were volunteers, 35.71% belonged to the staff, and 7.14% belong to the category of OTHER. In specifying their choice, the respondents answered the following: a member of the organisation, a legal representative, and a professor. The organisations that the respondents belong to are mostly financed through donations (34.04%), private funding (31.91%), public funding (23.40%), and OTHER (10.64%) which has been described as either projects, or the respondents did not have that piece of information. The largest percentage of respondents come from non-government organisations (72.09%), youth organisations such as clubs, movements or associations (13.95%), government organisations (11.63%), or from a vocational association (2.33%).

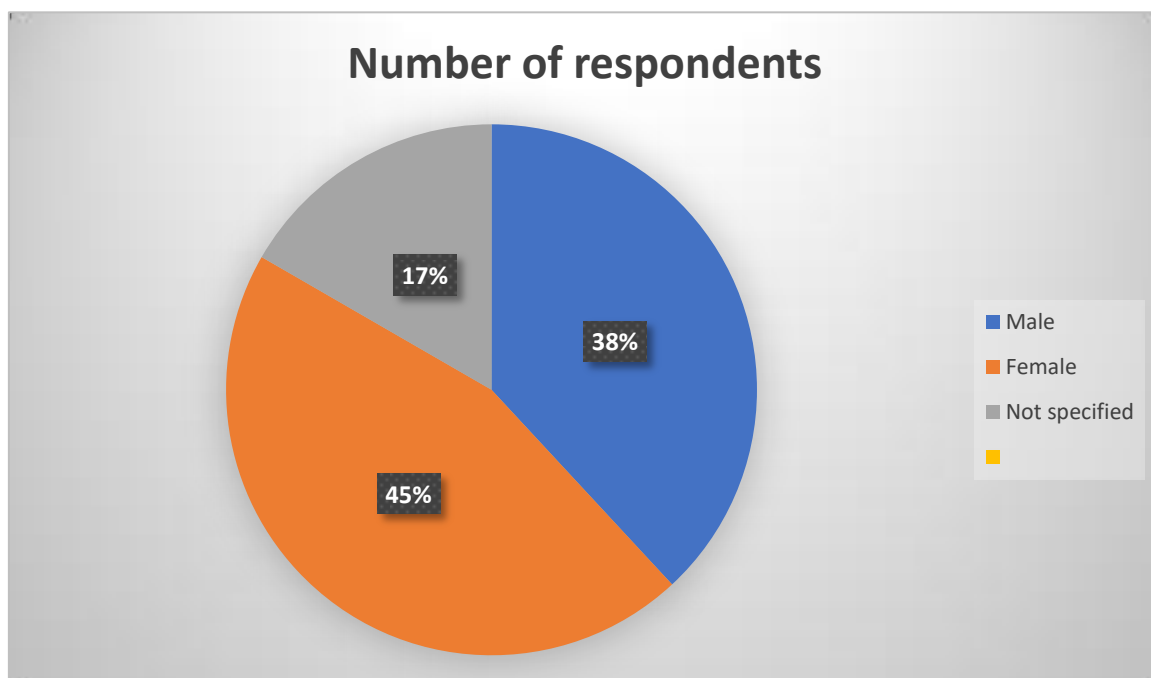


Figure 1. Number of respondents among youth organisations, NGOs, and different profiles of activists

When it comes to the questionnaire intended for the young, there were 35 valid responses. Out of that number, 37.14% (13) are male, 51.43% (18) are female, and 11.43% (4) did not wish to specify. Regarding the respondents' age structure, the largest percentage of respondents belong to the age group between 15 and 20 (40%), followed by the age group between 21 and 25 (34.29%), 26 and 30 (11.43%), and OTHERS (14.29%), whereby these answers included 31 and 44 years of age. As to the profiles of respondents, 37.17% are HE students, 34.29% are employed, 20% are volunteers, and 8.57% are unemployed. As to

respondents' level of education, 42.86% are undergraduate students, 20% possess a college degree, 17.14% have a high school diploma, and 14.29% have a master's degree. Only 5.71% still attend high school.

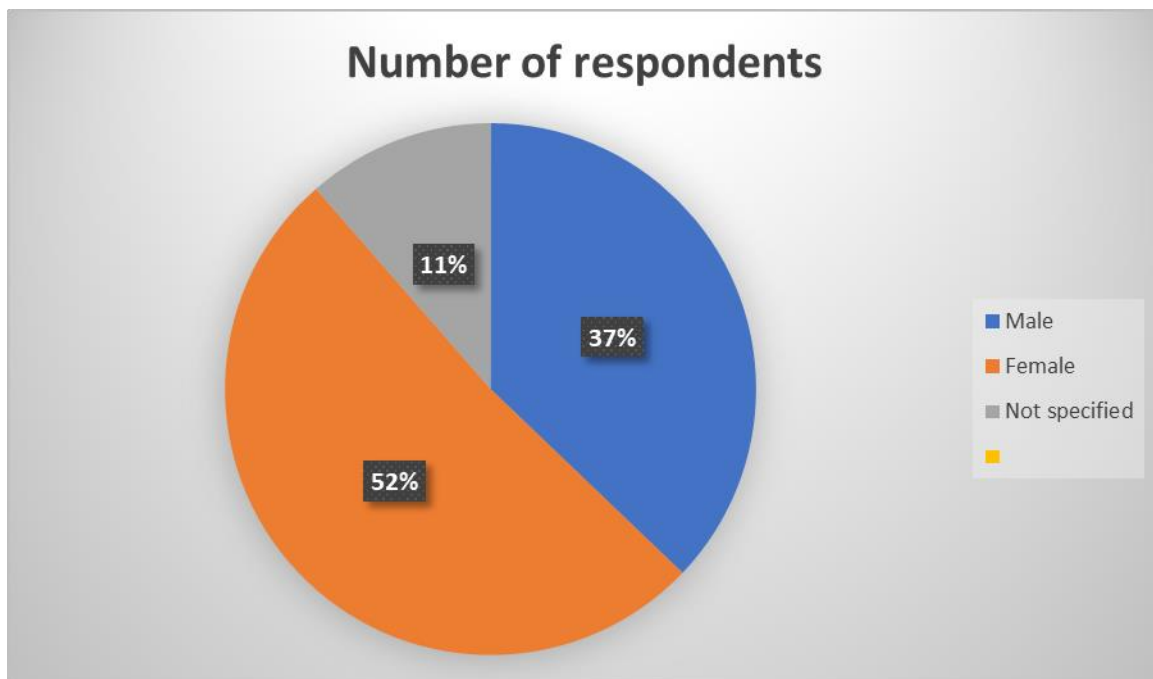


Figure 2. Number of respondents among the youth

3.4.3 Findings

3.4.3.1 Questionnaire for NGOs and youth organisations

In the survey intended for NGOs and youth organisations respondents, when asked about the primary field of interest of their organisations, the respondents mainly opted for social activism (sport, culture, art) (37.50%), which was followed by activism based on the matters of identity (race, gender, ethnicity, religion) (29.17%), activism based on acute social problems (human rights, equality, environment) (27.08%), and OTHER (6.25%) such as consumer protection, patient rights, ecology and activism in economic development. Political activism is an option that no respondent opted for.

When it comes to the strategic plans or regulations for using digital technologies, 42.86% responded that their organisations have these regulations ready, 33.33% responded that no such regulations exist in their organisations, while 23.81% had no answer to this question. As to the necessary hardware and software that can facilitate the process of online activism, 85.71% responded that they possessed the necessary equipment, 2.38% said that they did

not possess such equipment, and 11.90% did not have an answer to this question. When it comes to data protection systems, 48.78% of respondents state that their organisations possess such systems of data protection, 17.07% claim not to have such systems, while 34.01% did not possess this information. According to respondents, their respective organisations are mostly dedicated to the constant improvement of their online engagement (71.43%), 9.52% claim that no such effort is invested, while 19.05% is not sure about the accuracy of the statement. When they introduce changes and improvements it is mostly related to different approaches to topics and issues about the youth and their activism (38.10%), changes in the way they address the young (28.57%), changes in the choice of topics (23.81%), while 9.52% state that they rarely introduce any changes. According to respondents, they usually have no problem reaching their target groups even if they do not have constant access to online contents (80.95%). Only 14.29% states that they have no such reach, while 4.76% are not sure. In order to reach their target groups, respondents mostly resort to face-to-face activism (35.90%), or they resort to online actions (sending e-mails, posting on social media, organising surveys) (26.92%), use TV, radio or newspapers (23.08%), or go through some other organisations (12.82%).

Consequently, the respondents believe that the most effective way of reaching their target groups is face-to-face activism (42.86%), followed by TV, radio and newspapers (35.71%), while 21.43% believe that it is the Internet and online actions. As many as 92.50% believe that they possess adequate digital skills to engage in online activism, while only 7.50% believe that they do not possess such skills. In opting for the skills that they possess, the majority of respondents (36.36%) state that they can create simple digital contents (posts, newsletters, images, memes), 23.38% can use the available tools on social media, while the percentage of those who can do the most basic actions such as sending e-mails and those who can create complex contents (blogs, vlogs, podcasts, webinars, online games, apps) is the same, 19.48%. All respondents use online tools to reach their target groups, whereby 62.50% use such tools every day, 32.50% once a week, and 5% occasionally. According to respondents, the most popular online tools and platforms they resort to are as follows: Facebook (30.36%), YouTube (21.43%), Instagram (17.86%), and Twitter (15.18%). Other tools are used to a much lesser extent. The afore-mentioned tools are used mostly because they are available (35.16%), because the young use them the most (30.77%), or because they are easy to use (21.98%). Most respondents believe that the use of digital tools increases the reach and facilitates the communication with the target groups (34.38%), help send the message (31.25%), and help people connect faster (19.79%). However, 11.46% believe that these tools exclude those who do not have access to the Internet. In the course of their online activism, the respondents most frequently engage in posting notifications (23.13%), organising events (19.73%), or call to actions (14.97%). Approximately the same percentage of respondents resorts to online tools to raise awareness (12.93%), and educate the population on relevant matters (12.24%). When resorting to digital activism, respondents mostly use simple images, posts and e-mails (46.99%), while the same percentage resorts to video streaming (18.07%), and various art forms (18.07%). Animations



and forums are used by 7.23%. The respondents use those contents and tools that are already available (38.82%) or easy to make (23.53%). The afore-mentioned organisations engage young people as volunteers (36.76%), but also through peer activities. When it comes to risks of online activism, 27.12% stated that they faced unwanted forms of behaviour such as ghosting, negative comments, etc., 22.03% faced hate speech, while 23.73% did not face any risks at all. Cyber-bullying is present in 13.56% of the cases. The largest percentage of respondents stated that they had mechanisms to deal with such situations (51.28%), while as many as 35.90% were not sure about that. As many as 92.50% of respondents combine online and face-to-face activism. When it comes to assistive technology, as many as 56.41% are not sure whether they resort to this kind of technology in their everyday work, while only 15.38% claim to do so (they use sound software, audio-books, and software for the visually impaired). The respondents mostly improve their digital skills independently (89.47%), while only 10.53% attend courses. When investigating organisations' capacities to improve their digital skills, and online impact the respondents are mostly indecisive. They provided the same answer regarding their satisfaction with their online practice, impact they leave, and effects that they produce. However, as many as 65% are not sure about the way in which they can measure such impact, and only 12.50% claim to measure their impact through surveys, statistics, number of visits to their web pages or social media groups, etc.

3.4.3.2 Questionnaire for the youth

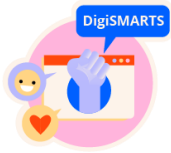
In regards to the second survey intended for the youth, when asked about the availability of the Internet access, 97.14% have a stable and permanent access to the Internet, while 2.86% do not have a stable and permanent access, but they still to have occasional access. As to the type of connection, 77.14% have a broadband Internet and 22.86% have a mobile Internet. The largest number of respondents use smart phones (48.48%) to access the Internet, 30.30% use a laptop, and 19.70% use a desktop computer. Only 1.52% use a tablet. The largest number of respondents spend from 3 to 5 hours daily browsing the Internet (45.71%), 40% of respondents spend more than 5 hours on the Internet, while 14.29% spend less than 3 hours online. Regarding how the young use the Internet, 27.66% go online to have fun, 24.47% go online to communicate with peers, 20.21% to get educated, 12.77% to search for the news, and 9.57% to express their opinions and attitudes. Only 5.32% go online to work. When online, the respondents mostly spend their time on social media (39.73%), browsing the Internet (36.99%), and attending lessons on education platforms (10.96%). Other uses are much less represented, whereby it is interesting that only 5.48% spend time on gaming platforms. The most frequently visited platforms are Facebook (30.23%), YouTube (26.74%), Instagram (17.44%), and TikTok (13.95%). When asked about their choice of platforms, the respondents stated that the content was fun and simple, and all their friends were there, too.



When choosing the Internet content, the respondents primarily pay attention to the quality of the content (humorous, fun, smart, inspirational) (37.31%), then to the manner in which the content is presented (animation, music, colourful and attractive content) (29.85%), and to the content usability (22.39%). It is interesting to note that interactivity has not seen as something essential. Only 10.45% of respondents see interactivity as a decisive characteristic. When asked about how they express themselves online, the majority of respondents stated that it was through text messages (39.71%), by means of memes and gifs (32.35%), or through video content (19.12%). Blogging (1.47%) and visual art (7.35%) are present to a lesser extent. Regarding daily social and political events, respondents mostly stated that they did stay in touch with current events (54.29%), 31.43% of respondents were not sure, while 14.29% were not interested in daily social and political events. Those who do inform themselves, they do so by going online (45.83%), watching TV (18.75%), or use all possible sources (14.58%). When respondents do follow daily social and political events, 51.43% are active listeners, 31.43% are not interested in the message, and 17.14% are passive listeners. When asked about their wish to become engaged in order to make a difference, 74.29% stated that they wanted to become engaged at one point or another. Some 25.71% were not sure, while there were no negative answers.

When asked if they have ever actively advocated a cause, 60% responded positively, 34.29% were not sure, and only 5.71% responded with a NO. The most frequent causes that our respondents actively advocated were as follows: the environmental struggle to protect the rivers and mountains, and clean air, to fight against lithium mining, and the sale of water sources, and to support of LGBTQ+ rights and human rights in general. The afore-mentioned causes were advocated by sharing information (18.60%), signing a petition (17.44%), protests (17.44%), changing a profile picture on social media (13.95%), calling to action (13.95%), and posting comments (12.79%). When it comes to respondents' digital skills, the majority can create simple digital content (22.41%), communicate and cooperate online (20.96%), and use the tools available online (17.24%). Only 10.34% can create complex online content, while 11.21% can solve serious software and hardware issues. Regarding how they acquired their digital skills, the respondents stated that they did it alone (43.08%),





32.31% acquired them online, and 10.77% learned from their peers. Only 3.08% used specialised IT courses, and 7.69% learned at school. When asked about their trust in the authenticity of online content, 51.06% believe the sources they had previously cross-checked with some other sources, 17.02% believe the content shared by people they know, and 12.77% believe reputable authors. However, 10.64% do not believe any online sources. When asked about the risks that young people encounter online, 55.56% never encounter any risks, 20% encounter unwanted forms of behaviour, and 11.11% face hate speech. Cyber-bullying, trolling and sexual harassment are all presented in the same percentage (4.44%). When they do encounter such behaviour online, it is usually when they offer support to the LGBTQ+ population, or when people do not share the same attitude. In the case when they face different forms of risks, the respondents usually report it (40%), withdraw (22.86%), or do not know what to do (37.14%).

3.5 Finland

3.5.1 Methodology

The Finnish team sent an e-mail containing the link to questionnaires to 17 organisations. Six of these were municipality level public sector youth work organisations, and the rest were representing NGOs working with young people. The questionnaires were also sent to students in the Turku University of Applied Sciences.

Furthermore, the Finnish team sent an e-mail to contact persons in the afore-mentioned organisations and asked them to forward it to their employees and young people within their reach. Based on the profile of the youths who answered this questionnaire, the best way to reach young people was the e-mail for students in Turku UAS.

3.5.2 Profile of the participants

We got 67 answers in total with regards to the youths' questionnaire, and 23 answers in total to the questionnaire targeting the youth workers. Not all respondents answered all questions.

The youth who answered the questionnaire were mostly women (89%), as compared to men (8%), and other (3%). They were mostly students (70%), their current educational level being an undergraduate student (70%). 27% of the respondents were working, and 3% were unemployed. This means that many students find themselves to be both students and employees.

Youth workers were mainly women (78%) and men, 22% of respondents. They were mostly employee level (91%), compared to only 9% representing director / president level. The



organisations where the professional respondents worked were mainly funded by public funding (96%), 4% having private funding. The organisations were mainly governmental (78%), with some third sector (17%) NGOs, and 5% were other organisations. Slightly more than half (52%) of the organisations were smallish, the number of employees being 25 or under, and over 25 in 39% of the organisations. 9% of respondents did not know the number of staff members.

Most professionals (48%) did not know how many volunteers they had in their organisations. Just over one-third (35%) of the organisations had a maximum of 25 volunteers, and over 25 in 17% of the organisations. The primary field of interest in organisations was mostly social activism / leisure time (art, sports, culture) (52%), and 35% answered that their organisation was not based on any interests. Issue-based activism was relevant to 13% of the organisations. This was probably because amongst the respondents there were plenty of public sector employees. The public sector organizes leisure time and other activities, but there is no special agenda behind these actions.

In the following segment one can encounter the findings based on the Finnish questionnaires. These findings are sorted according to target groups: the report begins with the findings from the youths' questionnaire, and proceeds to the questionnaire for youth workers. The findings are also divided according to themes.

3.5.3 Findings

3.5.3.1. The Questionnaire for the youth

The first theme in the youth questionnaire was infrastructure. All respondents (100%) had access to the Internet whenever they wanted, mostly by mobile phone (68%). Youths were mainly using smartphones (44%), and laptops (41%), when spending time on the internet. The majority spent online from 3 to 5 hours (48%) per day. However, quite many spent over 5 hours (40%) per day online, and only a few under 3 hours (12%).

Youths were mostly using the Internet to have fun and connect with friends, less for sharing thoughts and opinions. The responding youths mostly spent time on social media, learning platforms, browsing and reading news, discussion boards being the least favourable option. The most popular sites were Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Facebook, and the least used Twitter. Youths favoured these sites because of the interesting and funny content: news, funny videos, and interesting people. Youths also mentioned finding online content addictive.

Things that drew youths' attention online were interesting content, visuality and the ease of usage. Youths were most commonly expressing themselves by writing messages, by resorting to art and by using memes, as opposed to creating videos or blogs.

The second theme in the youths' questionnaire was online activism. Most of the respondents were following the news (71%). Surprisingly enough, many did not (25%). The Internet or discussions with friends were the most popular news outlets, whereas traditional newspapers were the least utilized. Youths considered themselves rather passive news followers, some being more active and for example analysing news. Most of the respondents wanted to perform some actions in order to change something (82%), the ratio of those youths who had indeed acted being as big as those who had not (40% both), with 20% not knowing if they had done something or not.

The respondents reported resorting to actions in order to stop animal testing and youth bullying, to influence the climate issues, children's rights, homelessness, and equality. They did this mostly by signing petitions (33%), but also by sharing information (23%), calling to action (14%) or posting comments (10%). Only 2% of youths addressed elected politicians.

Digital skills formed the third theme of the questionnaire. Youths evaluated their digital skills as good. They can send e-mails, find information online, use social media tools, communicate and co-work online, and create simple digital content (GIFs memes, pictures and posts). Youths felt that they could not do more advanced digital content (podcast, vlogs), or solve technical problems. They acquired digital skills mostly by themselves (30%), as well as with a help from friends (25%), at school (20%) or on the Internet (21%). Only a few (3%) had participated in a course.

Youths trusted the content on the Internet when it was scientific or when one found it on a reliable site. Only a few trusted the information from their acquaintances or from an influencer they followed on the social media.

The most common risk youths face on the Internet is hate speech, followed by bullying and thirdly, trolling and sexual harassment. However, 7% had not faced anything of this kind. Risks are faced on social media: in Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and on the discussion boards, and youths are handling them by withdrawing (40%) or by reporting about them (40%). Only 2% answered that they took part in disputes. Youth also stated that they resorted to blocking the harassing profiles.

3.5.3.2 The Questionnaire for NGOs and youth organisations

The first theme in the questionnaire for youth workers was about infrastructure. There were 22 answers in the youth workers' questionnaire, but it is presumed that one respondent did not finish it.

Most organisations the professionals worked in had no strategic plan for using digital technologies (46%). However, nearly a third (27%) had. Almost a third (27%) of the respondents did not know this kind of plan existed or not. Most of the organisations had the necessary equipment to facilitate the process of online engagement (64%), but some did not



(23%), and some (13%) of the respondents did not know whether this was true or not. Most organisations had data protection systems (91%), while 9% of respondents did not know about this matter.

A little over one-third of the organisations (36%) were dedicated to the permanent review and improvement of online activism, and the same percentage were not (36%). 28% of the respondents could not define whether the organisation was dedicated or not. The organisations were introducing changes in their ways of addressing youth (42%), as well as in their ways of approaching them and their interests (33%), and in changing the topics or focus of their work (20%). There was also one textual answer saying that they were taking youth along to improve services.

Most of the organisations (86%) were able to reach various youth groups. They reach youths face-to-face, on social media, and through other organisations.

The second theme was online activism experiences. 54% of the respondents considered having necessary digital skills, whereas almost a half (45%) felt the other way around. Most of the respondents were able to send e-mails, use tools available on social networks and make simple digital contents. Some (3%) could also make more complex digital content. All the respondents utilized online tools to promote their actions and increase their visibility.

The majority of the respondents (91%) used the Internet in their work every day, 4,5% once a week, and 4,5% occasionally. The most common tools and platforms were WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, and the least favoured were YouTube and Twitter. The respondents also mentioned Discord. These platforms and tools are utilized because youths use them, and they are available. Half of the respondents considered the chosen platforms user-friendly. There was also a comment that those platforms were utilized because colleagues and partner organisations use them.

The respondents thought that digital tools helped spreading information about the organisation's actions faster, connecting people quicker, and increased the reach and communication with young people. Nobody thought that digital tools would reduce the quality of their actions. It was also mentioned that digital tools provided youths with more ways to participate in actions.

The respondents have implemented many online actions. These were mostly notifications, awareness raising campaigns, and calls to action. In addition, they heard young people's voices and their views, and organized online events. There was also a comment that online actions were used in everyday work with youth: helping and guiding young people, having conversations about sensitive issues, and organising leisure time actions for youths (chatting, game streaming, and group conversations).





The respondents mainly utilized text and simple images but also video streaming, blogs, animations and forums. The type and form of the content were chosen because of their easiness, relevance and availability. Respondents also kept track of the young people's interests.

The youth were involved in respondents work mostly by assigning them responsible roles (33%), and utilizing them for peer actions (30%). There was also one comment saying that youths were involved in all of the organisations' actions: from big decisions to small polls in social media.

The respondents face plenty of risks in their online activities. The most common form was unwanted behaviour (ghosting, sub-tweeting, and rumours) (33%), followed by cyber-bullying (23%) and hate speech (19%) and exposing young people to unsafe situations (19%). In addition, the respondents mentioned grooming and drug sale on Snapchat. One comment claimed that police were unwilling or lacked the resources to investigate crimes on the Internet. There was also a comment that sometimes youths had to accept new contacts (in Snapchat) or they would get bullied. 45% of the respondents considered having mechanisms to cope with these risks, 25% felt they did not, and even 30% were not able to say.

Most organisations combined online and offline actions (71%). 14% answered that they did not have any online action. Most of the respondents did not use assistive technologies in their actions (48%), and a third did not know if they used them or not, meaning they probably did not know what these technologies were. There were two comments about the directive of availability being considered (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/2102 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies).

Most respondents were improving their digital skills by independent learning (81%), and only one-tenth participated in organised courses. Improving digital skills with colleagues was also mentioned.

The third theme, the needs, was examined by resorting to the Likert scale. The scale of the answers is presented in the following table:

ITEM	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither/Nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree
We have time and resources to research and improve our online impact.	5%	45%	10%	25%	15%
We have time and resources to improve our digital skills and knowledge.	10%	35%	5%	40%	10%
I am satisfied with the current reach of the online activities I conduct for my organization.	5%	40%	25%	30%	0%
I am satisfied with the current feedback and reach relating to our current online practice.	5%	45%	45%	5%	0%
I am satisfied with concrete results which we have achieved through online activism.	5%	45%	25%	25%	0%
I have a clear plan and strategy how to use online tools and platforms in order to increase the reach.	5%	30%	5%	30%	30%

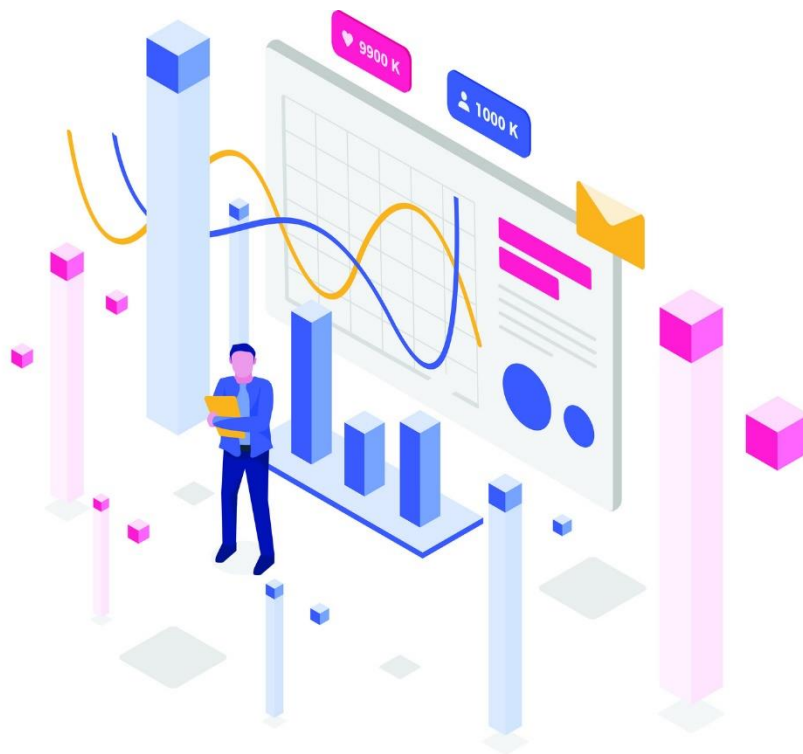
Table 1. Youth workers' needs related to digital work

From this table, one can notice that half of the respondents thought they had time and resources to research and improve their online impact, whilst the other half did not. Moreover, nearly a half considered having time and resources to improve their digital skills and knowledge, whereas the other half felt incapable of doing this.

55 % of the respondents were satisfied with the current reach of their online activities, and 50% were happy with the feedback and reach related to online practices. However, 45% neither agreed nor disagreed, which could mean that they did not understand the question.

Half of the respondents were satisfied with the concrete results they had achieved with online activism. Again, 25% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 25% were not satisfied. Most of the respondents (60%) thought they did not have a clear strategy and plans of how to use online tools and platforms to increase the reach.

Finally, the questionnaire had one question about assessing the effects of their online actions. Nearly a half (45%) of the respondents did not know if they had the means for this, and 40% thought they did not. Only 15% considered having such means, and they assessed their actions by asking youth themselves, and by using different kind of numerical data, for example visitor counts and contacts.



3.6 Cyprus

3.6.1 Methodology

In Cyprus, the questionnaires were distributed through Facebook advertisements and general e-mails during the period predefined by the consortium. Specifically, the questionnaires were distributed on two occasions: the first call was on July 15, 2022, and the second call was on August 22, 2022. On September 15, 2022 the distribution of the questionnaires was stopped.

3.6.2. Profile of the participants

The participants providing answers to the first questionnaire (Youth questionnaire) were 31 persons in total, 10 men and 21 women. The age of the participants was as follows: 2 participants, between 21 and 25 years old (6.45%), 13 participants, between 26 and 30 years old (41.94%), and 16 participants (51.61%) stated that they belonged in the category of other age. The participants were students (6.06%), unemployed (3.03%), employees (84.85%), volunteers (3.03%), and other (3.03%). Regarding their educational background, participants were university students (6.45%), university graduates (9.68%), masters' degree holders (74.19%) and others (9.68%).

3.6.3 Findings

Regarding the technological infrastructure of the participants to engage in online activities, the participants had a continuous access to the Internet, within a broadband (89.66%) and mobile network (10.34%). Participants are using a variety of equipment like computers (13.51%), mobile phones (35.14%), tablets (16.22%), laptops (33.78%) and other (1.35%). The majority of the participants spent more than 5 hours on the Internet (75.86%), 3 to 5 hours online (20.69%), and less than 3 hours (3.45%). Participants are using the Internet for the following reasons: communication (21.62%), searching for news (21.62%), training (21.62%), sharing their opinion (9.01%), and for entertainment reasons (21.62%). Specifically, while online participants spend their time on social media (25%), news portals (13.89%), training portals (20.37%), entertainment portals 5.56%, in chat rooms 10.19%, browsing for content (23.15%), and other activities such as streaming platforms (1.85%). More specifically, the most popular platforms used by participants are the following: Facebook (31.3%), YouTube (28.92%), Instagram (21.69%), Tiktok (9.64%), Twitter (6.02%), Snapchat (1.20%), other - Netflix (1.20%).

The reasons for choosing the afore-mentioned platforms are mainly for entertainment and news/ update purposes. Furthermore, they also used them for activities such as watching movies, listening to music, chatting, shopping, following influencers, etc. Participants'



interests are mostly attracted by the content (27.96%), usability of the platforms (26.88%), interactivity (21.51%), presentation of the content (22.58%), and other reasons - used by other users (1.08%). Participants choose to express themselves by posting texts (41.18%), using memes (27.45%), creating (9.80%), or writing at a blog (7.84%), or through art (7.84%).

Regarding online activism, the majority of the participants' experience willingness to change something (88.46%), and 50% of the participants openly advocated action, 46.15% didn't express their opinions, and 3.85% didn't know. Some of the actions that the participants engaged in were: cyber security, climate change, refugees, peace, militarism. The actions stated above were supported by spreading information regarding the action (22.89%), by signing a petition (18.07%), changing the profile picture on social media to support the action (6.02%), by calling to action (16.87%), by participating in a protest (12.05%), by publishing some comments online (15.66%), by speaking to elected politicians (4.82%) and other (3.61%).

Regarding digital skills, participants can send e-mails (17.33%), find information and data (16.67%), use tools available on social media (16.67%), communicate and collaborate online (16.67%), create digital content (14%), create complex digital content (9.33%), and solve complex problems (9.33%). The digital skills were acquired from school (7.46%), specific target training (7.46%), from peers (17.91%), by themselves (35.82%), online (29.85%) and other - from university lessons (1.49%). Of the total number of the participants 31.43% trust reputable websites, renowned authors (21.43%), cross-checked information (25.71%), information sent by people they know (7.14%), information shared by bloggers, influencers, celebrities (8.57%), and 5.71% of the participants do not trust information on the Internet. The dangers encountered online are the following: hostile speech (14.29%), cyber-bullying (8.57%), unwanted behaviours (8.57%), trolling (17.14%), sexual harassment (2.86%), and not facing risks at all (48.57%). Participants reported that they faced risks when they were presenting a valid analysis of their opinion, when they were talking about peace in Cyprus or about their sexuality, and when they were commenting on a post. They cope with those risks by withdrawing (34.62%), reporting the violation to the administrator (30.77%), remaining engaged in the conflict (3.85%), without knowing what to do (3.85%), and other (26.92%).

The second questionnaire was oriented towards participants who work in NGOs, youth organizations, as well as towards youth workers and activists. There were 47 respondents, 12 men (23.91%), and 35 (76.09%) women. The age range of the participants was as follows: 18-25 years old (6.38%), 26-35 years old (42.55%), 36-45 years old (40.43%), and other (10.64%). Regarding the employment situation of the participants, 8 participants were directors at their organizations (17.02%), 3 were members of the board of directors (6.38%), 2 participants were volunteers (4.26%), and 33 participants were employees (70.21%). Almost a half of the participants work in non-governmental organizations (51%), Youth service organizations (10.20%), and the government sector 28.57%. The majority of the participants responded that their organization was active in relation to human rights,



inequality, ecology etc (36.21%), political activism (3.45%), identity - gender, race, religion (12.07%), social activism - arts, sports, culture (25.86), and other topics such as education, etc. (22.41%).

More than a half of the participants (56.41%) have a strategic plan or policy in their organizations regulating the use of digital technologies for online engagement purposes, 25.64% don't have a strategic plan, and 7 participants (17.95%) don't have this information.

The 69.23% organizations have the necessary equipment (hardware and software) to facilitate the process of online engagement, and also a system of data protection (79.49%). The majority of the participants (78.38%) stated that they were able to reach different groups of young people, including those who did not have a permanent access to online content (underprivileged groups), through face to face activism (19.67%), online activities (29.51%), mass media (24.95%) and other organizations (22.95%). Based on the answers of the participants, the most effective manners of reaching target groups are the following: face to face actions (29.73%), online actions (51.35%), mass media actions (18.92%). The majority of the participants (75%) stated that they had the required skills to engage themselves in online activism. Regarding the above-mentioned digital skills, 27.78% of the participants can send e-mails, 30.56% can use social media tools, 27.78% can create simple digital content, and 13.89% can create complicate digital content. The participants use digital tools every day (63.89%) or once a week (27.78%), and 23.74% of the participants use Facebook, 20.14% Instagram, 12.23% Twitter, 20.86 % YouTube, 2.16% Snapchat, and 12.23% WhatsApp. The reason that participants resort to those services are because they are mostly used by the young 27.93%, they are available 26.13%, safe 9.91%, user-friendly 22.52%, due to the COVID-19 situation 12.61%, and for other reasons 0.90%. Participants' work is influenced by the digital tools for the following reasons: it facilitates the approach to and communication with young people 29.46%, helps people connect faster 26.79%, helps send a message faster 24.11%. 10.67% of the participants use the Internet to create reports, organize events 14.67%, for posting notifications 16%, starting campaigns 14.67%, calling to actions 14%, for education purposes 20%, for sharing other peoples' views 10%. Regarding the hazards faced by the participants, they stated that they were facing the following: hostile speech 8.82%, cyber-bullying 29.41%, unwanted behaviours 26.47%, exposure to unwanted situations 29.41%. Almost a half of participants (40%) have mechanisms to cope with hazardous situations. Furthermore, 38.89% of the participants stated that they used assistive technology to include people with disabilities in their work. 25% stated that they didn't use assistive technology, and 36.11% of the participants didn't know the answer. Participants stated the following:

1. they are happy regarding the online activities they take (totally agree 14.71%, agree 35.29%, neither agree nor disagree 35.29%, disagree 11.76%, and totally disagree 2.94%)

2. they are happy about what they have achieved through online activism (totally agree 20.59%, agree 35.29%, neither agree nor disagree 35.29%, totally disagree 8.82%)
3. they have a clear plan and strategy on how to use online tools and platforms to increase reach (totally agree 17.65%, agree 41.18%, neither agree nor disagree 26.47%, totally disagree 14.71%)

Based on the results and the findings of the first questionnaire, participants statements reveal important information regarding their online access, abilities, potential hazards and ways of affronting it. Even though they have access to the Internet through a variety of devices, almost a half of the participants face a variety of online hazards such as the following: hostile speech (14.29%), cyber-bullying (8,57%), unwanted behaviours (8.57%), trolling (17.14%), sexual harassment (2.86%). Participants cope with those dangers by leaving (34.62%), reporting the violation to the administrator (30.77%), remaining involved in the conflict (3.85%), not knowing what to do (3.85%) and other (26.92%). That information in relation to the advanced abilities of the participants at using various platforms for the purpose of communication or entertainment, highly developed skills are extremely important as it is shown in the case of potential hazard, because frequently participants don't have a clear plan of reaction.





Based on the results and the findings of the second questionnaire that was intended for participants who work in NGOs, and youth organizations, as well as for youth workers and activists, the majority of the participants stated that (56.41%) their organizations had a strategic plan or policy for the use of digital technologies for online engagement purposes, and furthermore participants (58.97%) are committed to constantly reviewing and improving online engagement in order to introduce changes that will increase the quality and positive outcomes of their actions. Regarding online hazards, participants stated that they were facing the following: 8.82% hostile speech, 29.41% cyber-bullying, unwanted behaviours 26.47%, exposure to unwanted situations 29.41%, and other 5.88%. A large number of participants (40%) have mechanisms to affront hazards and this is very important because it is necessary to raise awareness in order to be able to affront online hazards. Furthermore, participants stated that they were happy about what they achieved through online activism (7 participants totally agree 20.59%, 12 participants agree 35.29%, 12 participants neither agree nor disagree 35.29%, 3 participants totally disagree 8.82%), so the right solution must be found in order for participants to be able to be active online.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The research conducted within the first project's intellectual output resulted in some valuable feedback from people actively engaged in making a difference when it comes to different acute social topics, as well as from young people who represent a sound basis for some future activists and bringers of positive changes.

When it comes to youth organisations, NGOs and the youth workforce in general, one can point out various positive developments in the field of digital activism. They are as follows:

- Strategies for digital activism are in place;
- Organisations possess the necessary technology for digital activism, as well as data protection systems;
- Activists are supported by their organisations when it comes to their digital engagement;
- Youth workforce has the ability to contact youths, spread information about their organisation's actions on the Internet, and they consider the digital environment relevant to their work.

However, there are aspects which leave ample room for improvement, and these are as follows:

- A lack of skills for producing complex digital content (vlogs, production of multimedia articles, complex animations, audio and video content, etc.);
- A lack of capacity among youth organisations to effectively monitor their online impact (whether some data are useful or not; how some online actions concretely produce results);
- Youth workers seem to lack the skills to act online strategically, to get feedback, and improve functions accordingly;
- The existing data protection strategies or digital activism strategies are not as effective as they should be;
- Facing a variety of hazards when engaging in online activism (hate speech, cyber-bullying, unwanted behaviour, etc.).

When it comes to the young people who resort to digital technologies, there are also some positive aspects revealed by the research and these are as follows:

- Accessible and fast Internet connection;
- Young people generally have an inclination towards creating changes, but they rarely advocate a cause or an action;
- Even though young people generally resort to petitions and simple sharing of information on social media, such apparently small engagement appear to leave a trace.

As opposed to the previously mentioned positive aspects, the research has also revealed some less positive sides when it comes to the youth and their digital activism:

- A lack of digital skills to create complex digital content;
- A lack of active spirit among the young, and their rather passive engagement;
- Facing potentially risky situations when expressing opinions publicly and openly online poses a big challenge regarding the abilities and opportunities to actively engage in civic engagement.

4.2 Recommendations

- Resorting to the most popular networks among the young as a potential digital activism space;
- Redefining the notion of online activism as a future digital skill for youths;
- Introducing guidelines to effectively monitor online impact of youth organisations;
- Introducing guidelines to act online strategically, to get feedback, and improve functions accordingly;
- Enhancing digital skills of the youth and those of the youth workforce through tailored training;
- Encouraging the young to be more socially active online;
- Creating mechanisms for dealing with risky or hazardous situations which may ensue in the course of digital communication;
- Devising a clear plan and/or strategy on how to use online tools and platforms in order to increase the reach;
- Devising a clear plan and/or strategy on how to avoid online risks and/or how to confront/cope with hazardous situations.

To sum up, when it comes to NGOs, youth organisations and youth workforce in general, the research has established a good basis for focusing on digital activism aspects which leave ample room for improvement. Although respondents state that they possess the necessary equipment, adequate digital skills, and data protection systems, the findings have showed that face-to-face activism is still more dominant. A slight nudge is needed in the right direction to increase the digital engagement, introduce more creative ways of using the Internet for online activism (youth workers mostly use simple images, posts, and e-mails), and thus increase the reach. Furthermore, when it comes to the use of assistive technologies, it appears that this segment of using digital tools is still rather underdeveloped, according to respondents' answers. This could be a valuable piece of information for the project consortium in the process of devising the planned project outputs. Likewise, measuring impact is another aspect of digital activism that deserves attention. Namely, respondents mostly either do not have the means or do not know how to measure the impact that they create online.

On the other hand, when it comes to young people and their digital skills, it was expected that the percentages of their access to the Internet, the time they spend online as well as



the quality of their connection would be high. This is a good precondition for online activism. It is, therefore, rather valuable to be aware of some very important findings in order to engage young people and create adequate tools and apps that they would find useful. Namely, according to the respondent, they mostly use smart phones to perform their online activities. This is an important piece of information, since it informs the consortium of tools and apps that would be useful on smart phones. Furthermore, the young spend most of their time on social media, and it is interesting that they do not spend so much time on gaming platforms, and do not find interactivity the most significant characteristic of online content. They search for smart, inspiring and fun content. It is also very important to emphasise that the young keep in touch with daily events, and express the desire to become actively engaged. When they do so, they tend to share information and content, and that appears to be their principal method of engagement, which is another useful and valuable piece of information for the consortium and our future actions on the project.

With all of the afore-mentioned in mind, one could argue that the main limitation of the conducted research is a rather small sample. Nevertheless, the obtained results will be valuable for informing the following steps on the project with the aim of producing some useful, practical, applicable and at the same time creative, inspiring and original open educational resources and tools to further contribute to activism entering the virtual zone to a greater extent, and with the aim of reaching and influencing larger audiences to become more active in shaping their reality.



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ANNEX I

The Youth Questionnaire

EXPERIENCES, PRACTICES AND NEEDS OF THE YOUNG REGARDING THE USE OF ONLINE TOOLS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This survey is conducted as a part of Erasmus + project “DigiSMARTS – Digital, Social Media, Activism, Rights, Training and Skills” (Ref. N°: KA227-C33AB596-EN). The context of DigiSMARTS is the need for young people to not only have good digital skills, but to be able to apply these to engage with citizenship, democracy and social change, to become influencers and activists, skilled-up and ready to shape the future. DigiSMARTS addresses the priority of supporting youth workers in the broad European youth workforce through providing online open access, free, educational resources, taking them through the steps required to run a successful online activism project, working with youth in co-producing change in an area such as environmental concerns, employment and skills, crime levels or social inclusion/equality issues.

In order to produce the most effective results we need to understand the current needs and practices, as well as challenges encountered by youth workers and the young alike in relation to the use of digital technology for the purposes of digital activism understood as individual and/or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general by resorting to digital technologies or by using them as an important part of their engagement.

To obtain the most relevant responses the project consortium would like to ask youth workers engaged in various youth organizations, institutions and non-government bodies, as well as young people themselves to provide the feedback by completing this questionnaire. We kindly ask you to provide true and honest answers based on your experiences relevant for this survey. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 10 minutes.

GDPR: All data gathered through this survey will be strictly used explicitly for the purposes of this research. The responses are anonymous and they will be handled in a discreet manner. The answers will be saved in a properly secured place, with no authorization to anyone apart from the Research Team. Our consortium complies with the GDPR regulation and the protection and processing of personal data.

Consent: By clicking the "Agree" button, you indicate that you have read all the information above, the privacy policy, that you agree to participate voluntarily, and that you are above 16 years of age. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please click the "disagree" button.

1. I AGREE

2. I DISAGREE



DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender:

1.Man

2.Woman

3.I do not wish to specify

Age:

1.15-20

2.21-25

3.26-30

4.Other: _____

What is your profession? You can choose more than one option.

1.Student

2.Employed

3.Unemployed

4.Volunteer

5.Other _____

What is your current education level:

1.A high-school student

2.A high-school graduate

3.Undergraduate student

4.Bachelor degree

5.Master degree

6.Other: _____





INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Do you have an access to the Internet?

1. Yes, I have continuous access.
2. I have no access at all.
3. I do not have continuous access.

2. What kind of network coverage do you have?

1. Broadband

2. Mobile

3. Other: _____

3. What kind of equipment do you use? You can choose more than one option.

1. Desktop computer
2. Smartphone
3. Tablet
4. Laptop
5. Other: _____

4. How many hours a day do you spend online:

1. Less than 3 hours
2. From 3 to 5 hours
3. More than 5 hours

5. What do you use the Internet for? You can choose more than one option.

1. To communicate with my peers
2. To search for the news
3. To educate myself
4. To share my opinions
5. To have fun
6. Other: _____

6. When I am online I spend my time:

1. On social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
2. On news portals





3. On learning platforms

4. On gaming platforms

5. In chat rooms

6. Browsing

7. Other: _____

7. What platforms do you visit the most? Please, choose your top three options.

1. Facebook

2. Instagram

3. Twitter

4. Youtube

5. Tiktok

6. Snapchat

7. Other: _____

8. Why do you opt for the chosen platform(s)?

9. What attracts your interest online?

1. Content (humour/smart/inspirational)

2. Easy to use softwares/ platforms

3. Interactive nature of platforms

4. Presentation (animation, music, colourful content)

5. Other: _____

10. How do you choose to express yourself?

1. By posting text messages

2. By creating video content

3. By using memes

4. By blogging



5. Through art (music, visual arts)

6. Other: _____

ONLINE ACTIVISM

1. Do you follow daily social and political events?

1. Yes

2. No

3. I do not know

2. How do you inform yourself about daily social and political events?

1. On the Internet

2. TV channels

3. Newspaper

4. Speaking with others (peers, parents/ carers, teachers)

5. All of the above

6. I am not interested

7. Other: _____

3. How do you usually react to news?

1. I am an active listener (I analyse the message and think about the implications).

2. I am a passive listener (I understand the message, but I do not analyse it).

3. I do not react to news (I am not interested in the message).

4. Have you ever had the desire to act in order to change something in your environment?

1. Yes.

2. No.

3. I do not know

5. Have you ever actively spoken up about a cause or an action?



1. Yes.
2. No
3. I do not know

6. If YES please state a cause or an action that you advocated. If there are many, please name top three.

7. How did you advocate the stated cause or action?

1. By sharing information about it
2. By signing a petition
3. By changing your profile picture in support of a cause
4. By calling to action
5. By protesting
6. By posting a comment
7. By speaking to elected politicians
8. Other: _____

DIGITAL SKILLS

1. Please, tick those options which relate to your digital skills:

1. I can send an e-mail.
2. I can find information and data.
3. I can use the tools available on social media.
4. I can communicate and collaborate online.
5. I can make simple digital content (GIFs, memes, digital images, posts on social media...)
6. I can make complex digital content (podcasts, vlogs, webinars, online games, mobile apps...)
7. I can solve problems (software and hardware issues, apps issues, etc.)
8. Other: _____

2. How did you acquire digital skills?





1. I learned at school.

2. I attended specialised IT courses.

3. I learned with the help of my peers.

4. I learned by myself.

5. I learned online.

6. Other: _____

3. Under what conditions do you trust the material found online? You can choose more than one option.

1. I trust reputable websites.

2. I trust renowned authors (writers, journalists, reporters, etc).

3. I trust the information cross-checked with other sources.

4. I trust the information sent by people I know.

5. I trust the information shared by people I follow (bloggers, influencers, famous personalities, etc.)

6. I never trust information online.

7. Other: _____

4. Which of the following risks do you encounter online?

1. Hate speech

2. Cyber bullying

3. Unwanted behaviour (ghosting, subtweeting, rumours)

4. Trolling

5. Sexual harassment

6. I do not encounter such risks.

7. Other: _____

5. If you do encounter the previously listed forms of risks, where do you usually face them?

6. How do you cope with the aforementioned risks?

1. I withdraw.





2.I report the violation to the administrator and/or a person in charge.

3.I engage in conflict.

4.I do not know what to do.

5.Other: _____

Your comments and suggestions:

THANK YOU!



ANNEX II

The Questionnaire for NGOs, youth organisations, youth workers, and activists

EXPERIENCES, PRACTICES AND NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS REGARDING THE USE OF ONLINE TOOLS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This survey is conducted as a part of Erasmus + project “DigiSMARTS – Digital, Social Media, Activism, Rights, Training and Skills” (Ref. N°: KA227-C33AB596-EN). The context of DigiSMARTS is the need for young people to not only have good digital skills, but to be able to apply these to engage with citizenship, democracy and social change, to become influencers and activists, skilled-up and ready to shape the future. DigiSMARTS addresses the priority of supporting youth workers in the broad European youth workforce through providing online open access, free, educational resources, taking them through the steps required to run a successful online activism project, working with youth in co-producing change in an area such as environmental concerns, employment and skills, crime levels or social inclusion/equality issues.

In order to produce the most effective results we need to understand the current needs and practices, as well as challenges encountered by youth workers and the young alike in relation to the use of digital technology for the purposes of digital activism understood as individual and/or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general by resorting to digital technologies or by using them as an important part of their engagement.

To obtain the most relevant responses the project consortium would like to ask youth workers engaged in various youth organizations, institutions and non-government bodies, as well as young people themselves to provide the feedback by completing this questionnaire. We kindly ask you to provide true and honest answers based on your experiences relevant for this survey. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 10 minutes.

GDPR: All data gathered through this survey will be strictly used explicitly for the purposes of this research. The responses are anonymous and they will be handled in a discreet manner. The answers will be saved in a properly secured place, with no authorization to anyone apart from the Research Team. Our consortium complies with the GDPR regulation and the protection and processing of personal data.

Consent: By clicking the "Agree" button, you indicate that you have read all the information above, the privacy policy, you agree to participate voluntarily, and you are at least 18 years old. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please click the "disagree" button.

1. I AGREE

2. I DISAGREE



DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender:

- 1.Man
- 2.Woman
- 3.I do not wish to specify

Age:

- 1.18-25
- 2.26-35
- 3.36-45
- 4.Other: _____

What is your current position in your organisation?

- 1.Director/president
- 2.Member of the Board
- 3.Volunteer
- 4.Staff
- 5.Other _____

My organisation is mainly funded by:

- 1.Public funding
- 2.Private funding
- 3.Donations
- 4.Other: _____

The type of organisation I work for is:

- 1.Non-government organisation
2. Youth service organisation (associations, clubs, movements)
- 3.Governmental organisation



4. Other: _____

The number of employees in my organisation:

1. ≤ 25

2. > 25

3. I do not have that information.

The number of volunteers in my organisation:

1. ≤ 25

2. > 25

3. I do not have that information.

What is the primary field of interest of your organisation?

1. Issue-based activism (human rights, inequality, ecology...)

2. Political activism

3. Identity-based activism (race, sex, religion...)

4. Social activism (art, sports, culture...)

4. Other: _____

INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Does your organisation have a strategic plan or policies for using digital technologies for the purposes of online engagement:

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

2. Does your organisation possess the necessary equipment (hardware and software) to facilitate the process of online engagement:

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know





3. Does your organisation possess data protection systems:

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

4. Is your organisation dedicated to the permanent review and improvement of online engagement in order to introduce changes which would raise the quality and positive effects of your actions:

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

5. What kind of changes do you usually introduce in your practice? You can choose more than one option.

1. Changes in our approach to topics and issues related to the young and their activism
2. Changes in the form of addressing the youth
3. Changes in the choice of topics we address
4. We rarely introduce changes
5. Other: _____

6. Do you manage to reach various youth groups, including those who do not have permanent access to online contents (various underprivileged groups):

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

7. If you chose YES in the previous question, could you please state the ways in which you reach various youth groups:

1. Face-to-face activism
2. Online actions (e-mails, surveys)
3. The media (radio, TV, newspapers)
4. Through other organisations (referrals)
5. Other: _____

8. In your experience, what is the most effective manner of reaching the largest number of young people:

1. Face-to-face action
2. Online activities (through e-mails, social media, online forums)



3.The media

4.Other _____

ONLINE ACTIVISM EXPERIENCES

1.In your opinion, do you have the necessary digital skills to successfully engage in online activism (events organisation, petitions, calls to action, training, raising awareness, etc.):

1.Yes

2.No

3.I do not know.

2.Please, check those options which relate to your digital skills:

1. I can send an e-mail.

2.I can use the tools available on social networks

3.I can make simple digital content (GIFs, memes, digital images, newsletters, posts on social media...)

4.I can make complex digital content (podcasts, vlogs, webinars, online games, mobile apps...)

5.Other _____

3.Do you resort to online tools and platforms in order to promote your actions and increase your visibility

1. Yes

2. No

3. I do not know

4.How often do you resort to online tools and platforms in your work:

1.Every day.

2.Once a week.

3.I do not use digital tools in my work.

4.Other: _____

5.What tools and platforms do you use? You can choose more than one answer.

1.Facebook

2.Instagram

3.Twitter



4. Youtube

5. Tiktok

6. Snapchat

7. WhatsApp

8. Other: _____

6. Why do you resort to the aforementioned tools and platforms? You can choose more than one option.

1. Because the young use them the most.

2. Because they are available.

3. Because they are safe.

4. Because they are user-friendly.

5. Because of the current circumstances (COVID-19)

6. Other: _____

7. In your opinion, how does the use of digital tools influence your work? You can choose more than one option.

1. It increases the reach and communication with the young.

2. It helps people connect faster.

3. It helps send the message faster.

4. There are no significant effects of using digital tools.

5. It reduces the quality of our actions.

6. It excludes young people without regular access to the Internet.

7. Other: _____

8. What actions do you engage in online? You can choose more than one option.

1. Petitions

2. Event organisations

3. Notification

4. Raising awareness

5. Call to action

6. Education





7. Hear young people's voices and views

8. Other: _____

9. What kind of contents do you resort to in the course of your online actions? You can choose more than one option.

1. Text and simple images (e-mails, posters, posts on social media)

2. Video streaming

3. Animation

4. Blogs

5. Forums

6. Artwork

7. Other: _____

10. How do you decide on the type of content and form? You can choose more than one option.

1. We use the most available forms and contents.

2. We resort to contents and forms that are easy to make.

3. We use the most relevant form for a given content.

4. We investigate into young people's interests, preferences and online habits

5. Other: _____

11. How do you involve the young in your work?

1. Peer activities

2. Assigning responsible roles to the young

3. Volunteering

4. They advise on the strategic direction of the work.

5. Other: _____

12. What risks do you face in the course of your online activities?

1. Hate speech

2. Cyber bullying

3. Unwanted behaviour (ghosting, subtweeting, rumours)



4.Exposing young people to unsafe situations (e.g. privacy breach)

5.Other: _____

13. Do you have mechanisms of coping with the aforementioned risks?

1.Yes

2.No.

3.I do not know

14.Do you combine online and offline activism?

1.Yes, I do.

2.I only resort to offline activism.

3.I only resort to online activism.

4.I do not know.

15.Do you use assistive technology to include people with disabilities in your work?

1.Yes

2.No.

3.I do not know.

16. If you chose YES in the previous question, could you please give us examples of assistive technology that you resort to?

17.How do you improve your digital skills?

1.Autonomous learning.

2.Through organised courses.

3.Other: _____



NEEDS

1. We have time and resources to research and improve our online impact:

1. I strongly agree
2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

2. We have time and resources to improve our digital skills and knowledge:

1. I strongly agree
2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

3. I am satisfied with the current reach of the online activities I conduct for my organisation:

1. I strongly agree
2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

4. I am satisfied with the current feedback and reach relating to our current online practice:

1. I strongly agree
2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

5. I am satisfied with concrete results which we have achieved through online activism:

1. I strongly agree
2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

6. I have a clear plan and strategy how to use online tools and platforms in order to increase the reach:

1. I strongly agree





2. I agree
3. I neither agree nor disagree
4. I disagree
5. I strongly disagree

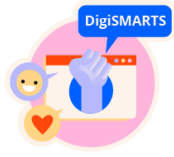
7. Do you have the means of assessing the effects of your online actions?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I do not know

7. If YES, please state the means of assessing the effects of your online actions?

Your comments and suggestions

THANK YOU!



<https://digismarts.eu/>