Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
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Social Inclusion, Digitalisation and Young People

Research study

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Executive summary

Social inclusion is a process that enables a young person to build up self-esteem, self-realisation and resilience, to become an autonomous and productive member of society, able to reach self-fulfilment and contribute to the development of society as a whole. In order to support the social inclusion of young people, their participation in social, economic and political life should be promoted, based on the equality of rights, equity and dignity. However, certain groups of young people face multidimensional barriers or disadvantages, encompassing political, social, cultural and economic dimensions. These young people may comprise, among others, youth with disabilities, NEET youth, young refugees and migrants, LGBTIQ+ youth, young women and girls, youth suffering from substance abuse or dependency, youth from minority ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds, socio-economically marginalised youth, homeless youth, youth in abusive households and youth who have committed or have been a victim of crime.

Acknowledging the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership's extensive work on the topic of social inclusion and inequalities, and the findings from the 2018 Symposium "Young people, social inclusion and digitalisation", there is an understanding of the need to better approach the topic of digitalisation in relation to the lives of young people and its implications for youth policy, youth work and youth research. The purpose of this paper is thus to explore the intersection of these two themes – social inclusion and digitalisation, examining the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion and how we can make use of inclusion opportunities arising from the new digital reality.

The introduction sets the framework for the study by looking at what has been done so far in terms of creating a common approach to understanding the two themes: social inclusion - a common topic for policy, practice and research and digitalization as new but fast-developing phenomena, which has an impact on the youth field and youth work.

In order to explore in more details the opportunities for social inclusion in the digitalized world, the second part of the study offers an inventory of the different policies put in place by the European, national and local authorities (where available). It also reflects on the need to move towards smart youth work and/or to the outcomes of the work done so far in the area of social inclusion in order to ensure easier access for young people with fewer opportunities.

The study presents a collection of existing digital platforms, online tools and educational and training opportunities available to young people and youth workers or teachers. It is based on the desk review and the online questionnaire, which was completed by correspondents of European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) and youth organisations around Europe. The data collected from 38 questionnaires from 23 countries shows that the formal education system benefits from a wide range of projects and initiatives that bring teachers and pupils closer to the online world. Platforms have also been developed by national and local authorities to engage the citizens into decision-making processes. Moreover, local youth organizations and the European umbrella youth organizations have developed online training opportunities for the youth workers and youth educators, most of which now operate trans-nationally.

The final section of the study looks at the risks and opportunities associated with social inclusion of young people within the digital realm, also reflecting on the of approaches and recommendations for addressing the risks. The conclusion invites the reader to reflect on the future of participation of young people with fewer opportunities in the digital area. At the moment of the compilation of this study, very few identified initiatives targeted directly young people, and even fewer focused on young people experiencing multiple disadvantages. However, the growing digital reality, if its potential is used by the governments and organisations, still presents a definite opportunity for developing digital solutions for social inclusion, which need to involve a variety of stakeholders and young people as partners and co-creators.

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ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
COE	Council of Europe
EKCYP	European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy
EU	European Union
EYC	European Youth Capital
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Higher Education
IT	Information technologies
LE	Lower Education
NEET	not in employment, education or training
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
PEYR	Pool of European Youth Researchers
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STEAM	Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics

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Introduction

Social inclusion rarely happens by virtue of significant events like graduation or employment. Instead, it is a long-lasting process that enables a young person to build up self-esteem, self-realisation and resilience. Social inclusion enables a young person to become an autonomous and productive member of society. However, young people are not a homogenous group, and their experience transitioning through this process is influenced by a range of inequalities. Young people, such as those with disabilities or from migrant backgrounds might encounter limited access to some of the services or opportunities. The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership's study on barriers to social inclusion *Finding a Place in Modern Europe* (2015) refers to five areas of possible inclusion or exclusion: education, labour market, living, health and participation. The five areas of social inclusion can be referred to as 'safety nets' since they provide basic resources and prerequisites for the fulfilment of everyday needs. However, some of the above-mentioned groups of young people are either facing difficulties using these 'safety nets' or are having quite unstable 'safety nets', which leave them socially excluded compared to other young people.

Social inclusion is a concept better understood in the youth field due to youth sector's long-term commitment to this issue. It encompasses a broad range of sub-topics, such as employment, employability, health or participation. Digitalisation, on the other hand, is a fairly recent topic to the society at large and to the youth sector in particular. It refers to the use of digital tools and opportunities, but also to the social phenomenon of increasing importance of digital technology, mass communication and online spaces and communities. All EU digital strategies in the past decade, Digital Agenda for Europe (2010), Digital Single Market for Europe (2015) and a Europe fit for the digital age (2020) aimed at having every European digital. However, the rapid growth of the Internet access, connectivity and reliance on technology has not only determined the swift development of the digital world; it has also determined a new landscape for inequality, caused by varying access to digital tools and instruments and exclusions or inclusion within the digital realm. In a contemporary context, digital means of social inclusion can thus be understood as another dimension of 'safety nets'.

Digitalisation has spontaneously made its way into youth work. Its presence and use in the youth sector has grown significantly over the last few years. Now accepted as part of the practice, it is often assumed that digital tools offer a panacea for reaching out to include more young people, especially those hard to reach due to different social, geographical, economic or cultural barriers. Yet, social inclusion as it

relates to the digital world is about more than just access to technology and can be considered a complex, multidimensional concept.

Technological change requires young people to quickly build the skills and competences needed for the digital era. Yet, *"being digitally competent is more than being able to use the latest smartphone or computer software — it is about being able to use such digital technologies in a critical, collaborative and creative way"* *(European Commission, 2017).*

Illustration by Athanasia Panagiotidi, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018.

In this context, throughout the study, we are looking at the intersection between young people's social inclusion and digitalisation in order to understand how the development of the digital world promotes or inhibits inclusion. Across Europe, there is an increasing interest for the opportunities digitalisation offers, and a variety of experience and knowledge of its use towards fostering social inclusion. Yet, there has been little analysis of benefits and opportunities of the digital world, as well as risks and potential perils of this new reality, particularly for those at risk of marginalisation. There has also been little discussion of the implications for the youth field, across research, policy and practice. Besides for infrastructure and access, the digital agenda within public policy is still not addressed adequately, and neither are the educational and social dimensions of digitalisation.

Existing work in the area

In 2018 the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership organised the **Symposium 'Young people, social inclusion and digitalisation',** in Tallinn, Estonia, where over 110 participants discussed the intersection between social inclusion of young people and digitalisation. Some of the conclusions, indicated in the

report Connecting the dots: Young People, Social Inclusion and Digitalisation Symposium, include the finding that the digital reality further increases inequalities and exacerbates the accumulation of advantages and disadvantages, leading us to the need to better understand the reality of digitalisation in young people's lives, the implications for the youth sector, the adaptations required from youth work and youth policy in order to be better prepared to face the challenges, and exploit the opportunities that current and new digital tools and trends offer.

Furthermore, the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership has produced extensive knowledge on the theme of social inclusion, in particular: the Youth Knowledge Book 'Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers' (2007); the study "Mapping of Barriers to Social Inclusion of Young People in Vulnerable Situations 'Finding a place in modern Europe' (2015)", the outcomes of the conference on the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations (2014); 'Beyond Barriers: a youth policy seminar on social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situation in South East Europe' (2015); the T-Kit 8: Social Inclusion (2013, 2017) and the knowledge stemming from the Symposium on youth participation in the digitalised world (2015). Finally, the Symposium (Un)Equal Europe (2016) explored the increasing inequalities among young people due to social, geographic or economic reasons and the polarisation of society.

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe's Seminar 'Artificial Intelligence and its impact on Young People', in December 2019, discussed approaches and understandings of Artificial Intelligence (AI), its impact on young people and the role of the youth sector in working with the AI. In 2016, European Union organised an expert group on "Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy", under the Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018, which produced "Developing digital youth work. Policy recommendations, training needs and good practices examples for youth workers and decision-makers" (European Commission, 2019: 6).

In terms of policy framework, the new EU Youth Strategy and its implementation tools including the new EU programme in the field of youth, Erasmus+ (2021-2027), and the EU Youth Dialogue, as well as aspects of the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 of the Council of Europe foresee, in different ways the use of digital tools for reaching out to more young people, and facilitating their access to rights. These converging efforts are aiming at creating a more inclusive and participatory development and implementation of policy and practice, which can be informed by more knowledge in this area.

Methodology and framework of the study

This study *aims to explore the existing state of play* when it comes to digitalisation and social inclusion of young people. The overall question leading this study was*: "What is the intersection between social inclusion and digitalisation?".* In order to explore this intersection, three main sub-questions were used:

- What are the relevant policies, legal frameworks and practices at European, national and local level looking at the intersection of social inclusion and digitalisation in the youth field?

- What are the instruments (tools, platforms):

    o that the national and local authorities, or other entities, have been developing to train the specialists in the youth field (the youth workers, youth educators, youth specialists, civil servants) to work on digitalisation and social inclusion

    o that the state and non-state actors make available for young people in order to respond to their needs and interests related to digitalization?

- What are the potential risks and opportunities of digitalisation for young people – especially for the ones that are at risk of social exclusion?

Considering the research questions stated above, the **objectives** of the study are the following:

    o To offer a general review of the European, national and local youth policies, focusing on social inclusion and digitalisation.
    o To present existing practices, based on a brief analysis of the national, transnational and local projects.
    o To present potential risks and opportunities of digitalisation.

In terms of data collection, two main methods are used:

1. The online questionnaire using open questions

Data was collected using an online questionnaire answered by EKCYP correspondents and youth organisations across Europe. 38 completed questionnaires were received from 23 countries [1] on the context, policy and practices of using digitalisation towards social inclusion of young people across Europe.

2. Desk review of relevant documents

The researchers conducted a desk review of mainly secondary sources (literature, legislation, action plans, governmental programmes, resolutions and decisions). This was complemented by the secondary analysis of data collected during the EU's 6th Cycle of Structured Dialogue [2], in order to examine the attitudes of marginalised young people regarding the digital trends and tools.

The intersection between social inclusion and digitalisation - understanding key concepts

The following section outlines a conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding the links between digitalisation and social inclusion and the impact of digitalisation in young people's lives.

Social inclusion and exclusion

Social inclusion has been defined as the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, Glossary, 2017).
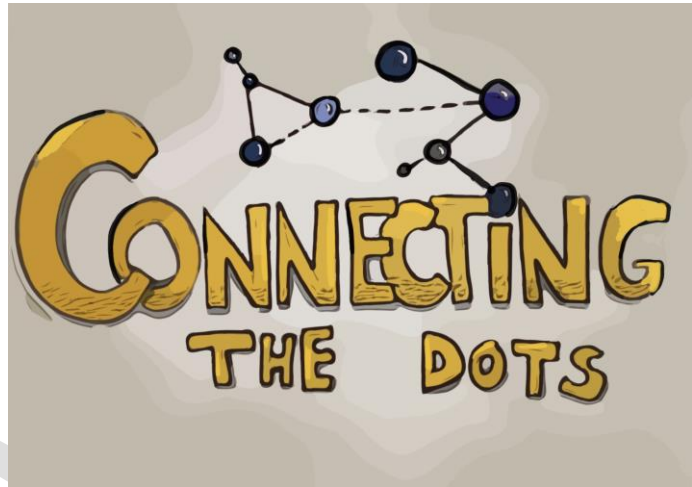
Illustration by Zilvinas Mazeikis, from Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation,Tallinn, 26-28 June 2018

Within this framework, the focus of the work on inclusion and integration is on young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers, marginalised or have fewer opportunities. Their exclusion from society may come from the limited access to public institutions, legal system, housing, employment, health, culture, education, mobility opportunities, geography, disabilities or any other aspect which limits their access to social rights; and it may be based on their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live.

Disadvantage and exclusion is multidimensional – it encompasses social, political, cultural and economic dimensions, and operates at different social levels. It is dynamic, in that it impacts people in various ways and to differing degrees over time. And it is relational – it is the product of social interactions, which are characterised by unequal power relations, and it can produce ruptures in relationships between people and society, which result in a lack of social participation, social protection, social integration and power (Department for International Development - DFID, 2010).
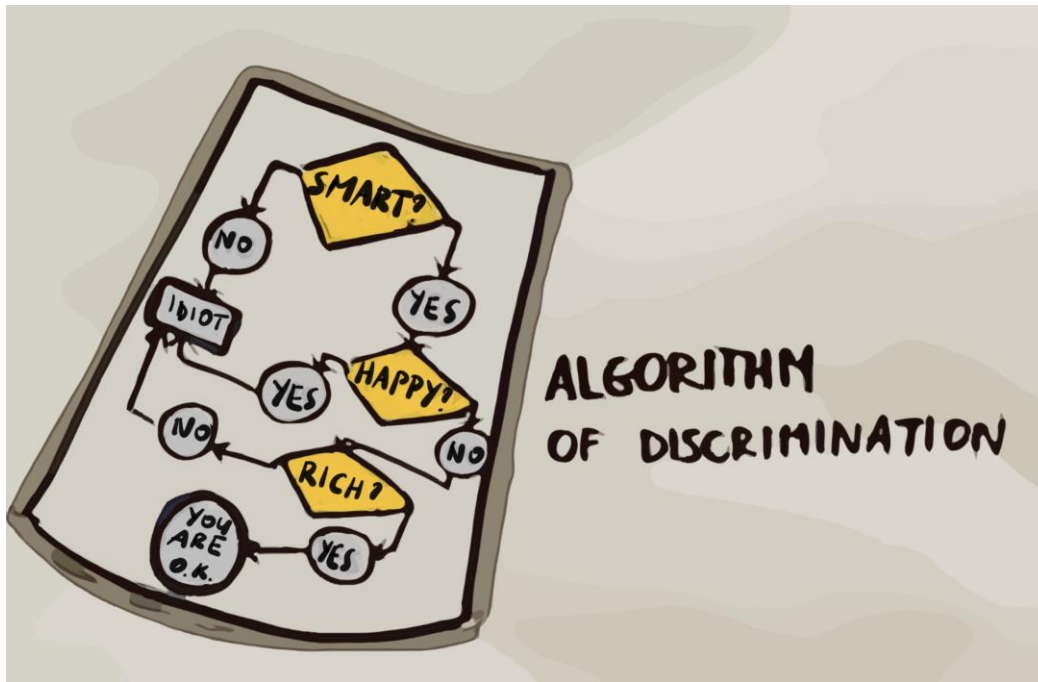
Illustration by Zilvinas Mazeikis, from Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation, Tallinn, 26-28 June 2018

While all young people experience complex transitions from dependence to autonomy under rapidly evolving circumstances, social inclusion has a particular meaning to those young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and live in precarious conditions (EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, 2018a).

Keeping in mind the multiple levels of social exclusion, and the disadvantaged groups of young people which were identified by the Steering Group,[3] young people that the study concerns itself with may include young women, refugees, socio-economically disadvantaged youth (including financial hardship, housing, family breakdown and educational attainment), young people in NEET situations, youth of different races, ethnicity, religion or sexuality, young people with a disability, young people suffering from substance abuse or dependency and youth who have committed or have been a victim of crime- all groups of young people who are facing some kind of disadvantage or exclusion. The causes of exclusion are multiple and most of the young people that this study concerns itself with are facing multiple forms of exclusion. For them, inclusion involves breaking or overcoming various barriers before acquiring their access to social rights and being able to participate as full members of society.

Digital transformation and competences

Digitalisation, as a transformative process of integrating digital technologies into everyday life is continuously shaping our society, and it has been recognised to have a significant impact on the youngest generations. It is accelerated by new technologies and has a high social and economic impact. As a social phenomenon, digitalisation may support or hinder the efforts necessary to achieve social inclusion. During the last decade access to technology and the Internet have increased, with a large part of the population accessing it for various purposes - work, communication, information or entertainment. Nevertheless, significant gaps can be identified in terms of skills, accessibility, equal opportunities, and types of services available and provided, particularly at the national level.

Another important concept relevant for the study is **digital social inclusion,** which refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities – including the most disadvantaged – have access to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The access is evaluated through 5 main elements: affordable, robust broadband internet service; internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; access to digital literacy training; quality technical support; and applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration. Digital Inclusion must evolve as technology advances, but it requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional and structural barriers to access to and use of technology (National Digital Inclusion Alliance.).

A variety of tools of digital social inclusion are already at young people's disposal and youth across the Council of Europe Member States. Organisations are also investing in digital resources, particularly through projects using digital tools to foster social inclusion or using digital platforms to foster participation.

ICT could enhance young people's human, social and cultural capital, offering them access to educational and training opportunities, enabling them to connect and develop bonds, become culturally aware and exchange resources, thoughts and ideas (McLoughlin S. 2018b). Yet, digital agenda is still not addressed adequately. While infrastructure and access have been addresses at various levels, the educational and social dimension of digitalisation remain less explored.

Young people and Digitalisation

A widespread consumption of the ICT and digital media among young people have brought a false paradigm of the 'digital native'. This paradigm presumes that young people who grow up surrounded by digital technologies intuitively know how to use them and how to avoid risks of spending time online.

The term 'digital native' was coined by Marc Prensky (2001) and included for the first time in the article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" as an attempt to explain why teachers face constant troubles in teaching students. The 'digital natives' are *"the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video-games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age"*. 'Digital immigrants', on the other hand, are those born prior to 1980 who "*were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in their lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology*" (Prensky, 2001).
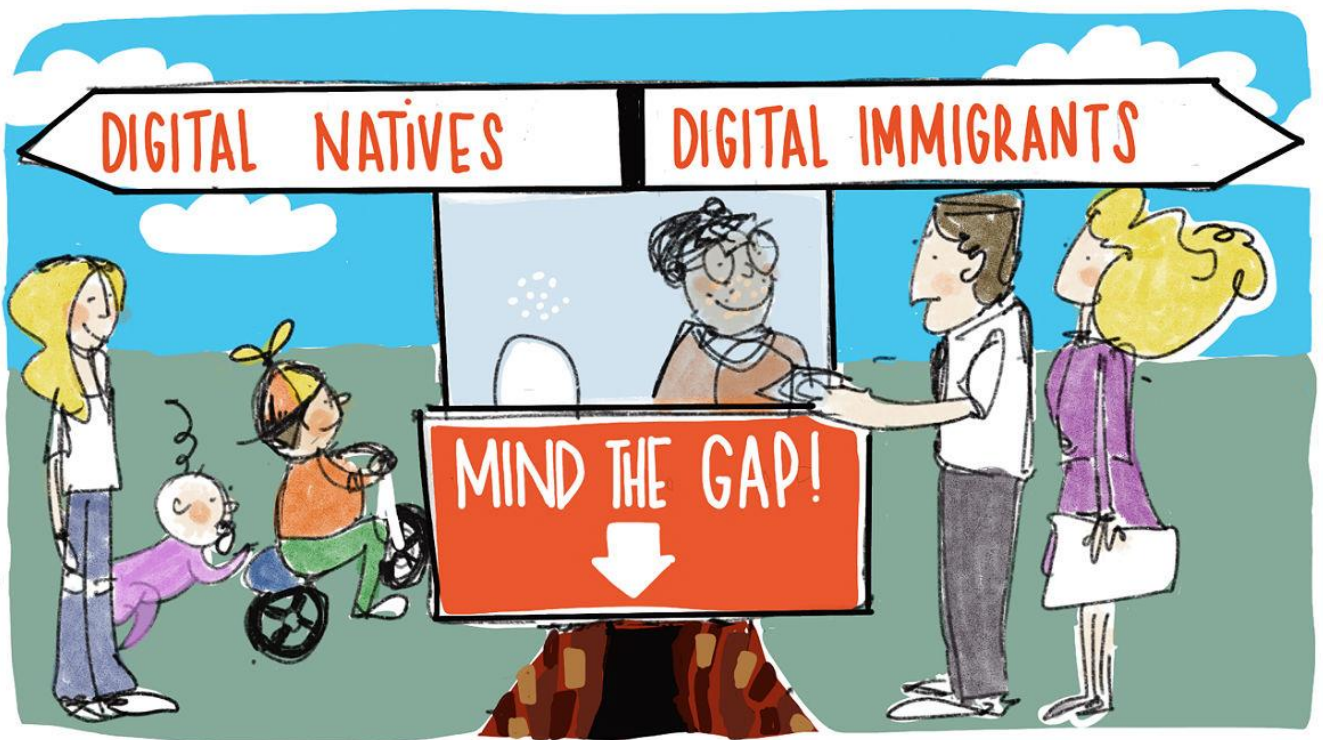

Illustration by Vanda Kovacs, Coyote, Issue 27, 2018

The idea of 'digital natives' has been widely debated and challenged. The ECDL Foundation (2015:1) highlights that *"young people do not inherently possess the skills for safe and effective use of technologies, and skills acquired informally are likely to be incomplete".* Consequently, there are serious gaps in addressing the digital skills inadequacies and providing young people with necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to minimise the risks and maximise the benefits of participation in an online world.

In order to understand how young people relate to the new digital world, it is important to look at their connectivity patterns and examine how they use technology and the Internet. Research on young people's use of Internet and technology in the Council of Europe Member States is quite limited, but the Eurostat data [4] provides us with some insights into the situation in the European Union.

In terms of **access to the Internet**, only 1% of young people have never accessed the Internet, while 95% use it daily and 89% prefer to use mobile devices as access points. Yet, even for those who use Internet regularly, reliance on Internet in the spring of 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, has also raised questions and exposed inequalities related to the availability of data to access online content, and also the availability of computers within households, which would allow young people to use the technology as a part of their formal and non-formal education.

However, when it comes to the **use of technology and Internet** there is a clear preference given to communication and entertainment activities, including participation in social networks, while engagement in more advanced tasks is rather limited. Only 13% of young people have engaged in programming activities, 11% have taken part in online consultations or voting to define political or civic issues and just 10% have done an online course, on any subject.
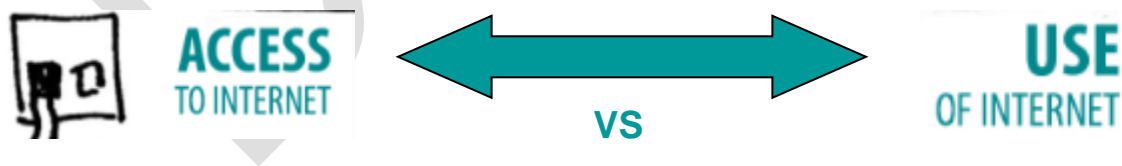
In addition to the Eurostat data, secondary analysis of the data collected as a part of the VIth cycle of Structured Dialogue [5] similarly indicates that there are differences in the way young people from minority backgrounds engage with online tools and sources of information, compared to those from non-minority backgrounds. Young people from minority backgrounds [6] found social media and general Internet searches more important for accessing (in their view) truthful information than young people

from non-minority backgrounds. However, the reverse was true when considering Government websites, potentially indicating the lack of trust in the system and official sources of information. Considering that many people from minority groups may see themselves excluded or unrepresented within official or dominant narratives, this potentially indicates the importance of the proliferation of online news sources and the value they hold for people from minority backgrounds.

Young people from minority backgrounds also placed greater importance on the role of web-based sources than those from majority backgrounds when trying to overcome stressful situations such as having relationship issues, feeling stressed or depressed and when learning how to discuss things peacefully with people who hold different opinions. This may potentially indicate that young people from minority backgrounds may have greater benefits of using online tools than young people from majority backgrounds, as digitalisation enables communication and interaction between groups that might otherwise be more isolated and disconnected.

Illustration by Ana Mendes, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018

The results also showed that online participation tools were more important to young people from minority backgrounds than those from non-minority backgrounds for engaging in public issues. This may potentially be explained by the idea that such tools are generally more accessible and can be used for greater outreach. Interestingly though, being from a minority background had no substantial effect on participants' desire to use web-based sources for careers advice or to set life goals.

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Digital youth work

Youth work has an important role in building the capacity of young people in terms of digital skills and competences as well as digital citizenship. Digital citizenship refers to the ability to use information technology to engage in society, politics and government. Acknowledging that digital literacy plays a crucial role in contemporary societies, youth workers are trying to follow the existing interests of young people as well as to respond to their needs (European Commission, 2019).

The expert group on 'Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy' set up under the European Union Work plan for Youth 2016-2018 defined digital youth work as proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work (European Commission, 2019: 6). Youth work should encourage young people to develop their digital skills as well as to structure a space for them to learn, share experiences and actively participate in the society, in a safe environment.

Moreover, smart youth work, defined as the innovative development of youth work encompassing digital youth work practice and including research, quality and policy component (Council of the European Union, 2017) should provide opportunities for young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, to engage and be more active. The priority given to digital youth work has been highlighted through the adoption of the Conclusions on Digital Youth Work (Council of the European Union, 2019), urging Member States to address digital gap and inequalities. The conclusions aim to overcome the digital gap among young people, by prioritising youth workers' training and education in this area.

However, neither digital youth work nor smart youth work could evolve without the participation of young people. If young people are to participate online, then youth work tools and instruments also need to evolve and move online. A combination of offline' and 'online' working methodologies can be used in order to address the digital divide for certain groups of young people and create and develop an inclusive participatory working space. In early 2020, the move to the digital youth work was particularly prominent due to the confinements imposed by governments around Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many youth workers and teachers to move their activities online.
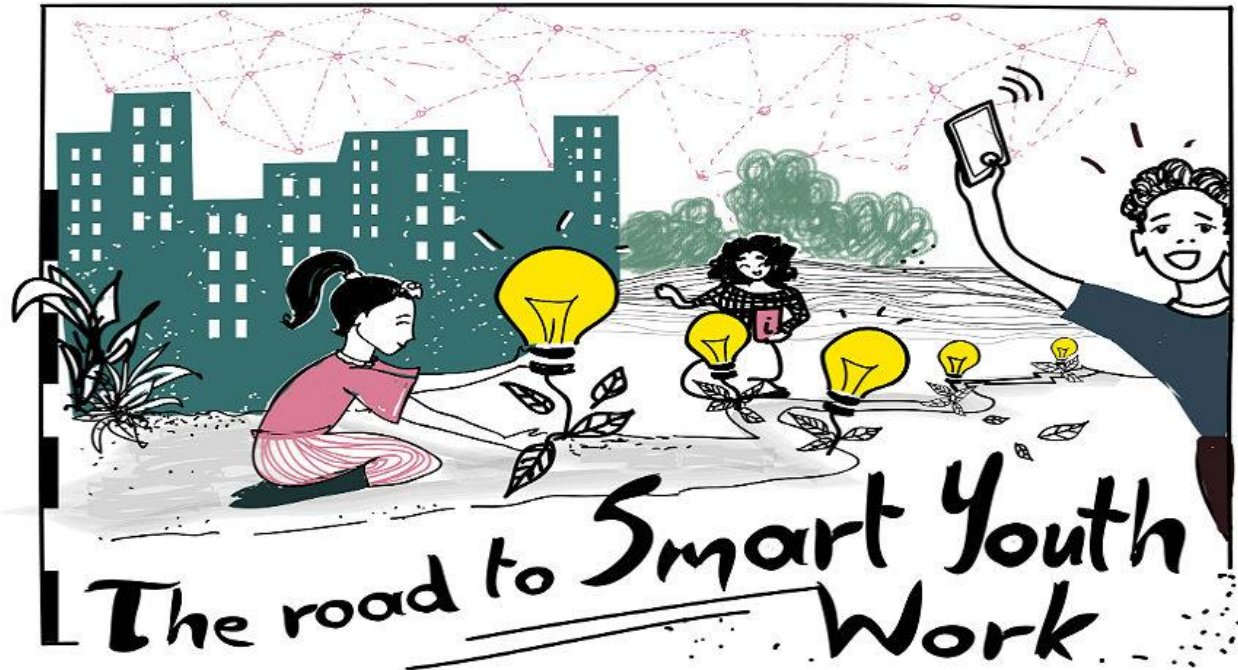
Illustration by Athanasia Panagiotidi, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018.

The conceptual framework sets the development of the following sections of the study. The four dimensions: **Social inclusion and exclusion, digital transformation, young people and digitalisation and digital youth work** are important for framing the analysis of the impact of digital transformation on young people's lives in relation to their social inclusion or exclusion. These dimensions also allow us to explore the risks and opportunities associated with the intersection of young people's needs and interests with the digital transformation of the society.

Review of relevant policies European and national level

This section examines existing digital policies at European, national and local levels, based on the review of relevant documents and data collected through the surveys.

Relevant policies at the European Level

European Union

According to the European Commission, (2016) Europe needs digitally smart people in order to successfully undergo digital transformation. But, the realities shaped by digitalisation also require a policy framework which allows for the best use of opportunities and regulation of risks. There are two dimensions of the EU policy in this area: **the digitalisation agenda** which, at times, refers to young people but not through a separate agenda for all its citizens and **the youth policy agenda** that is currently focused on promoting the digital tools. In both dimensions, social inclusion has the potential of becoming one of the key topics in the near future.

1. **European Digital Agenda**

During the past decade many European countries have engaged in developing frameworks and policies addressing digitalisation and new technologies. In this context, the European Union took on the responsibility to harmonize and coordinate these efforts, first in 2010 with the adoption of the **[Digital Agenda for Europe](#)** (European Commission, 2010b), intensified in 2015 with the **[Digital Single Market for Europe](#)** (European Commission, 2015) when digitalization was highlighted as the second top priority out of the 10 identified for 2014-2019 Commission's plan. The most important priorities and funding are generally in the area of connectivity or Internet infrastructure. In the recent years, more visibility has been given to education and inclusion, as 43% of EU citizens still lack basic digital skills (The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), 2019).

Starting with 2020, **[Europe fit for the digital age](#)** (European Commission, 2020) is the new EU digital strategy, closely linked with the EU flagship initiative - the European Green Deal, aiming to build on previous policy efforts by putting at centre the citizen. One of the three pillars is particularly focused on "Technology that works for the people", including actions which address investments in digital competences and development of Artificial Intelligence with respect to people's rights and designed to earn their trust (European Commission Communication: Shaping Europe's Digital Future, 2020).

One of the priorities of the Digital Single Market for Europe 2014-2020 is *"An inclusive e-society - The Commission aims to support an inclusive Digital Single Market in which citizens and businesses have the necessary skills and can benefit from interlinked and multilingual e-services, from e-government, e-justice, e-health, e-energy or e-transport."* In this context, European digital inclusion is mainly focused on making ICT more accessible and using ICT to reduce marginalization, which has resulted in the inclusion of the development of skills necessary in this new digital era as specific priority within EU funding (EU Social Fund, Regional funds or Erasmus+). In order to monitor and evaluate the digital progress around the member states, the European Commission works in the framework of the European Semester (The European Semester, 2019), publishing national reports and country specific recommendations, as well as through the EU Digital and Economy Index (DESI) - a tool created to measure various digital dimensions, grouped around 5 main categories: Connectivity, Human capital, Use of Internet services, Integration of digital technology and Digital public services. The 2019 ranking includes in the top 3 positions Finland (69.9 score), Sweden (69.5) and the Netherlands (68.9), while the last 3 positions are occupied by Bulgaria (36.2), Romania (36.5) and Greece (38) – showing great discrepancies in their overall score and potential risks for digital exclusion.

A new skills agenda for Europe (2016) highlighted the need for the Member States to set up the national digital strategies by mid-2017 and put in place measures for development of digital skills, required by the labour market within the education systems. In 2016, the European Commission set up the expert group on 'Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy' coordinated by the Directorate General for Education and Culture – Unit C.1: Youth policy, to address the issue of digital divide, among others (Study on Youth participation in democratic life, 2013). The digital divide in terms of access to the Internet and social media for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds also leads to the 'voice divide' on the digital platforms*.*

The European Commission's communication: *Shaping Europe's Digital Future (February, 2020)* sets a new vision for Europe's digital citizens, acknowledging that "the need for digital skills goes beyond the job markets", and is closely connected with all aspects of professional and private lives. Thus, basic digital skills are a necessity for participation in rapidly-changing society and in the labour market. In order to prepare for all these challenges, a series of new policy actions are foreseen, starting with 2020, among them the communication includes: a ***Digital Education Action Plan*** to boost digital literacy and competences at all levels of education, a ***reinforced Skills Agenda*** to strengthen digital skills throughout society and a ***reinforced Youth Guarantee*** to put a strong focus on digital skills in early career

transitions. The impact of these actions is yet to be analysed after the full adoption of the new Multiannual Financial Framework and their full deployment.

2. European Youth policy agenda and digitalisation

As needs and interests of young people change, youth work should also evolve. This requires youth workers to develop their digital skills to be able to conduct *smart youth work* and understand the issues youth face online. The Council of the European Union's Resolution on encouraging political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe (Council of the European Union, 2015) invites for

transparent actions and policies in terms of inclusivity and equal access to all young people, including the development of digital tools for political participation.

Illustration by Zilvinas Mazeikis, from Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation,Tallinn, 26-28 June 2018

In addition to that, the smart youth work methodologies are designed to be in line with the *[European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens](#)* (European Commission, 2017) and the [Digital Education Action Plan](#) (European Commission, 2018b). EU *Youth Strategy 2019-2027* also promotes online participation, inviting EU member states to "explore and promote the use of innovative and alternative forms of democratic participation, e.g. digital democracy tools and facilitate access in order to support youth participation in democratic life and engage young people in an inclusive way, whilst being aware that some young people do not have access to the internet and digital technologies, or the skills to use them" (European Commission, 2018c). Digital media serve as enabling, capacitating and empowering, and their use is backed by their two powerful characteristics – anonymity and protection of identity. Young people are strongly attracted by the anonymity of the digital media, especially when it comes to the usage during leisure time activities.

EU Youth Strategy (European Commission, 2018c) further emphasises that 'this generation is the best educated ever and among the most creative in using Information and Communication Technologies and social media. Member States are therefore invited to adapt the digital opportunities and to create the framework for youth workers to use the technology and pedagogical practices to increase access and

help young people cope with digital means. If not developed yet, digital youth work should be included in the occupational standards and should align to the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and the agenda on skills development (Council of the European Union, 2012).

In addition, there are still important steps to be taken to encourage the participation of marginalised youth. The policy documents mentioned above suggest that the decision makers should be transparent about their actions and use more social media tools to communicate with young people. The development of the digital skills was also extensively promoted through the EU programme in the field of youth – Erasmus + 2012-2018 and through the EU Youth Dialogue. Numerous Erasmus + KA2 projects focused on digital youth work, with benefits particularly noticeable for young people from marginalised backgrounds. One of the key actions that could address the 'digital divide' is the European Solidarity Corps Programme which aims to 'enhance the engagement of young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality solidarity activities with a view to contributing to strengthening cohesion, solidarity and democracy in Europe, with particular effort to the promotion of social inclusion' (EU Regulation 2018).

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has extensively worked on ensuring a safer Internet for children and young people. The Council of Europe's Internet Governance Strategy (2012-2015) attaches importance to the rights of the Internet users, while the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), reinforced by the Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment (Council of Europe, 2018) focused on children's rights on the internet. The documents are in line with the Guide to human rights for internet users (2014) that has a dedicated a part for children and young people.

The Recommendation of the Council of Europe on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights (Council of Europe, 2015b: 18-19) included as one of the manners of accomplishing youth social inclusion the acknowledgement that all young people should have equal access to public amenities (including post offices, community centres, youth work centres, employment services, and **information and communication technologies**.

The Council of Europe (2018) *Recommendations on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment* (Council of Europe, 2018) calls upon the Member States to ensure that policies and initiatives are informed by rigorous and up-to-date evidence about young people's experiences in the digital environment. It should be done in order to map existing opportunities and risks for young people, identify emerging trends and guide the targeting of policy and resources to ensure young people's well-being in the digital environment.
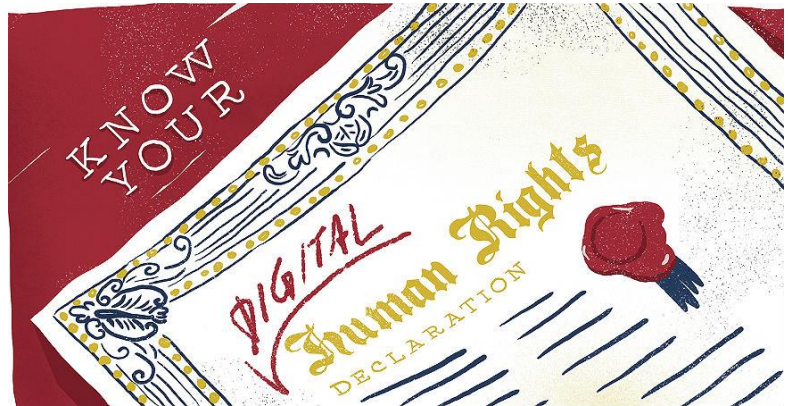

Illustration by Ana Mendes, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018

National policies relating to youth, digitalisation and social inclusion

This review is based on the 38 questionnaires from 23 countries on the context, policy and practices of digitalisation towards social inclusion across Europe. 14 respondents have provided examples of national policies and initiatives addressing digitalisation and connections with young people's skills, inclusion or online safety. The examples highlight efforts taken by various governments to advance digital agenda and promote digital skills, particularly in formal education (by updating national curricula or supporting teachers' skills), to support infrastructure development and ensure schools' access to the Internet, as well as to develop public digital services. Considering that this is a new topic in the field, most answers related to either examples of social inclusion policy and measures where digitalisation is a tool to reach out to young people or to digital instruments put in place for innovation reasons or for the general advancement of the society. The review has identified the following:

● There are countries where clear and well defined national policies and initiatives addressing digitalization and connections with young people's skills, inclusion or online safety were put in place such as Albania (through the National Policy in place for Protection of Children and Youth Online) or Estonia, countries where the policies are translated through practice in terms of open access to resources (Austria - Lost in Information: Open educational Resources, Workshops, Publications) as well as countries where the available European granting schemes

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allowed the development of pilot initiatives – Belgium (Pilot initiative Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange).

● In other countries the subject of digitalisation mainly resides with the formal education system linking Information Technologies (IT), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and digitalisation (Croatia and Germany). Moreover, in the case of more recently adopted National Youth Strategies there are references to digitalisation and inclusion of young people, even if they are not shaped as separate pillars (Greece, Estonia, Ireland, Malta and Serbia).

● In other contexts, even the local policies have been targeting the advancement of digitalisation and the development of the digital skills as it is the case of Tartu Municipality in Estonia where citizens can engage online using the ICT and smart solutions in decision-making in the city.

● Furthermore, various public institutions across Europe have successfully developed online tools that allow for more transparent and faster approaches that could foster the social inclusion of young people - from the online platforms that monitor and support young people (the Estonian tool that monitors young people at risk of exclusion and provides early intervention measures), to the participation platforms for young people and youth organisations (Greece) or an overall monitoring related to the process of digitization (Austria).

Social inclusion, digitalisation and young people – Relevant practices

Through the review of the relevant documents and the online survey, the study had been looking at the following dimensions:

1) the digital tools and online platforms available to young people and youth workers, or other platforms used by public institutions with the aim to foster social inclusion.
2) the educational digital programmes and opportunities for:

  a) young people, including marginalised groups

  b) youth workers and teachers

The analysis below looks at the existing digital tools and platforms used by the youth sector. Most of the examples presented are open access platforms accessible to those who are already familiar with ICT and do not necessarily question the accessibility of these instruments – neither in terms of abilities nor knowledge. Not all of them are necessarily directly targeting marginalised young people in order to promote social inclusion, but they are certainly a useful tool towards achieving that goal – particularly in the area of education, mental and sexual health, cyber bullying or rights of minorities. Some of these platforms started to be used by youth workers and other youth practitioners trying to improve the outreach of their projects and initiatives. -

Digital Tools and Online platforms addressed to young people and youth workers

Generic platforms used by the youth sector

International platforms and tools have been embraced by the youth sector as valuable resources, integrated in various activities. Thus, Virtual Meeting Rooms (VMR) software (Zoom, Skype, ezTalks, etc.) and messaging applications (Telegram, Viber, Snapchat, etc.) have become popular among youth organisations and youth workers, who use them as channels to better communicate, outreach and support more young people, organise their activities or provide educational opportunities to various groups.

Similarly, young people and specialists working with young people (youth workers, social workers, teachers, etc.) have access to various educational platforms that offer access to a multitude of opportunities. A list, with some of the most popular, includes: edX, founded by Harvard and MIT,

offering a wide diversity of free open online course provided by globally top-ranked universities and industry companies; Coursera offers to both young people and youth professionals various courses on welfare and rights of youth and social inclusion; Khan Academy offers tailored content adapted to age, including resources for teachers and parents; Scratch enables creativity through programming, offering educational tools for both young people and teachers; Kahoot stimulates learning through a game-based approach to learning, making it a valuable tool for both youth workers and teachers who can create their own content, for free.

European platforms addressed to youth workers teachers or other youth specialist

Two important **European online repositories available for the youth sector** map the various online learning opportunities, digital tools and methods: **DIGI YOUTH Portal** and **ICT 4 Youth Work**. Particularly designed for youth organisations, youth services and youth workers, the two platforms are the outcome of two EU funded, Erasmus+ projects.

Inspired by the popularity of the international online platforms and the need to adjust to the new digital world, a series of **European platforms and resources** have emerged during the years.

European Youth Portal is an inter-institutional platform of the EU which offers information on the various opportunities and resources available to young people, covering 35 countries and available in 28 languages.

Youth policy essentials is the first Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on youth policies, created by the EU - Council of Europe youth partnership. The course is particularly addressed to youth policy makers, youth NGOs, youth leaders, youth workers and researchers.

Youth Work Portfolio is a tool designed for youth workers, youth leaders, volunteers or professionals working in the youth sector with an aim to support their self-assessment regarding the level of youth work competence, as well as to further set new learning and professional development goals. This is the online version of the tool developed by the Council of Europe and originally published in 2006.

SALTO Youth is a platform which provides, as part of the European Commission's Training Strategy, non-formal learning resources for youth workers and youth leaders, and organizes training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies (NAs) within the frame of the European Commission's Erasmus + Youth programme and beyond.

National platforms and tools mainly addressed to young people[1]

The online survey highlighted practices in 15 European countries. Most of the platforms identified through the survey have been developed by NGOs or private entities, with small percentage created by governmental bodies. Majority of them are designed exclusively for young people, addressing topics such as education, mental and sexual health, cyber bullying or rights of minorities. While many of these digital tools are mostly available through websites, a large majority also include mobile versions or applications and are accompanied by complementary means of communication, such as chat rooms, instant messaging apps, emails or phone-lines.

With most of the identified practices, young people are the beneficiaries rather than co-creators of the developed platforms, which makes it difficult to evaluate the extent to which these tools directly cater for young people's needs and interests, particularly those youth at risk of exclusion.

Illustration by Vanda Kovacs, Coyote, Issue 27, 2018

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[1] A detailed summary of platforms and practices from the survey is available in Appendix II of the study

In terms of topics that the platforms cover, the practices can be clustered into six main categories:

1. *Educational and professional guidance*

Through these platforms, young people can engage in educational programmes, gain ICT skills, self-assess their skills and knowledge, identify and apply for jobs, and engage in gamified activities that reward involvement in various activities (both online and offline).

Serbia - VIVET project

Virtual Internships in Vocational Education and Training is an innovative platform supporting youth with disabilities to do internships using online tools. Implemented by Belgrade Open School, the initiative is available at: http://www.vivet-project.eu and http://www.platform.vivet-project.eu/index.php.

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2. *Information and counselling*

These platforms are designed to raise awareness and provide guidance on a number of issues relevant to young people - from emotional well-being and self esteem, rights of young people (particularly belonging to: ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, LGBTQIA), to social problems and relationship issues (love, friendship, family).
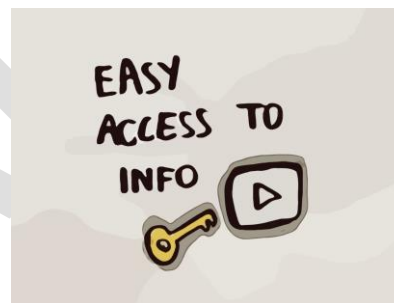
Illustration by Zilvinas Mazeikis, from Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation, Tallinn, 26-28 June 2018

Sweden - umo.se

A national-wide digital youth guidance centre, financed by all Swedish regions, where young people (13 to 25 years old) can get guidance and information about the body, sexuality, relationships, mental health, alcohol and drugs, self-esteem and much more.

Additionally, youmo.se is targeting newly arrived young people, offering partly same information as umo.se in several languages such as English, Arabic, Dari, Somali, Swedish and Tigrinya. Youmo.se is addressed to young migrants in Sweden but has also reached other young people (still living in their countries of origin), where information of this kind is not available.

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3. Health

These platforms have diverse purposes, ranging from providing information, support and guidance in the areas of mental health (addressed to young people in emotional crisis, depression, and suicidal behaviour), substance and alcohol abuse, sexual activity or HIV services. Many of these platforms include 24/7 assistance, where young people can receive tailored support. In some cases they ensure the anonymity of the young person, in order to provide an open and safe space for sharing.

Estonia - enesetunne.ee

It is an online platform aiming to lower the tension/stress, prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviour, deal with depression and monitor sleep. The platform contains separate pages for information for young people, specialists working with young people and parents, and it includes links to different apps.

4. Platforms specifically targeted at marginalised young people

While most of the platforms in this category are not exclusively dedicated to young people, they are designed to support people with different disabilities and enhance their capacity to participate in society. Such examples include mobile applications who guide the visually impaired people with voice information for their better orientation in the outdoors, light or motion detectors, scanning and reading apps, or even web-platforms for physically disadvantaged people, which provide information about events that are accessible for them.

Slovak Republic - "Dobrá Linka" (Good line)

It is a psychology counselling online tool for young people with health disabilities. This platform creates a safe space for young people with disabilities to share their problems and thoughts with professional psychologists. The platform was developed by IPčko and is available at: https://dobralinka.sk/

5. Online safety

These platforms are particularly addressed to children and teenagers and aim to empower and protect them from the risks associated with online activity. They particularly deal with issues related to cyber-bullying, illegal and harmful content or behaviour, hate speech and more. Most of these platforms are accompanied by Helplines and other online reporting mechanisms, where young people (but also parents, youth workers and other adults) can report online abuse.

Albania - www.isigurt.al
The National Platform www.ISIGURT.al serves to inform children, youth, parents and teachers on internet use and provides tips and guidelines on digital world, how to navigate it, what is out there and how youth can benefit from digital opportunities. The platform, available also for android phones, has a reporting mechanism in place, if children and youth would like to report cases related to security, safety or abuse. It has an established cooperation with the National Child Helpline, who provide counselling to children and youth through online chat services.

Malta - BeSmartOnline!
This tool aims to empower and protect children and teens online from risks associated with online activity, through numerous awareness raising initiatives and by fighting illegal and harmful content (particularly online child abuse) and harmful behaviour online (Besmartonline.org.mt). Students can also report an online abuse. It is co-funded by the European Union through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and forms part of INSAFE and INHOPE – the European network of Safer Internet Centres and hotlines.

6. *Dialogue and consultation*

Following the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, National Youth Councils and other youth organisations have developed permanent websites to be used during Structured Dialogue cycles.

Illustration by Ana Mendes, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018

National platforms and tools mainly addressed to youth workers, teachers or other youth specialists

Adding to the platforms particularly designed for young people's use, some countries have also developed online resources and platforms for youth workers and other specialists working with young people. Complementing the face-to-face youth work, now there is a wider availability of online courses and specific digital tools. These platforms are useful for the youth workers, contributing to the development of their competencies' and improving the work they do with young people. However, it might be too early to make claims about their role in enhancing social inclusion, as majority of the platforms are not specifically designed for this purpose.

Whereas these platforms are still limited, they include innovative approaches that enable youth workers, educators or even parents to:

● Improve their ICT skills through educational platforms that enable them to use new technologies (software and devices) in delivering new content and services;

● Share experiences, materials and tools through platforms that facilitate communication and cooperation;

● Proactively engage in online safety

Complementary to children and youth helplines, specific platforms have been designed to support parents and adults to deal with young people's Internet safety. Considering that adults are generally less digitally skilled, their training also needs to include an integrated approach in online safety.

From the institutional side, various public institutions across Europe have taken steps in developing online tools and based on the examples collected, several types of platforms can be identified:

● Online platforms and registries that record the activities in which children and young people (that are not in formal education, employment or training) have been engaged;
● Youth Guarantee Monitoring Tools (at the local and national level) that allow social workers to identify young people at risk and propose support measures;

Estonia: Youth Centre Logbook

The tool was implemented in the Youth Prop Up programme (part of the wider programme), targeting young people (15–26 years old) who are in NEET situations, by using the Logbook system (electronic monitoring). Through the tool, young people's case files were recorded, thus enabling: 1) profile analysis of the youth participating in the programme (sex, age, region, background, obstacle, desired result and learning needs, duration of the process, chosen activities, cooperation and results); 2) the dynamics of the service (background, duration of the process, chosen activity, results, etc.); 3) the effect on the challenges faced by the youth and the society.

https://ank.ee/youth-prop-up-programme-description/

● Participatory budgeting platforms that allow young people to advance their priorities and projects at the local level;

Greece

The Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality (KEDITH-EYC 2014) launched a digital platform for the Participatory Budgeting for Youth: **http://www.kedith.gr/en/youthparticipatory-budget** with an aim to provide financial support to youth NGOs and youth groups and their projects. One of the ten thematic priorities of the participatory budgeting is social inclusion.

● Consultation and collective decision making-platforms.

Estonia

In Estonia osale.ee; volis.ee and eis.ee are national/local government institutions' web-based platforms for participation, consultation and public discussions over draft acts, as well as for other public policy proposals.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) is slowly being integrated into the activity of youth workers. In Austria AI powered chatbots have been included in the activity of Youth Information Services, thus releasing youth workers from routine activities. The use of AI and technologies for these purposes is likely to increase in the near future.

Trainings and educational opportunities with a digital dimension-
Digital skills and digital youth work

As the entire process of preparing youth workers and other youth professionals for the new digital world is rather new, the expert group was set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 published "**Developing Digital Youth Work**: Policy recommendations, training needs and good practice examples for youth workers and decision-makers", aiming to offer youth workers, and youth sector at large, a more tailored instrument. It outlines seven main categories that define the competences and training needs of youth workers: Digitalisation of society, Planning, designing and evaluating digital youth work, Information and data literacy, Communication, Digital creativity, Safety, Reflection and evaluation (European Commission, 2019).

Similarly, youth organisations have created valuable resources such as the European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work (Project digitalyouthwork.eu), Developing online youth information trainings (DOYIT) (eLearning Guide developed by ERYICA), offering practical materials and relevant information that can be multiplied in different contexts.

Digital skills for young people

The practices gathered through the survey allow us to shape the answers to two main questions:

1. _Which stakeholders have an active role in developing digital skills of young people?_

Where digital programmes exist within the youth sector they are mostly initiated and/or led by N*GOs, Youth Centers/Services or private entities* (including technology companies), particularly those organised in non-formal or informal settings (including hubs and makers-paces).

Romania

Digital Citizens Romania (non-profit organisation), together with many other Romanian organisations, implements events for children, teachers or parents as part of EU Code Week (during October, each year). The events take place in face-to-face formats (youth clubs, schools, open spaces in shopping malls, etc.) and focus on advancing basic digital skills and basic coding skills, through the use of free online platforms such as Scratch or Code.org.

Governments and education institutions have a role in delivering courses on basic ICT skills - as part of the formal education curricula, particularly at primary school. In some cases, schools also offer courses on media literacy or programming.

Sweden

All national and local government authorities in Sweden provide information digitally. Media literacy is introduced to young people through formal education, at all levels of schooling.

Funding used for digital programmes has various sources - private, public, including from the EU.

2. _Where do trainings take place and which topics they cover?_

Most of the trainings are delivered in _face-to-face formats_, but most of the organisers also provide educational materials online.

> **Slovak Republic**
>
> IUVENTA-Slovak Youth Institute, as a subordinated entity directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak Republic, offers various educational and training courses for young people and youth workers. Some of these courses address the topic of social inclusion or are directly designed for people from disadvantaged environments (for example courses for young Roma leaders). All of the study materials are provided online.

While most of the trainings cover *basic digital skills*, some of them also address online safety and others foster creativity - being organised in maker-spaces formats.

> **Ireland**
>
> **NewKD Techspace** is a project funded under SICAP managed to open a creative space where young people were inspired to create, produce and have fun with digital technology. More information about the project is available at: http://nekd.net/2016/04/tech-space-castleisland/

Digital programmes and educational opportunities for youth workers, teachers or other youth practitioners

The survey aimed to identify relevant educational practices that can be showcased, in what is still seen as a pioneering area. Comparable with how youth work has been historically developing - at different paces, in different contexts and with different standards - digital youth work and digital skills for youth workers advance today with the same unequal but innovative approaches.

From a social inclusion perspective the main conclusion that stems from the examples gathered shows that topics related to the challenges of the digital world and their impact on young people: cyberbullying, social engineering, safety online and other similar ones have started to be integrated in youth practitioners' trainings. This highlights that there is awareness and concern for these issues, as well as that there is an intentional purpose to involve youth specialists in minimising the potential negative impacts of the above-mentioned challenges.

Opportunities for educators in formal education
Ireland has created a **Digital Learning Framework for Schools and Post-Primary Schools**. The Statements of Practice are underpinned by the UNESCO ICT CFT and informed by the EU Joint Research Centre DigCompEdu and DigCompOrg frameworks. The framework "provides a common reference with descriptors of digital competence for teachers and school leaders promoting innovative pedagogical approaches which embed the use of digital technologies. Underpinned by constructivist principles, the Framework will support high quality education mediated by digital technologies promoting active learner participation and engagement in a wide range of learning activities". Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) has issued a **Strategy for technology-enhanced learning in further education and training.** Through eighteen practical actions, grouped under three themes, the strategy aims to build on existing capacity and establish technology-enhanced learning as an intrinsic part of further education and training in Ireland. The strategy is built on the premise that "technology can be used to enhance learning on initial engagement, as part of course delivery and assessment, and in supporting career progression".

Opportunities for youth workers
LifeLong Learning Platform (Belgium) has designed a training programme based on a competence framework for community "animateurs." The programme includes three key areas: emotional competences, specific animateur competences, and digital competences. Designed for youth workers and volunteers to empower disadvantaged young people and involve them more in their communities, the programme aims to bring, through youth work, mainstream institutions and youth services to more marginalised communities.

Opportunities, risks and implications of digitalisation

Social inclusion in the digital era

The following section primarily looks at the gaps in the digital skills and providing young people with necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enable them to minimise the risks and maximise the benefits of participation in an online world. The section also analyses some important steps that relevant stakeholders working with youth need to take in order to provide efficient assistance to the young people.

For this purpose, both, opportunities related to digital social inclusion of young people had been explored, as well as the potential risks that young people are exposed to when using the digital instruments. In this way we can identify the role of youth workers in new digital context and how digital tools can help them in better addressing youth's interests and needs.

Illustration by Vanda Kovacs, Coyote, Issue 27, 2018

Opportunities of social inclusion through digitalisation

The most significant contributors to the digital divide among young people are income, affordability and access to ICT. The Eurostat data published in *Being young in Europe today – digital world* reveals that in 2016 91% of young people in the EU made daily use of the internet, compared with 71% for the whole EU population. Young people are almost constantly 'on the move' when it comes to the Internet accessibility; in 2016, 83% of young people used mobile phones to access the internet away from home or work, compared with 38% who used a portable computer.

The highest proportion of daily Internet users was recorded among youth aged 16-19 years and among those with a higher level of formal education. Higher formal education points to one of the most serious hiatuses of the digital divide – education. Helsper (2016) in the report *Slipping through the net* suggests the youth who come from the poorer socio-economic backgrounds and weaker connections with their local community are more exposed to online risks or harassment or bullying. Their adverse online

experiences make them reluctant to use digital means of social inclusion, preferring face-to-face interactions. *Screenagers – Guidance for Digital Youth Work*, published by the National Youth Council of Ireland is adding to the evidence that the more digitally literate young people, the safer they will be while using digital technology.

Digital means of social inclusion have tremendous potential to address challenges of the contemporary young generation, but only if guided by awareness of the differences in resources, access, potentials and risks for youth well-being and advancement of the wider communities.

Opportunities for youth workers

The *EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027* (European Commission, 2018c) calls for the use of technology and pedagogical practices to increase access and help young people cope with their everyday needs via digital means. In this context, youth workers need to be aware of the following:

- smart youth work engages young people through digital means more effectively and productively than before, it reaches more young people and increases opportunities for personal development and social inclusion;
- digitalisation does not create or improve social inclusion by itself, but by creating social, political and economic conditions that can improve equality and empower people (VERKE & EYWC, 2019);
- digital youth work does not present a specific youth work method and it can be included in any type of youth work (open youth work, youth clubs, detached youth work) (European Commission (2018a, 2018d);
- digital media and technology can be a tool, an activity or a content in youth work, while digital youth work remains close to the basic ethics, values and principles of youth work in general.

Illustration by Zilvinas Mazeikis, from Connecting the dots: young people, social inclusion and digitalisation, Tallinn, 26-28 June 2018

Overall, it can be noted that the new **digital/AI-powered tools can offer many other opportunities to reach out to more young people** and better support those with fewer opportunities, such as:

- identifying the needs of young people and getting to know them better;
- predicting threats and prevention, for example detecting signs of stress and addressing young people's mental wellbeing;
- ensuring faster youth services - with the support of chatbots;
- using digital applications, such as the iWatch heartbeat tracking, designed for people with health conditions such as dyslexia or other problems related to stress/anxiety, down syndrome, autism, and others;
- offering more personalised information and guidance for professional/social/personal development based on the real needs of young people;
- supporting educational systems to become more tailored to the needs of young people, by using technologies that monitor the educational activity of young people and identify patterns for their preferred methods of learning.

Nevertheless, in order to ensure that youth work is inclusive and digital tools offer real opportunities to all young people, these tools should also be available in national languages, and not only in English.

Enabling functions of digital social inclusion is directly related to the functioning of the youth centres and other services providing support to the young people. It includes building capacity of the youth centres, linking them to the other stakeholders in the field and giving them visibility at the policy level. Verke & EYWC (2019) go further in elaborating how digitalisation of youth work can bring benefits to young people, by improving their social status and supporting them in achieving their goals:

- better knowledge about young people and their realities, needs and opinions;
- advanced organisation of youth work (planning, documenting and delivering activities) and
- providing support for the development of meaningful and inclusive youth policy.

Furthermore, regardless of the environment youth workers operate in (online-offline) and which tools they use, they have to act according to the three functions of youth work (Lundquist, 2012):

1) *socialization*, which refers to attaching the young people into their culture, society and surrounding communities;

2) *building trust into other people*, where the competences of the youth workers they encounter online are of the very high relevance

3) *individualization* function that refers to supporting the growth of a young person into a self, an independent individual aware of one's needs and goals.

Opportunities for young people

As identified throughout the study, as well as in the outcomes from the Council of Europe's Seminar on '*Artificial Intelligence and its impact on Youth',* digital technologies can bring a series of opportunities for young people, in terms of:

1. Health and wellbeing

The use of digital tools and social media can contribute significantly to the wellbeing of young people, especially when it comes to building trust and self-esteem, supporting peer education and improving the skills of both young people and youth workers:

- **digital technologies have the potential to bypass fear of contact among the young people in need of professional help and in improving or maintaining mental health;**

- digital technology "can provide destigmatized spaces fostering the ability to share personal stories, enhance social networks, and learn about resources from peers, as well as gain information, insights and strategies for coping with challenges can" (OECD, 2018: 8);

- social media and ICT tools can have benefits on youth mental health, by improving their social skills, talking to their friends and peers online, expressing themselves and initiating new actions (Frith, E., 2017);

- AI-powered technologies can serve as enablers for young people with disabilities. These may be, for example, in the form of applications that transform text to speech for young people with visual impairments.

2. Communication and Information

Young people find it easier to take on all the opportunities offered by the digital content and ICT, and address potential risks of online activities (Levente and Nagy, 2011), due to the following characteristics:

- Young people take in information quickly and are very fond of performing tasks simultaneously. It often means that they sometimes may approach the content in a superficial manner, without any deeper considerations on their usefulness or safety.

- Youth gives preference to images, videos and sounds over text and strive for immediate gratification of their desires.

In line with the listed characteristics, there are vast *types of techniques that can be used in order to better engage young users* of the digital social inclusion services. These include: indirect dialogues (interactive webpage, blog or wiki), direct instant dialogue (messaging, chat), social networking sites, video portals, MOOCs, social labs, 'maker spaces', games and virtual worlds that can facilitate bringing a solution to the young people's needs through their direct engagement.

From a communication perspective, digital youth work tools offer young people: faster access to information and basic guidance, interactive approach that may be available at all times and 24/7 services, available regardless of the place of residence of a young person and their willingness to expose their identity.

Last but not least, while the online world is also exposing young people to harmful content, on the other hand AI-powered technologies can offer new opportunities, as they can be used to detect, discourage and prevent online hate speech by informing users of the potential harm that their behaviour may cause.

3. Participation

Getting young people to actively participate in civic actions and in the political arena is one of the most important areas of social inclusion. Digital tools offer new opportunities for participation for marginalised youth through the use of various digital instruments, such as: decision-making tools, online petitions, online voting, social media - as an environment for (self)mobilising and coordinating youth communities and e-government public services that offer more transparency to public decisions and facilitate the communication with the young citizens.

4. Creativity and self-expression

Internet and new technologies are natural environment for young people, due to their constant use of digital tools. Nevertheless, young people are not just consumers but also creators, as these new tools offer them new possibilities:

- blogging and vlogging have become widely popular for explaining various issues to the wider audience, as well as to create communities around specific topics;

- platforms such as Scratch, Code.org or micro:bit have empowered large learning communities, where young people can create AI based games, simulations, chatbots and more.

Illustration by Athanasia Panagiotidi, Coyote, Issue 26, 2018.

In conclusion, the digital world provides young people with a tremendous wealth of opportunities, starting from access to information and educational content, to the opportunity to express themselves, help develop their identities and connect to other people. It is of the utmost importance to support the process of skilling and up-skilling children and youth, particularly those at risk of exclusion, by providing them reliable and friendly guidance through the meanders of the digital works.

Risks of digitalisation for young people

Conclusions on smart youth work (2017: 3) identify both the potential and risk of digital youth work *"[…]in raising the awareness and competences of young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, their families, youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth"*. The main risks identified in this study that concern, not only digital youth work, but digitalisation overall, are: cyber bullying, exposure to harmful online content, information bubbles and lack of critical thinking, and questions of privacy and data protection.

Cyber-bullying

Limited digital skills and competences make young people more prone to cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is a form of violence that young people can be exposed to, and it may include:

1) sending or posting abusive or threatening messages;
2) creating and sharing embarrassing photos or videos;
3) sharing secrets about someone online without their consent;
4) intentionally leaving someone out of an online activity or friendship group;
5) voting on someone in an abusive poll;
6) creating a website with mocking or critical content about someone;
7) hijacking online identities or creating a fake profile to damage another's reputation;
8) sending explicit messages or encouraging a young person to send a text, then sharing that more widely
9) cyber-stalking: continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm Frith (2017:19).

Harmful online content

While Internet offers access to valuable information and education opportunities, there is also a harmful online content which may pose risk for young people. According to the EU Kids Online Network, 12% of children were exposed to hate content, 10% to pro-anorexia content, 7% to self-harm content and 5% to suicide content (Haddon, Livingstone, the EU Kids Online network, 2012: 3). A review of research on the Internet and self-harm amongst young people found that there is the risk that the internet can normalise self-harm and discourage young people from talking about their problems and seeking professional help, especially if they belong to vulnerable groups and do not find reliable support in their

offline world. Young people also experience harmful online content regarding their self-image and self-value, due to proliferation of distorted body images, causing self-disrespect, which can affect young people's behaviour in the long run. Moreover, making online connections with the people who promote distorted body images may encourage self-harm and deterioration of the young persons' mental health.

Another wave of research conducted in 2014[2] showed that around one quarter of 11-16 year olds talk about private matters online, with over a third saying they find it easier to be themselves online (Livingstone *et al.*, 2014). Research shows that 40% of children sought new friends on the Internet, 29% of children and youth had contact with someone they had not met face to face before, while 13% of them met with their online contact in person. As far as negative experiences are concerned, research shows that 12% of children had been cyber-bullied and received sexual messages, while 17% of them reported having been bothered or upset online in the past year (Livingstone *et al.*, 2011: 16; Livingstone *et al.*, 2014).

Based upon the results of the existing research on children and the media one could say that children and youth in our societies are more vulnerable, more exposed to new challenges and more unprotected than ever before. This impression has often been nourished by the media emphasizing "risk and harm" of the online world. In 2012, the EU Kids Online presented a comparative insight at the European level into the 9-17 year-olds' exposure to Sexting (Livingstone, Görzig, 2012), Bullying and Cyber-bullying (Lampert, Donoso, 2012), Pornography (Rovolis, Tsaliki, 2012), Trolling, Happy Slapping, Vamping, Phishing and many other phenomena. The research also showed that the online risk does not necessarily result in harm (Haddon, Livingstone, 2014: 29). One of the key findings from this research is also that the 'virtual' has not displaced the 'offline': children and youth are still bullied face-to-face, whether verbally or physically, and they are exposed to pornography through a range of media including but far from limited to the internet" (Haddon, Livingstone, 2014: 30). However, these findings are used and emphasized by diverse audiences, with the goal of raising awareness of the general public for new models of media education, policies and programs. Yet, restrictive approach to digital tools and "mobile panic" can also have negative consequences for young people's digital literacy. Instead, there are many initiatives (sometimes from ICT companies) to empower children and youth, parents and teachers in their ICT skills as a possible solution to new challenges (as a part of their social responsibility programs).

Information "bubbles" and critical thinking

One of the primary functions of digital media is sharing views and networking, but this can also cause danger of social isolation in an offline world and discrimination of those with different views. Verke & EYWC (2019: 9) warn that *"social media creates an effective arena for identity politics and makes it easy to spread information as well as preconceptions. This can either break stereotypes or reinforce them. The rise of hate speech and online bigotry is a tangible example of the role that social media plays in forming people's opinions"*.

As emphasized by *the Digital Education Action Plan (*European Commission, 2018), exposure to incomprehensible amounts of data largely driven by algorithms creates risks that require critical thinking and thorough approach to digital social inclusion.

Privacy and data protection

Data exposed and gathered online are becoming increasingly valuable and questions of privacy and data ownership are gaining on importance, which is currently partially managed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union. Still, there is a need to know who is behind online identity, especially in the case of the young people's online activities. Reliable manners of reconciling individual privacy and protecting individual rights and safety are being re-invented constantly, but they can be successful only if young people and their parents, carers, teachers and youth workers are digitally literate and have developed critical thinking.

A summary of the potential opportunities and risks of the youth digital social inclusion reviewed in this paper can be found in **Table 1**. It is interesting to add that the survey on usage of the digital media in youth work on the national level resulted in only two mentions of the potential risks and five correspondents who listed opportunities for digital social inclusion as an important topic in current national debates. Based on the analysis above, a non-exhaustive list of opportunities and risks had been identified:

Table 1: Potential opportunities and risks of youth digital social inclusion

OPPORTUNITIES	RISKS/LIMITING FACTORS
User-tailored, targeted and personalised content	Moral panics Possible unethical practices Exposure to biases - algorithms can be designed with bias as well Algorithms/AI to which young people are exposed are not neutral
24/7 accessibility	Paradigm of a 'digital native'
Reaching young people in remote areas	Limited access to Internet and technology
Possibility to combine face-to-face and online approach	
Building trust	Youth unaware of how algorithms work, of potential risks and online harmful content Disinformation and propaganda Insufficient legislation and mechanisms to report (efficiently) online threats Cybersecurity is still a challenge for all technology operated systems
Anonymity and privacy	Low levels of understanding: how data is stored and who owns it; how online privacy can be managed. Violation of privacy and hacking Insufficient standards and legislation to protect human rights

Inclusion of marginalised young people	Tools and programmes that are not adapted to the needs of the disabled people
	Limited digital tools
	Insufficient digital skills
	Access to technology or educational programmes might come with a financial burden
Accessibility to disabled young people	Insufficient digital tools/applications
	Low levels of youth digital skills
Creation of enabling conditions for youth and youth workers	Low levels of youth workers' digital skills
	Measuring progress on the individual level (both for the youth and youth workers)
	Unclear or no user policy devised by the organisation providing help to the young people
Empowering youth and youth workers	Difficulties in providing written agreement of parents or carers for assisting minors
	Low level of the youth workers' competences
Strengthening digital literacy	Digital literacy classes are not part of the formal curricula in all countries
	Language barriers in the case of young migrants or refugees
	Understanding of copyright and Creative Commons
Professional opportunities	Education system/curricula is not adapted to the future of work
Adopting soft skills that can be easily transposed to the everyday lives	
Socialization function	Excessive screen-time and internet addiction

Critical thinking development	Exposure to unwanted content and sexting
Sharing (views, values, personal problems ideas for actions, creative solutions) and networking	Cyber-bullying and hate speech
Raising awareness of cultural and generational diversity	Adults, including youth workers and educators have less developed digital skills, compared to young people
Digital participation	In social media: Exposure to biases and filter bubbles Online violence and radicalisation In general: limited e-government tools
Creating identities	The degrading and stereotyped portrayal and over-sexualisation of women and young people – the impact of social media on young people's self-esteem
Expressing creativity	Harmful information and advice online (bulimia and anorexia, self-harm)
Enhancing innovative potential of individuals and organizations	
Engagement of both peers and professionals in providing help	Inexperienced peers with no training providing advice to the young people in need
Possibility to simultaneously engage otherwise disconnected and dislocated youth workers in providing assistance to the young people	
Providing various and interactive tools for youth social inclusion	Limited digital tools/innovation in the youth sector

Better data management and data-driven solutions for youth work	Limited capacity and knowledge to collect data. Low involvement of data scientists in the youth sector
Opportunities for evaluation of the youth work activities, by young people and by the youth workers and other stakeholders in the field	Insufficient research
	Lack of policies and frameworks in the youth sector
	Lack of measuring and evaluating progress and outcomes on the organisational level

Approaches to reduce risks

Based on the list of the risks streaming from the youth digital social inclusion we can envisage several steps that can be performed in order to enhance youth digital social inclusion. When it comes to managing youth work targeted at social inclusion, there are several approaches which can has a positive impact on the young people's lives:

1) identifying young people's needs and aspirations, and placing their insights in the social, cultural and geographical context;

2) making a plan and establishing a network of available and skilful youth workers to be engaged online;

3) continuously working on the digital competences of the youth workers, young people and their carers;

4) meeting the identified training needs;

5) writing guidance for youth workers;

6) providing strategic financial investment;

7) ensuring policy commitment;

8) challenging resistant mind-sets and false narratives, such as the 'digital native'.

Another set of recommendations considering youth and online risks that can be referred to comes from the report *Slipping through the net* (2016: 10)*,* authored by E. Helsper:

1. There is a need to tackle and minimise barriers and challenges in access, competences and outcomes for different groups of young people.

2. Countries of the Council of Europe should devote resources to the development of personalised skills training, especially those of the disadvantaged and vulnerable youth.

3. There is a need to facilitate collaborative inter-sectoral approach in assisting young people to overcome everyday hurdles and develop problem-solving skills and resilience.

4. Youth workers should be trained to support ICT related queries. It should be made explicit to the general public that these sources of support are available.

5. Evaluations of success of digital social inclusion should focus on the tangible outcomes that young people achieve and the inequalities therein.

Although there are already numerous contributions to analyses of the youth digital social inclusion, there are some aspects of this phenomenon that call for a decisive action or questioning of the current practices:

1. There is a need for reconciling a debate on a hiatus of the human rights online and offline by saying that the same human rights should be applied in the offline and online world, with paying special attention to the young people.

2. There is a need to review the EU dashboard on social inclusion and introduce additional indicators on digitalisation.

3. Young people should be included in decision making on social inclusion and enhancing digital social inclusion.

4. More profound insights into current practices of digital social inclusion are required, which is to some extent covered by the survey administered for the purposes of this study.

5. There are significant gaps in services and tools of digital social inclusion at disposal to different sub-groups of young people. At the European level, there are fairly similar services and contents when it comes to 'official' platforms, like European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, Erasmus+ agencies and Eurodesk. However, on the national level, it often means that the young people who are not highly educated or do not strive to access higher education do not have a proper digital service. Moreover, these services often tackle education, participation and employment, leaving other areas of social inclusion, like housing and health, out of scope.

Conclusions

Digitalisation, platforms and tools offer a great new opportunity for greater social inclusion of young people who are experiencing disadvantages arising from one's gender, ethnicity, race, religion sexual orientation and socio-economic status, among others. These multidimensional disadvantages and barriers are reflected in the lack of equality and opportunities in private, political, social, cultural and economic sphere of life.

While there is a general understanding that digitalisation may serve as a new avenue for social inclusion, and an interest in the topic, there has been little analysis of how and if digital opportunities improve the lives of marginalises young people, what risks it might bring, and what it implies for the youth policy, practice and youth research.

This study explored the intersection of the two themes – social inclusion and digitalisation – by setting the common framework for discussing the topic, and exploring the questions related to the policies and practices connecting the two themes, tools and platforms for young people and youth workers, and opportunities and risks arising from the new digital reality.

Social inclusion has long been at the heart of the youth sector's priorities, including a range of topics, such as employment, education, health and participation, among others, with a goal of supporting young person's development to become an autonomous and productive member of a society. The fast pace of digitalisation and technological changes, on the other hand, are quickly reshaping the youth work, and also demand development of new skills and competences of both young people and youth workers.

In order to respond to the new realities and needs of the youth field, European, national and in some cases local authorities have been developing new regulatory frameworks to address the issue of digitalisation, its potential for social inclusion and addressing the gaps in digital inclusion of young people. At the European level, both the European Union and the Council of Europe have developed various instruments to address this topic. European Union has over the past decade adopted Digital Agenda for Europe (2010), Digital Single Market for Europe (2015) and a Europe fit for the digital age (2020), in order to address the need for promoting development of digital competences among the citizens, which has also been reflected in the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps programme priorities also reflect the focus on promoting digital skills, while also

enhancing engagement, social inclusion and solidarity. Council of Europe's work in this field has focused both, on promoting the social rights of children and young people, while at the same time calling for the protection of rights within the digital environment and Internet safety.

At the national and local levels, the policies and initiatives addressing digitalisation and social inclusion range from countries which have clear and well-defined national policies or practical initiatives addressing digitalisation and young people's skills (Albania, Austria), countries in which digitalisation remains the area of formal education (Germany, Croatia), countries where National Youth Strategies refer to digitalisation and social inclusion of young people (Greece, Estonia, Malta, Ireland, Serbia) and even local authorities whose policies have clearly focused on development of digital skills of citizens (Tartu municipality, Estonia).

These legislative frameworks provide space and opportunities for municipalities, youth organisations, educational institutions and private entities to develop the initiatives, tools and platforms that can address social inclusion of young people in a digital context. While there are generic platforms at the European level, available to the youth sector at large, there are also specific platforms and tools for young people which offer support in the area of educational and professional guidance, information and counselling, health, dialogue and consultation, online safety and platforms specifically targeting marginalised young people, which mainly serve to facilitate people with disability in participation in society.

Moreover, there is an increase in educational and training opportunities that develop digital skills and support digital youth work. These concern opportunities for young people, which are mainly provided either through NGOs, youth centres or private entities, or government and educational institutions for developing basic ICT skills. The trainings are mainly delivered face to face, although materials are also provided online, covering basic digital skills, online safety and in some cases programming.

Digital programmes and education opportunities for youth workers, teachers and other youth practitioners, consider the opportunities for educators in formal education and also opportunities for youth workers, mainly on the topic of using digital tools in youth work, cyber-bullying and online safety.

The development of digital tools and platforms, and their proliferation in youth work carry numerous opportunities and risks associated with use of digitalisation towards social inclusion. Youth work can reach more young people, identify their needs and priorities better, offer personalised information and

guidance, support education system and digital media, tools, apps and methods can be incorporated into any type of youth work. On the other hand, young people benefit from new technologies in the various areas, including health, mental health and wellbeing, communication and information, participation and decision-making, creativity and self-expression.

Nonetheless, youth sector should also be aware of the risks of digital work for young people, such as cyber-bullying, issues of privacy and data protection, existence of harmful online content and information bubbles and need for development of critical thinking and critical analysis of the information available online.

While the analysis indicates that there is a potential for utilising digital tools towards social inclusion, it is important to reiterate that the existing tools and platforms are not necessarily developed with the purpose of social inclusion of young people, and very few initiatives target youth with multiple disadvantages. In order to take advantage of the new technologies and explore digital solutions towards fostering social inclusion:

- European, national and local authorities should devise and adopt policies and strategies that support access/connectivity and Internet safety, and facilitate use of digital opportunities for social inclusion
- Youth workers and educators should take advantage of and actively seek opportunities for developing their digital skills and competences
- Youth workers and educators should explore opportunities for social inclusion of marginalised young people through digital youth work
- Young people should be involved as partners and co-creators in development of new platforms, tools and approaches for social inclusion through digital means
- Strategies should be developed at all levels and by a variety of stakeholders to mitigate potential risks of digitalisation for young people, particularly those already at risk of exclusion
- Cross-sectorial cooperation should be emphasised between governments, transnational and local authorities, and civil society organisations, youth sector, ICT companies, private sector and young people.

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Appendix I - Secondary Analysis of VIth Cycle of Structured Dialogue Youth Survey Data: Social inclusion and digitalisation

Introduction

This review presents a secondary analysis of data gathered through questionnaires collected by National Working Groups and International Youth Non-Governmental Organisations through the VIth Cycle of Structured Dialogue. It was compiled into a single European dataset by Barta and Moxon (2018)[1] on behalf of the European Steering Group and Trio of Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies of the EU.

The survey was conducted in national languages and was distributed independently by National Working Groups using a variety of means including online approaches, distribution through schools and via youth centres and youth organisations. As a piece of youth consultation designed to support the development of Youth Goals, the administration and methodology[2] does not necessarily conform to rigorous research standards, particularly in the area of translation of questions. Nevertheless, the exceptionally large sample size and wide spread of countries, gives it potential to provide insightful data on the experiences of young people from minority backgrounds across Europe in relation to digitalisation.

Introduction to the analytical sample

According to Barta and Moxon (2018), starting from an original sample of over 28,000 responses, after data cleaning procedures and weighting the sample, 25,734 responses were further analysed from 18 European countries[3]; The weighting procedure was designed to ensure that the number of responses used from each country was proportional to the youth population (11-34) within that country, as some countries were substantially over represented in the original sample. In the final sample:

- o All respondents were aged 11-34.
- o 36.3% of respondents were male, 63.3% female, with 0.4% using the option "Other gender".
- o 14% of respondents indicated that they come from an ethnic minority background, about the same percentage indicated religious minority background, more than 19%

represented LGBTQIA+ community, more than 5% of the respondents were young disabled people.

- o In case of educational attainment, which is mostly represented by lower and higher secondary school graduates, only about 10% of respondents hold MA or higher university degrees.
- o Almost 47% of respondents were 18-year-old or younger, and 80% of the sample includes 24 year-olds or younger.

In the survey, it was possible to distinguish between variables based on ethnic and religious affiliation, sexuality, and disability[4]. The calculations by Barta and Moxon (2018) indicate that 38,8% of the respondents have some form of minority background.[5] [6]

A notable limitation of the sample in relation to this study in digitalisation is that with the exception of North Macedonia, the sample includes only countries from within the EU. This is unsurprising given that structured dialogue is an EU process.

Secondary analysis process

The original survey included nine questions relevant to digitalisation. These questions covered motivations for the use of web-based information, views on digital participation and preferences for media and information sources. All questions were based upon a five-point Likert scale, which was treated as continuous numerical data in line with Barta and Moxon (2018)'s original analysis.

A comparison of means using an independent samples t-test between respondents from participants from a minority background and non-minority backgrounds was conducted for each question. The exceptionally large sample size meant that all but one question showed statistically significant differences between responses from young people from minority backgrounds and non-minority backgrounds. However, a Hedge's G test indicated that in all but three cases the effect was almost negligible or very small. This means that although there were differences in responses between minority and non-minority groups that were not due to chance, these differences were generally small, and not likely to have an impact in the real world.

Within these three questions, preliminary analysis of responses by different equalities (e.g. religious minorities compared to non-religious minorities, sexual minorities to non-sexual minorities. etc) showed

that further statistical testing was unlikely to show substantial patterns which differed from the main findings. Preliminary analysis of comparisons by country group also indicated no obvious trends that varied with geography.

Results

There was a distinct pattern when looking at how young people from minority backgrounds used online sources to access truthful (in their view) information. Young people from minority backgrounds found social media and general internet searches more important than those from majority backgrounds. However, the reverse was true when considering Government websites. This may indicate a preference of accessing a range of sources and peer-to-peer messages rather than accepting official Government information. Considering that many people from minority groups may consider themselves excluded or unrepresented within official or dominant narratives, this potentially indicates the importance of the proliferation of news sources in the online world, and the value this has to people from minority backgrounds. There was no significant difference when corporate websites were considered however, and as the effect size for responses to these questions is very small, differences may be inconsequential in practice.

Areas where more substantial effects were seen were the importance young people from minority backgrounds placed on web-based sources when trying to overcome stressful situations such as having relationship trouble, feeling stressed or depressed and when learning how to discuss things peacefully with people who hold very different opinions. This potentially highlights the greater value that engaging in online dialogue and interaction may play for young people from minority backgrounds, than young people from majority backgrounds. Quite distinct from the consumption of news, it shines a light on the potential of digitalisation to enable communication and interaction between groups that might otherwise be more isolated and disconnected. Interestingly though, being from a minority background had no substantial effect on participants desire to use web-based sources for career advice or to set life goals.

Perhaps in support of this assumption the results also showed that online participation tools were more important to young people from minority backgrounds than those from non-minority backgrounds for engaging in public issues. This may support the widely held belief that such tools are generally more accessible and can be used for greater outreach.

Data tables

Q29 G How important are the following sources of support to you when you are trying to overcome stressful situations (e.g. having relationship trouble, feeling stressed or depressed)		
Web-based information sources (e.g. websites for young people, websites on mental health, etc.)		
Young people from minority backgrounds	Young people from majority backgrounds	Results (equal variances not assumed)
n= 4627 mean= 3.88 Std dev = 1.168	n= 9145 mean= 3.59 Std dev = 1.205	t= 14.782 df= 9545.678 Sig 2 tailed = 0.000 Hedges' g = 0.268299.
Q31e How important are the following options when learning how to discuss things peacefully with people who hold very different opinions (e.g. on upcoming elections, on EU affairs, etc.)? Websites (e.g. communication training websites, etc.)		
Young people from minority backgrounds	Young people from majority backgrounds	Results (equal variances not assumed)
n= 4295 mean= 3.82 Std dev =1.141	n= 8235 mean= 3.60 Std dev = 1.133	t= 10.030 df= 8656.671 Sig 2 tailed = 0.000 Hedges' g = 0.193718.
Q39b How important is the following to you when it comes to engaging in public issues (e.g. local politics, general decision making, etc.)? Online participation tools (e.g. signing a petition online, voting online, etc.)		
Young people from minority backgrounds	Young people from majority backgrounds	Results (equal variances not assumed)

n= 4487	n= 8573	t= 9.689
mean= 4.27	mean= 4.10	df= 9185.283
Std dev = 0.930	Std dev = 0.939	Sig 2 tailed = 0.00
		Hedges' g = 0.182796.

Q 30 Could you tell us how important are the following sources to you when you are trying to find truthful information (e.g. on everyday events, on upcoming elections, on EU affairs, etc.)?

30i Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Young people from minority backgrounds	Young people from majority backgrounds	Results (equal variances assumed)
n= 2639	n= 9152	t=5.515
mean= 3.54	mean= 3.38	df=11789
Std dev = 1.293	Std dev = 1.259	Sig 2 tailed = 0.00
		Hedges' g = 0.126302.

Q 30 Could you tell us how important are the following sources to you when you are trying to find truthful information (e.g. on everyday events, on upcoming elections, on EU affairs, etc.)?

30f General internet searches (e.g. whatever you find in google results, etc.)

Young people from minority backgrounds	Young people from majority backgrounds	Results (equal variances assumed)
n= 2355	n= 8408	t=1.968
mean= 4.01	mean= 3.96	df= 10760
Std dev = 1.054	Std dev = 1.053	Sig 2 tailed = 0.49
		Hedges' g = 0.132926

Answer options on all questions:	
Likert scale	**Assigned numerical score**

Very important	5
Important	4
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Unimportant	2
Very unimportant	1
Can't judge / don't know	Excluded from analysis

[1] Barta and Moxon (2018) Structured Dialogue VI Cycle National Consultations: Quantitative Data Analyses. European Youth Forum. Brussels.

[2] Moxon and Barta (2018) The VI Cycle of Structured Dialogue Consultation Introduction to the Final Reports. European Youth Forum. Brussels.

[3] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom,

[4] Following items were asked: Do you consider yourself to be …

-                 -   … part of an ethnic minority.

                 -         … part of a religious minority.

                 -         … lesbian, gay bisexual or any sexuality other than heterosexual.

                 -         … disabled.

[5] Referred to by Barta and Moxon (2018) as young people from minority backgrounds (financial aspects excluded)

[6] Although Barta and Moxon (2018) did not include young people who identified as "other gender" they identify participants who selected this option were also overrepresented in other minority categories and the number of respondents selecting this gender option was too low to impact significantly on statistical calculations.

APPENDIX II - Survey results

Table 2: Platforms/Tools Mainly Addressed to Young People

Country	Platforms/tools mainly addressed to young people	Category
Albania	The National Platform www.ISIGURT.al serves to inform children, youth, parents and teachers on Internet use and also provides tips and guidelines on digital world, how to navigate, what is out there and how youth can benefit. The platform, available also on the android phones, has a reporting mechanism in place, if children and youth would like to report cases related to security, safety and abuse. The platform cooperates with the National Child Helpline, which provides children and youth with counselling through chat.	Safety online/ Helpline
Austria	AHA+: Young people can gain professional experience by working in social institutions and collecting points and rewards to validate their work via the online platform: https://www.aha.or.at/plus. The platform is available for young people and organisations, and also contains information about workshops and trainings.	Professional/ job related
Belarus	"I do it myself" is a mobile application developed by "SOS-Children's Villages". This is a guide for young people in their transition to independent living. "Work is cool" is a mobile application developed by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union. The main purpose of the mobile application is to provide young people with job opportunities.	Professional/ job related
Belgium	Watwat.be - Wat Wat is an information and outreach online platform addressed to young people, coordinated by the non-profit organisation the Ambrassade with the support of the Flemish Government.	Information & Counselling
Croatia	"Pretezno vedro" is an app developed by a regional Center for public health. It is intended for children and young people with the purpose of promotion of mental health.	Mental health

Estonia	www.Teeviit.ee is a youth information platform and tool designed for young people to analyse the gained professional experience and support them in developing a CV.	Professional/ job related
	www.Enesetunne.ee is an online platform aiming to lower the tensions/stress, prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviour, deal with depression and monitor sleep. There are separate information pages designed for young people, specialists working with young people and parents. The platform also includes links to different relevant apps. www.Peaasi.ee is a platform for information about mental health, counselling and trainings.	Mental health
	www.Amor.ee is a platform for information about sexual health, counselling and trainings.	Reproductive health
	www.Suurimjulgus.ee is a counselling and information platform regarding bullying in school and cyber-bullying. The platform is available for school children, parents and teachers, offering various resources and e-lessons. The English version of the platform is https://greatestcourage.ee/.	Safety online and (Cyber)Bullying
	Narko.ee is an information and counselling platform regarding drug abuse; Tubakainfo.ee is an information web page for smokers, which also includes information that is specifically aimed at young people; Noored.alkoinfo.ee is an information and counselling platform regarding alcohol abuse.	Substance and alcohol abuse
	Nopi Üles is a program to support youth (7-26 years old) in developing ideas that are aimed at community development.	Support for community involvement
Finland	"SEKASIN-chat" is an online platform that helps young people anonymously on the questions regarding mental health and wellbeing.	Mental Health
Germany	GameOver Hate is an initiative addressed to gamers' communities promoting a non-violent online behaviour, no-hate speech and no gender bias attitude.	Safety online/ Hate Speech

Ireland	Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop. Random App of Kindness promotes empathy in children by using 9 mini-games, each of which are based on scientifically established ways of promoting aspects of empathy.	Counselling and empowerment
	MigApp is an application designed by the International Organisation for Migration, supporting migrants to have accurate and comprehensive migration-related information, and access to IOM programmes and services.	Information (immigration related)
	miFuture App is focused on supporting young jobseekers by connecting them to jobs.	Professional/ job related
	Assist Ireland has compiled a range of apps that support people with disabilities to participate in the digital world and use digital tools.	Inclusion of people with disabilities
Malta	"Kellimni.com" is an online support service run by trained staff and volunteers reachable through email, chat and smart messaging 24/7 for support.	Information and counselling
	"BeSmartOnline!" is co-funded by the European Union through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and forms part of INSAFE and INHOPE – the European network of Safer Internet Centres and hotlines respectively, that aims at empowering and protecting children and teens online from risks associated with online activity, through numerous awareness raising initiatives and by fighting illegal and harmful content (particularly online child abuse) and behaviour online (Besmartonline.org.mt). Students can also report an online abuse.	Safety online/ Helpline

	Office 365 offers a number of accessibility tools, which caters for various accessibility needs, including, among others: - Vision: Use a screen reader and keyboard shortcuts with Office. - Focus: Learning Tools can improve comprehension (e.g. Immersive Reader, included in OneNote Learning Tools, is a full screen reading experience to increase readability of content in OneNote documents).	Inclusion of people with disabilities (generic software)
	Star Kids is a programme (to be implemented in the recent future) aiming to enhance active inclusion for children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, either residing in the community or in residential care. Children are given an opportunity to gain practical ICT skills that are relevant for them to improve the quality of the educational experience. The project will kick off with a study to understand the dynamics of the gaps that exist in terms of ICT skills and tools. It will proceed with the development of an appropriate training programme and eventually with the provision of ICT tools and facilities as well as the delivery of the training. Parents/Caregivers will also be brought on board to support children's participation. In parallel, a study will be undertaken to assess the results of the project in order to contribute towards lessons learned for future planned interventions.	Education/ training
Romania	Save the Children Romania manages the Romania Safer Internet Center and children Helpline, as part of the INSAFE network. www.FaraFrica.RO (No Fear) is an online platform supporting children to overcome cyber-bullying, which also engages influencers/vloggers as role models and promoters.	Safety online/ Helpline

Serbia	Centar Srce - Center for the Provision of Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention in cooperation with VegaIT company from Novi Sad, created an app in order to prevent and inform the general public about suicide. The application provides help to people who are in an emotional crisis, as well as information on ways to contribute to suicide prevention. Krug zdravlja (Circle of health) is the application which offers anonymity, recognition of symptoms, techniques for overcoming certain conditions, Ask Psychologist, information about disorders, psychological tests, video workshops, forums, organization of various events and much more. In 2017 application won first prize at "European youth Award" in Healthy life category.	Mental Health
	Posao za mlade (Work for youth) is the platform designed to enable young people to access the latest information from the labour market including job and practice ads, relevant business news, and employment advice and starting their own business.	Professional/ job related
	As a part of the Structured Dialogue, National Youth Council of Serbia developed an online platform to foster youth participation in decision-making processes: www.dijalog.rs	Consultation/ EU Structured Dialogue
	Belgrade Open School implemented VIVET project (Virtual Internships in Vocational Education and Training) where an innovative platform is produced to provide youth with disabilities to do their internships using online tools.	Education Inclusion of young people with disabilities
Slovak Republic	IPčko – Internetová poradňa pre mladých / Internet youth counselling provides online, free and anonymous psychological and social help for young people. During the 2018, representatives of "IPčko" spoke with 13 000 young people via online chat or email and advised them on various topics and problems.	Information and Counselling

	IPčko has created also a project called "Dobrá Linka" ("Good line"), which is a psychological internet counselling tool for young people with health disabilities. It creates a safe space for young people with disabilities to share their problems and thoughts with professional psychologists.	Inclusion of young people with disabilities
	„Online Human Library" is an initiative using an online environment to bring various topics and storytelling closer to young people. These stories are divided into 7 categories - life with disabilities, poverty, people and nationalities, adoptions, volunteering, education and life with disease.	Creativity Information
	"Digital technologies for good" is a grant scheme operated by a Slovak mobile operator. In 2019, the fund has supported 5 projects aiming at: a) developing a mobile application for children and parents with hearing and speaking disabilities; b) developing an application that will be able to guide the visually impaired people with voice information for their better orientation outdoors; c) creating a web-platform for physically disadvantaged people, where they can find information about events that are accessible to them; d) help for mentally disadvantaged people and people that have problems with communication abilities by creating a special communication software. Online translator is a service provided by a Slovak mobile operator. They have created the platform in 2015 in order to help people with hearing loss or hearing impairment with communication. Service is based on the online connections with interpreters.	Inclusion of people with disabilities
	Campaign „BLIND TRIPS" is a project of the Open Society Foundation in Slovakia in cooperation with a popular Slovak influencer (Youtuber): Selassie. Its aim is to raise awareness and tolerance between teenagers by showing them real life of their peers that might be or used to be in the difficult situations or conditions, such as a refugee camp, a Roma village, and former concentration camp.	Information/ Inclusion of young people with disadvantaged backgrounds

Sweden	Living History Forum (Forum för levande historia) is run by a Swedish public authority that works with issues on tolerance, democracy and human rights. They provide educational materials on issues such as racism, tolerance, and being a Bystander. They also have a digital tool presenting LGBT-persons rights.	Information Minority groups rights
	www.Umo.se is a nation-wide digital youth guidance centre, financed by all Swedish regions. Young people (13-25 years old) can get guidance about the body, sexuality, relationships, mental health, alcohol and drugs and self-esteem. There is a special digital youth guidance centre – www.youmo.se - targeting newly arrived young people, offering partly the same information as umo.se (human rights, the body, sexuality, relationships, mental health etc.), in several languages such as English, Arabic, Dari, Somali, Swedish and Tigrinya. Youmo.se targets young migrants in Sweden, but has actually also reached out to young people in their countries of origin, where information of this kind is not available.	Information and counselling Health Integration of young immigrants
	www.ungdomar.se is a digital service for all young people, who are offered professional support with a broad field of issues - from health/mental health, eating disorders, bullying, social problems (own or in close relations or family), religion, relations and economy.	Health Information and counselling
	www.mind.se is an internet service for those who suffer from suicidal thoughts, anxiety and depression. The service is open to anybody, including young people with mental health issues, and parents. https://dinarattigheter.se/ is a service for those young people at risk for honour-based violence and oppression. It also gives advice for teachers who have students who may be at risk.	Mental health
	www.friends.se supports young people who are being bullied, either offline or through social media. They also provide trainings and support teachers and youth workers.	Cyber(Bullying) Helpline

Switzerland	www.ciao.ch/www.tschau.ch is an online platform for 11-20 year olds which provides information to young people about various topics of their concern, including employment, money, health, sexuality, use of internet, religion, beliefs, discrimination racism, violence and substance abuse. It also has an online forum for young people to connect, ask specialists and if needed contact emergency helplines.	Information and counselling
Ukraine	The application Free2ask aims to provide professional psychological and medical support to teenagers and young people. It can be used to ask for help, find answers on sensitive questions about sexuality, the impact of drugs or to receive assistance in case of violence. The application was developed by the International Fund "Public Health Alliance" and the All-Ukrainian charity foundation "FULCRUM" with the support of the World Childhood Foundation in cooperation with the Elton John AIDS Foundation.	Health Information and counselling
	BeWarned Dance, BeWarned Connect and ConnectPRO are three applications developed by the start-up "BeWarned Company", established in 2015. BeWarned Dance allows people with hearing impairments to dance to their favourite songs. BeWarned Connect also allows deaf and hearing-impaired people to communicate with others. BeWarned Connect PRO app is a part of the Connect PRO technical solution to make business Deaf Friendly. BeWarned Connect PRO enables communication with deaf and hard of hearing clients. The start-up develops services that help people with hearing impairments to solve everyday problems. One of the company's founders is a hearing-impaired programmer Vitaly Potapchuk. The start-up guarantees that all the developments are pre-tested by an audience with deaf and hard of hearing. The BeWarned team has released the following materials: Link: https://dou.ua/lenta/articles/dou-projector-bewarned/, Video: https://www.producthunt.com/posts/connect-by-bewarned	Inclusion of young people with disabilities (hearing)
	Project "Underage, overlooked: Improving access to integrated HIV services for adolescents most at risk in Ukraine" - uses social media platforms and messengers (Instagram, Telegram, Viber) to engage young people into the	Reproductive health

	project activities and improve their access to services. The project is implemented by the International Charitable Foundation "AIDS Foundation East-West" (AFEW-Ukraine) and funded by Expertise France 5% Initiative. http://afew.org.ua/en/project/underage-overlooked-improving-access-to-integrated-hiv-services-for-adolescents-most-at-risk-in-ukraine/	
United Kingdom	Mind Of My Own (MOMO) creates accessible apps for advancing children's universal rights, in order to support the Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A range of apps support young people in communicating their views and feelings on education, health and care; and supporting children and young people with additional needs to use digital tools to express themselves.	

Table 3 - Platforms/tools addressed to youth workers and other youth professionals

Country	Platforms/tools addressed to youth workers and other youth professionals
Austria	Inclusive Education – IncluEdu is a strategic partnership of leading European Educators and Researchers who collectively have a unique expertise in the field of ICT and inclusive learning. IncluEdu, with the support of EU project funding, has developed a range of competence based-courses that enable European Educators to use tablets and mobile devices to activate and empower their learners. Information Bots of the Youth Information Services in Austria
Estonia	Suurimjulgus.ee is a platform to communicate the importance of bullying-free environment, counselling the bullied, information for parents and specialists working with young people. Mitteformaalne.ee is a web platform about non-formal learning including information regarding non-formal learning, schooling and study materials and trainers' contacts. Estonian Youth Work Centre has prioritized cooperation and ICT in several funding schemes for open youth centres and hobby schools.
Finland	Verke promotes Finish and Estonian youth work, highlighting the work done by various youth workers, such as Emilie Hanstrom writing about digital youth work among socially excluded youth in the Åland archipelago. Digital Youth Work: A Finnish Perspective also sets out some important progress in this area.

Ireland	The National Youth Council of Ireland has developed an online guide, gathering various examples of youth work: https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Screenagers-Guidance.pdf. These include: social platforms, maker tools, digital media and virtual reality tools, which carry the potential to be used to support social inclusion. Webwise.ie offers parents information, advice and free education resources on internet safety issues and concerns. Ireland's National Parents Council Primary operates the parent/adult helpline to deal with issues relating to internet safety, including cyber-bullying. The NPC also provides parents with training courses, both online and face-to-face.
Slovak Republic	OKO – Objav kompetencie online / Discover competencies online is an online game that offers insights and examples of youth work and volunteering. The online game provides players with experience of how youth work can look like, what can be done through youth work and which competencies can be developed. The project has been created by the organization "Kaspian" in cooperation with organizations "Scouting" and "Inex". Project „Good Line " organized by IPčko may be considered as the best example of connecting digitalisation and social inclusion within the youth work in Slovakia, providing a psychological internet counselling tool for young people with health disabilities. It creates a safe space for young people with disabilities to share their problems and thoughts with professional psychologists.

Table 4: Online Platforms developed by public authorities

Country	Online platforms developed by public authorities
Austria	Digitalroadmap is an institutional tool that monitors the digital progress in Austria.
Estonia	From 2015–2023 the programme "Inclusion of youth at risk of social exclusion and improvement of youth employability" is implemented. The programme is approved by the Ministry of Education and Research and co-financed by European Social Fund. The main goal is to provide access to youth work for more young people and involve young people at risk of exclusion. The Youth Prop Up programme (part of the wider programme) targets young people (7–26 years old) who are not currently involved in any kind of academic study, employment or training, using the Logbook system (developed by KEKS) for documenting the process of working with the target group. Youth Guarantee monitoring is a tool operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs is meant for local municipalities to search national registers to get information about young people (16–26 years old) who according to the registers might face the risk of exclusion. Social work specialist in the local municipality can then contact the young people to inform them about the support measures on approval and interest of young person. Other platforms, which are not youth specific include: - osale.ee; volis.ee, eis.ee, which are national/local government institutions web-based platforms for participation, consultation and public discussions over draft acts, as well as for public proposals. - Petitsioon.ee is a petitions platform for citizens' campaigns. - CitizensOS is a collective decision-making platform for citizens.

Greece	The Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality (KEDITH-EYC 2014) launched a digital platform for the Participatory Budgeting for Youth (http://www.kedith.gr/en/youthparticipatory-budget) with an aim to provide (financial) support to youth NGOs and youth groups and their projects (one out of the ten thematic priorities of the participatory budgeting was the social inclusion).

Table 5: Digital Programmes or Educational opportunities offered to young people

Country	Digital programmes or educational opportunities offered to young people
Austria	Workshops by Safer Internet: https://www.saferinternet.at/ Lost in Information Workshops by the Austrian Youth Information Services.
Estonia	Noorte Tugila programme is a Youth Guarantee Support System, as part of EU youth guarantee program for youth not in education, employment or training (NEET). The program is aimed at 15-26 years old young people who are not in education, employment or training. As part of the program, support is offered for youth as well as for the specialist working with youth is offered (trainings, networking).
Finland	Support for NEET-youth digital skills (as part of a researcher's Master's Thesis)- is a pilot project executed in one of Vamos Helsinki's groups, which provides coaching to NEET-youth between ages 16 and 29. The project allowed addressing many different topics concerning digitalisation, based on EU DigComp 2.0's digital competences. As a result of the project, three broader themes emerged: 1) increased enthusiasm and interest regarding digitalisation; 2) development in identifying one's skills and shortcomings; and 3) learning and developing new skills. The data collected during the project displayed the effectiveness of the development activities. Furthermore, the results showed that these issues could be handled and developed as a part of the training. Overall, the most important outcome of the projects was the increased enthusiasm and interest regarding digitalisation - it helps youth to develop their digital skills independently and it also supports lifelong learning.

Ireland	The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022 provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. Administered by Pobal and funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development, it also receives funding from the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.
	An ESRI report (2018) reported that "Some local community government (LCGs) members indicated that social media and technology provide them with a set of digital tools to communicate and connect more efficiently and inexpensively with wider networks for support and/or to raise awareness. The use of social media and websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Survey Monkey, was proposed to aid measurement of engagement for LCGs in order to easily record and monitor the interactions between individuals and groups using hits, likes, surveys, polls and video views".
	NewKD Techspace is a project funded under SICAP managed to open a creative space where young people were inspired to create produce and have fun with digital technology.
Romania	Atelierul Digital/Digital Workshop provided by Google promotes digital skills, based on the Google tools (available for university students).
	Private trainings are provided by non-profits or companies for a fee, covering topics from programming, robotics or other advanced STEM topics.
	Formal education (schools) provide basic ICT skills starting with the 5th grade - until the 8th grade. Starting with 2018 programming classes have also been introduced in schools.
	Digital Citizens Romania (non-profit), together with many other organisations, organised during the years events for children, teachers or parents as part of EU Code Week (basic digital skills, basic coding using Scratch or Code.org).
	Save the Children Romania (non-profit) offers trainings on media and digital literacy for children and young people (up to 18 years old).

Slovak Republic	IUVENTA-Slovak Youth Institute as a state-subsidy budget organization directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak republic, offers various educational and training courses for young people and youth workers. Some of these courses aim at the topic of social inclusion or are directly designed for people from disadvantaged environments (for example courses for young Roma leaders). All of these courses are inclusive and accessible. Firstly, because they are financed from the state budget and secondly because there is a space to include special assistants or interpreters if needed. All of the study materials are provided online.
Sweden	All national and local government authorities provide all information digitally. It is in the first hand the responsibly of formal education to introduce media literacy to all young people, from preschool and compulsory school levels up to upper secondary education.
UK	Voices 4 Impact is an innovative listening platform for amplifying young people's voices across the UK. The platform was developed by The Bytes Project, a community youth organisation in Northern Ireland, which supports young people with a safe space to learn and develop their skills.

Table 6: Digital programmes and educational opportunities offered to youth workers, teachers or other specialists

Country	Digital programmes and educational opportunities offered to youth workers, teachers or other specialists
Armenia	KASA foundation (a Swiss funded entity) manages resources and online platform designed for informing and training youth workers.
Belarus	Distance Learning Platform of the EDU-HUB of the Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs. EDU-HUB objectives are as follows: -provision of information and technical support for specialists working with adolescents and young people at-risk; -organising exchange of the experience and best practices in working with adolescents and young people at risk in the context of counselling and HIV testing; -widening opportunities for communication of most-at-risk adolescents and young people and their inclusion in the processes of counselling and dialogue in the development of new programs and projects in the field of health protection and promotion. Source: http://www.belau.info/moodle/index.php?lang=en_utf8
Belgium	Lifelong learning platform implements a training programme for youth workers and volunteers to empower disadvantaged young people and involve them more in their communities. It also aims to bridge mainstream institutions who offer youth services with more marginalised communities (through youth work). The training programme was based on a competence framework for community "animateurs" and includes three key areas: emotional competences, specific animateur competences, and digital competences. Yearly event "Dig It Up" (organised by De Ambrassade & Cultuurconnect) aims at supporting youth work and cultural organisations in their search for digital possibilities.
Estonia	The Youth Agency, which is responsible for national training programmes for the youth workers, is organizing trainings about smart youth work.

Greece	Government supports educational and training programmes (supporting non-formal education and youth work) for youth workers who work in social inclusion contexts and also thematic seminars (such as preventing violence, improving living conditions and gender equality) and study sessions (on the subject of non-discrimination and active citizenship), as well as post-graduate programmes with a digital dimension. They take into consideration the specific situations and needs of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to prevent and eradicate poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion. There are also seminars related to the impact of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its implementation for NGOs, in terms of digital challenges and human rights.
Ireland	The National Youth Council of Ireland promotes the use of STEAM and Digital Youth work, through a range of innovative initiatives. Ireland has a Digital Learning Framework for Schools and Post-Primary Schools The Statements of Practice are underpinned by the UNESCO ICT CFT and informed by the EU Joint Research Centre DigCompEdu and DigCompOrg frameworks. Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) has issued a Strategy for technology-enhanced learning in further education and training.
Malta	As a part of the compulsory education, the Ministry for Education and Employment's Digital Literacy Community of Professional Educators (COPE) delivered sessions for educators using "Clickers" and other Special Educational Needs (SEN) hardware and software. The Ministry for Education and Employment supported educators to take part in an online course "Bullying not in my class" (Reference: Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills (DDLTS, Circular 8 of Year 2019). Additionally, in October 2018 the Digital Literacy team within the Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills (DDLTS) - Ministry for Education and Employment contributed to developing a Core Curriculum Programme (CCP) at one of Malta's colleges with marginalised or at-risk students.

As part of the BeSmartOnline! project in Malta, Social and Career Development (PSCD) Education Officers have developed a series of workbooks to help teach young people digital citizenship skills. The aim of the workbooks is development of 21st century digital citizenship skills from a very young age. The workbooks are designed to be interactive, fun and thought provoking, and are used as an important tool in teaching students to learn how to communicate and collaborate safely and responsibly online.

Romania	**Techsoup Association Romania** - Îndreptar Digital (EN: "Digital Handbook") was developed as a response to a society where the teachers are stigmatised about not keeping up with the realities of the modern age and technology. Primary school teachers play a vital role in children's most formative education, but currently, in Romania, they are hardly prepared to teach their students about the digital and online environment. "Digital Handbook" helps primary school teachers (mostly from rural Romania or from small urban communities of up to 50,000 people) educate children, as well as parents and local communities, about taking advantage of mobile technology and freely-available online tools and services as a means to learn, gain access, get ahead and come together as a community. The program also stresses the importance of responsible behaviour online and critical thinking about the Internet. Using blended learning methods, the program creates opportunities for teachers to build an active learning environment in their classes regardless of children's social and economic status, and also to improve school-community relations. **Digitaliada** offers trainings for school teachers - complementary with an online platform/hub where online resources are available for most subjects, enabling teachers to use better digital tools and pedagogical materials. **Save the Children Romania** -Ora de Net/Internet Hour project promotes internet safety among Romanian parents, teachers and specialists by creating public awareness campaigns, by offering informative sessions, trainings, and by improving educational methods used in schools. It aims to combat illegal or harmful content and internet-related offences (child sexual abuse material (CSAM), grooming), to encourage the responsible use of the internet and new communication technologies by children, parents and teachers, and to influence decision making by bringing together key stakeholders in formulating and implementing realistic policies.

| Sweden | There are training programmes available for those who in their profession get in contact with young migrants, to provide them with information on how to use and introduce youmo.se. The training itself is not digital, but it aims for learning to use the digital tool. |

[1]Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovak Republic, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom

[2] Appendix I - Secondary Analysis of Vith Cycle of Structured Dialogue Youth Survey Data: Social inclusion and digitalisation

[3] The first meeting of the Steering Group on Social Inclusion of young people and digitalisation took place in Brussels on 8-9 April 2019, in order to examine the objectives of the research and provide guidance on most relevant questions and trends.

[4] The following Eurostat data sets have been consulted: "Individuals' level of computer skills", "Individuals' level of Internet skills", "Individuals internet use". The data sets have been analysed for the age group 16-29 years old, in all EU member states.

[5] Structured Dialogue is a means of mutual communication established by the European Union, between young people and decision-makers in order to implement the priorities of European youth policy cooperation and to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process It is now known as the Youth Dialogue.

[6] In the statistical analysis 'minority backgrounds' is defined as any young person self identifying as part of an ethnic minority, part of a religious minority, lesbian, gay bisexual or any sexuality other than heterosexual or disabled.