

MAD S



HANDBOOK

Models for Advancing the Digital Inclusion of Seniors

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AIM AND DESCRIPTION

Digital literacy has evolved from being a mere convenience into an essential requirement for engaging effectively in modern life. Whether it's accessing healthcare services from a distance or managing routine activities such as banking, travel, insurance, and local administrative tasks, digital literacy is a fundamental skill. Furthermore, it serves as a critical tool in addressing social isolation and diminishing loneliness, particularly among seniors dealing with health or mental challenges, limited mobility, or low income. In doing so, it addresses a substantial gap within the context of lifelong learning. In 2020, over one fifth (20.6%) of the EU population was aged 65 and above (source: Eurostat, 2021). Nevertheless, our efforts to deliver essential information technology training and digital competence education to elderly individuals have encountered significant obstacles in execution. These barriers encompass factors such as restricted internet availability, the challenge of reaching out to the older generation, particularly those who do not regularly use the internet, seniors' resistance to technology adoption, and a lack of awareness regarding suitable teaching approaches and content formats customised to their distinct requirements, cultural background, and social circumstances. Financial limitations compound the difficulty, as a considerable number of seniors face difficulties affording training programmes.

The project MADIS (Models for Advancing the Digital Inclusion of Seniors) establishes connections among adult education organisations from three distinct EU countries with the aim of fostering a varied and innovative approach to digital inclusion training for senior citizens. It is of great importance, particularly in European nations with a significant elderly population, such as the partnering countries of Germany, Italy, and Greece. Between 2011 and 2021, these countries saw an increase in the population aged 65 and over ranging from 1.3% to 3.2% according to Eurostat (2023). Furthermore, the cultural differences in how they integrate seniors into society vary significantly within and between the nations. This project aims to bridge the digital divide that disproportionately impacts senior citizens, a demographic growing in significance within our society. MADIS has made it its mission to identify and disseminate effective approaches to educational activities tailored for the digital inclusion of senior citizens, even in the face of significant implementation barriers.

- The primary goal was to collect insights into the factors that hinder seniors from attending training to acquire digital skills referred to as "implementation barriers." This involved conducting a survey in the partnering countries, Germany, Greece, and Italy, asking seniors 65 and over:
 - what has kept them from participating in digital training activities so far;
 - what is keeping them from using digital tools and online median;
 - what and how would they like to learn so there is a link to real-life needs.

The data was compiled into National Evaluations of each project partner and provides a comprehensive overview of the main implementation barriers and can be used to inform, guide and develop training interventions that will develop readiness and drive the digital inclusion of senior citizens.

- The next step encompassed gaining insight into effective digital education programmes designed for senior citizens in partner countries and beyond, specifically those that have effectively tackled the identified implementation barriers identified in the survey. The presented models incorporate inventive teaching methods,

outreach tactics, and funding strategies, including collaborations with local community centres, senior organisations, and residential care facilities. By highlighting these best practices, our goal is to equip adult education institutions and educators with the tools to more effectively address the digital divide among seniors, ultimately encouraging their involvement in digital education initiatives.

- Fundamentally, this project strives to establish a digitally inclusive society, with a particular focus on senior citizens by showcasing the 12 best practice models in this digital handbook and presenting how diverse countries have effectively surmounted the challenges hindering digital education for seniors.

This handbook highlights the importance of the pressing issue of addressing digital literacy among seniors and the wider population, aligning with the evolving needs of our contemporary world. It enhances the quality of life for numerous individuals and cultivates a sense of belonging and empowerment among the most vulnerable segments of our society. Through collaboration with international partners, we bring together a range of viewpoints and strategies, making it a genuinely pan-European endeavour.

1. SURVEY

1.1 AIM AND DESCRIPTION

The aim of the survey conducted as part of the MADIS project was to collect feedback regarding the reasons why senior citizens haven't been attending training classes aimed at developing and improving their digital skills. This was achieved by asking them the following questions:

- What factors have prevented them from participating in digital training activities so far?
- What barriers are keeping them from using digital tools and online media?
- What and how would they like to learn so there is a link to real-life needs?

It is important to note that the survey did not aim to comprehensively assess or standardize the interviewees' level of digital literacy, as this was beyond the project's scope. Instead, the primary goal was to identify the barriers preventing them from accessing and participating in training programs designed to enhance their digital literacy.

Participants had the option to complete the questionnaire either in person or through interviews. The questionnaire covered four areas: structural data, digital literacy, barriers to digital training activities, and learning needs, and contained these 32 questions:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Marriage Status
4. Education
5. Previous job
6. Living arrangements:

7. Mobility: (tick box if yes)
8. Do you have access to adequate public transport opportunities?
9. Place of residence:
10. Which of these devices do you own, and how often do you use them?
11. What is your relationship with these devices?
12. If you have a technical problem with a digital device, whom do you turn to?
13. (Only if you answered "NONE OF THESE") If you DON'T own any device, why?
14. Have you ever attended training courses on the use of any digital device (smartphone, pc/tablet, ...)?
15. If YES, could you give us some information?
16. If YES, how satisfied were you?
17. If YES, what did you like most?
18. Which of these social conditions could prevent you from attending a training course on the use of digital devices?
19. Which of these personal conditions could prevent you from attending a training course on the use of digital devices?
20. Which of these physical conditions could prevent you from attending a training course on the use of digital devices?
21. Which of these organisational characteristics could prevent you from attending a training course on the use of digital devices?
22. Has anyone ever explained to you the advantages of using digital devices?
23. Have you ever been asked to participate in a digital training course?
24. Which of these devices would you like to learn how to use?
25. Which of these functions would you like to learn how to use?
26. For which of these health promotion activities would you be interested in learning how to use digital devices?
27. For which of these everyday tasks would you be interested in learning how to use digital devices?
28. For which of these activities to combat loneliness and alleviate isolation would you be interested in learning how to use digital devices?
29. How much time per week would you be willing to put in to learn?
30. Would you be willing to invest money on a training course?
31. If YES, how much?
32. What would be the ideal conditions for you to participate in a training course (max. 3 answers)?

The gathered data underwent analysis using Excel and Google Data Studio, encompassing an examination of the primary research inquiries, including both closed and open-ended questions. This analysis also involved the application of cross-tabulations and filters to the outcomes. The results were presented in both quantitative forms, such as numerical representations through graphs, and qualitative forms through descriptive methods. Subsequently, this analysis resulted in three separate national evaluations, one for each partner country, which were then merged into a consolidated evaluation to convey the most pertinent and significant insights.

1.2 DEFINITIONS OF TARGET GROUP

The survey was carried out among a minimum of 30 senior citizens per partner country (Germany, Greece and Italy) for a total of more than 90 elderly persons. Because this survey aimed to delve deeply into a particular subject rather than extrapolate findings to an entire population, we selected a smaller number of participants without strict adherence to criteria of representativeness. However, we aimed to conduct the survey with 40% males and 60% females, categorising them into three age groups: 50% in the 65-70years range, 30% in the 70-75 years range and 20% aged over 75 years.

1.3. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results provided an understanding of implementation barriers identified and ranked by senior citizens. Only 40% of the Interviewed seniors had prior experience in digital training programmes, which typically lasted an average of 35 hours. These programmes primarily emphasised fundamental digital skills and were conducted at non-academic locations like community centres. Interestingly, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the programmes they took part in. The most highly valued aspects of these programmes were the quality of the instructors and the programme's format. This preference is also evident in the implementation barriers chosen by seniors in the survey.

To analyse the survey results the implementation barriers were categorised into four distinct groups: personal, social, physical, and organisational barriers.

Personal barriers are:

- not wanting to attend training courses with other people
- not being used to attending training courses
- topics being too difficult
- not being able to speak English well enough

Social barriers are

- having to look after other people
- not having enough money
- having no time

Physical barriers are:

- not being able to see well
- not being able to hear well
- not being able to sit for long
- various other physical or mental constraints

Organisational barriers are:

- having to take an admission test
- not having devices to bring to the course
- having to pay a fee to participate
- not having any means of getting to the course

Nearly half of the interviewed seniors felt that they encountered no specific barriers when it came to enrolling in training programmes. Conversely, the remaining respondents identified various barriers, including not having enough money (20 respondents), not having enough time (19 respondents) or having other family commitments that do that do not allow them to participate in training courses (20 respondents). Among the organisational barriers, the most prominent issue was the course cost, with 31 respondents highlighting this concern. Following closely were challenges related to access to digital devices and apprehension about potential admission tests.

The primary personal barrier entails a deficiency in English language proficiency required for comprehending digital applications, as reported by 33 respondents. Additionally, 18 respondents expressed discomfort with attending training courses, along with a prevalent perception of inadequacy in terms of skills and knowledge necessary for course participation. Remarkably, physical barriers appeared to have minimal impact overall.

The following list presents the implementation barriers and their rankings identified by the survey respondents.

OVERVIEW	BARRIERS	NR	%
PERSONAL BARRIER	I DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH WELL ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND ENGLISH COMMANDS/GUIDELINES USED TO EXPLAIN DIGITAL DEVICES	33	32,4
PERSONAL BARRIER	I HAVE TO PAY A FEE TO PARTICIPATE	31	30,4
SOCIAL BARRIER	I HAVE TO LOOK AFTER MY GRANDCHILDREN OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS	20	19,6
SOCIAL BARRIER	I DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO AFFORD IT	20	19,6
SOCIAL BARRIER	I HAVE NO TIME BECAUSE I HAVE MANY COMMITMENTS	19	18,6
PERSONAL BARRIER	I AM NOT USED TO ATTENDING TRAINING COURSES	18	17,6
PHYSICAL BARRIER	I CAN'T SIT FOR LONG	18	17,6
PHYSICAL BARRIER	I DON'T HEAR WELL	17	16,7
PERSONAL BARRIER	I DO NOT KNOW IF I AM ABLE TO ATTEND TRAINING COURSES ON THESE TOPICS	15	14,7
ORGANISATIONA L BARRIER	I HAVE TO TAKE A TEST TO BE ADMITTED TO THE COURSE	14	13,7
ORGANISATIONA L BARRIER	I HAVE TO BRING MY DEVICE WITH ME	14	13,7

PHYSICAL BARRIER	I DON'T SEE WELL	12	11,8
ORGANISATIONAL BARRIER	I HAVE NO MEANS OF GETTING TO A COURSE (NO ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT, NO DRIVER'S LICENSE, NO ONE TO DRIVE ME THERE, ETC.)	12	11,8
PERSONAL BARRIER	I DO NOT LIKE ATTENDING TRAINING COURSES WITH OTHER PEOPLE	7	6,9

In general, there appears to be a moderate level of interest among seniors in enrolling in training courses aimed at acquiring and enhancing digital skills. The barriers to implementation offer valuable and comprehensive insights for training providers looking to design and deliver courses that promote digital inclusion among seniors.

Ranked according to prevalence, the main implementation barriers identified by seniors that hinder their participation in digital training courses were:

- Language barriers related to understanding English commands and guidelines used to explain digital devices. These pose a significant hurdle for many seniors. Addressing language barriers through language support such as translated materials and English glossaries resources is essential.
- Fees associated with digital training courses deter seniors, especially those with limited financial means. Exploring funding options such as partnerships with funding and local organisations to reduce or waive course fees is recommended to enhance accessibility.
- Family commitments such as looking after grandchildren or other family members. These prevent some seniors from participating in training courses. Collaboration with organisations to provide childcare services can help alleviate this barrier as can flexible scheduling to accommodate varying availability, particularly for women with family commitments.
- Physical barriers, including limited mobility, hearing impairment and vision impairment. These barriers hinder some seniors from engaging in training activities. Ensuring course materials and facilities are accessible and providing information about transportation options is essential. Training providers could also forge partnerships with local organisations, such as libraries and work with local centres and organisations to promote easily accessible digital training opportunities, especially in rural areas. It might also make sense to offer flexible learning formats, including remote and in-person options and to ensure accessibility for seniors with physical impairments, for instance with comfortable seating and assistive technology.
- Personal barriers like a lack of familiarity with attending training courses and uncertainty about attending further deter seniors. To address these barriers, courses should be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of seniors, for instance by considering shorter durations of classes to prevent overwhelm, by offering smaller class sizes for personalised instruction or by offering them in proximity to seniors' homes for convenience. Also, creating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment, especially for seniors with preference for solo learning, might help overcome some of these personal barriers.

- Organisational barriers such as admission tests and the need to bring personal devices. These barriers discourage participation. Simplifying admission requirements, offering loaner devices and exploring flexible learning formats can mitigate these challenges.

Seniors expressed a strong interest in acquiring digital skills for practical purposes, such as communication with family and friends, accessing healthcare services and performing daily tasks like online banking. Digital training courses should align with these learning needs. Therefore, in order to facilitate the digital inclusion for seniors, adult education providers and other stakeholders involved in providing digital training to seniors should, among other things, develop tailored communication and outreach strategies that address the specific needs and interests of seniors based on demographic factors like gender, age or place of residence; emphasise the practical benefits of digital training courses, highlighting improved communication, healthcare access and daily life efficiency; and prioritise practical skills such as using PCs, smartphones and tablets for effective communication, accessing healthcare services, and managing daily tasks like online banking.

By tailoring their digital training courses to address these implementation barriers, adult education providers and educators can empower seniors - including the ones being affected the most by barriers such as seniors in rural areas with limited education and predominantly women - to enhance their digital literacy, improve their quality of life and participate more fully in today's digitally-driven society.

To learn more about the survey, please refer to the "Report on Implementation Barriers" made available on EPALÉ (Elektronische Plattform für Erwachsenenbildung in Europa - <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/de>) or on the MADIS website: <https://www.madisproject.eu/>.

2. BEST PRACTICES

3.1 AIM AND DESCRIPTION

This section provides a collection of best practices of digital training interventions aimed at seniors, which overcame one of several of the implementation barriers outlined above.

Collecting best practices is generally aimed at establishing and promoting methods and approaches that have been proven to be effective and efficient in a specific field of industry. The MADIS project partners conducted online research in various languages to compile a solid set of best examples in the area of digital training of seniors from across the world. The aim of this collection of best practices is to inspire and to strengthen the skills and knowledge of trainers and educators from the adult education sector and beyond, making it a valuable tool for teaching and professional development in the area of digital training interventions of seniors.

To ensure that each best practice example offers systematic and pertinent details and to also define what the best practices examples should *not* include, the project partners defined exclusion criteria. These criteria encompassed the following: courses offered exclusively in an online format, courses with a price exceeding 50 EUR, courses with a duration

of over 2 hours per session, courses designed for advanced skill levels, courses with excessively large student groups, and courses exclusively offered by government institutions.

Each best practice provides information on the organisation and its location and the programme's objectives, describes briefly the implementation barriers addressed, the outcomes received and lessons learned. Some best practices contain quotes from programmes' senior participants, educators, or programme affiliates highlighting the importance of such programmes and closing in on the digital divide in current society.

3.2 BEST PRACTICES

This handbook highlights 12 best practice models from Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Slovenia, United Kingdom and the United States of America, which have effectively addressed barriers hindering seniors from participating in digital training courses. Therefore, this handbook serves as an educational resource, designed to inform, influence and enhance training initiatives. By integrating these best practices into adult education programmes and other forms of training, organisations and educators can engage seniors in training courses and empower them with the digital skills and knowledge they need to participate fully in the digital age, fostering greater social inclusion and improved quality of life for older adults.

3. COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES

3.1 GERMANY

“Digital Kompass” | Germany

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal barriers: The various *Digital Kompass* (*Digital Compass*) locations provide a unique support structure which addresses personal barriers of seniors with visual and hearing impairments who want to improve their digital literacy (16,7% of survey respondents said that they “don’t hear well” and 11,8% said that they “don’t see well”). The *Digital Kompass* - by offering one-to-one sessions, small courses and exchange among seniors - also addresses the personal barrier based on “not being used to attending training courses with other people”.

Organisational barriers: Via its digital learning tandems, the *Digital Kompass* project also addresses mobility barriers such as limited access to public transport, no driver’s license, etc., a barrier which 11,8% of survey respondents quoted.

“Learning has no age limits”

Organisation

Funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection it is run by several organisations, among them: BAGSO (Voice of the Elderly), the association “Germany safely on the net”, the German Association for the Hearing Impaired, and the German Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Contact

BAGSO Service GmbH - Federal Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations
 Director of Digital Kompass
 braun@bagso-service.de

Website

[BAGSO](#)

Description

The *Digital Kompass* project has been running since 2016.

Locations: *Digital Kompass* runs local contact points across over 170 locations in Germany for people with hearing and visual impairments who are looking for support in using digital media and devices. Here, people with visual or hearing impairments, in particular also people aged 65 and over, can learn or improve their digital knowledge in formats such as one-on-one sessions, courses or joint exchange rounds. The on-site knowledge providers are specifically sensitised and qualified for the special needs of the target groups and can provide on-site counseling.

Digital learning tandems: Learning tandems are based on volunteers, who are often students from university. To prepare the participating students for volunteering, they go through e-learning modules, covering topics such as digital media in old age, working with sensory and mobility impairments, as well as communication, technical basics and methodological-didactic modules for promoting digital participation. A student and a digitally inexperienced person, who can register for this service, then form a team (“tandem”) and exchange knowledge based on personal preferences of the learner, for example by phone, thus also bringing intergenerational learning into old peoples’ homes.

Needs addressed

- Combat loneliness and alleviate isolation
- Promote mental health
- Manage everyday tasks

Further materials:

[Digital-Kompass | Materialien](#)

Lessons learnt

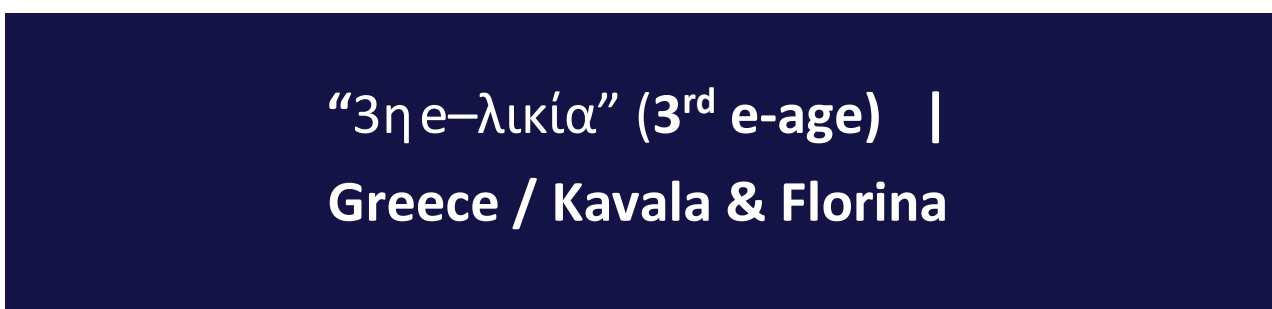
- Effective communication methods, such as clear and slow speech, and the provision of easy-to-read texts support participants’ accessibility.
- Participants of training courses report that they use their newly gained digital skills to, for example, find out about current issues, to make bookings online, to edit photos and stay in touch with their family, friends and acquaintances.

Special focus

The *Digital Kompass* recognises the importance of volunteer activities in fostering social interaction and provides inspiration and support to dedicated volunteers, such as students. It also offers comprehensive guidelines for the coordination of local contact points, covering topics such as accessible language, teaching concepts and operational aids.

All materials are barrier-free!

3.2 GREECE



Organisation

The Ministry of Digital Governance of Greece launched the *3rd e-age* initiative which aims at the Digital Empowerment of people aged 60+. The National Technology and Research Infrastructure Network (EDYTE S.A. – GRNET), a body of the Ministry of Digital Governance, designed and implements two individual actions: A. Operation of Digital Support Teams; B. Function of Digital Corners.

Implementation barriers addressed

Social and Organisational barriers: By offering free courses and conducting the lessons either using their own electronic equipment (mobile phone, tablet, laptop) or with the equipment of the Digital Assistant, the trainer of 3rd e-age addresses various implementation barriers specific to seniors such as “I do not have enough money to afford it”, which 19,6% of survey respondents mentioned, and “I have to bring my device with me” (13,7%).

Physical barriers: The 3rd e-age programme provides digital skills courses at training venues that are physically accessible and user-friendly for seniors with mobility or sensory impairments, thus addressing physical barriers such as “I can’t sit for long” (17,6%) and “I don’t hear well” (16,7% of survey respondents stated).

Description

The 3rd e-age, the new free digital training pilot programme, aims to support individuals aged 60+ lacking digital resources and skills to engage with “Digital Greece”. Specially trained Digital Assistants and instructors, offer personalised guidance with an educational focus, enabling participants to independently utilise digital services. Over the course of 6 months, 1,992 support and training sessions were conducted in two municipalities.

At Digital Corners the Digital Assistants provide full support and mentorship opportunities to help seniors acquire the required digital skills needed to avoid social exclusions.

Lessons learnt

The use of *gov.gr*, a new web portal of Greece, hosts every digital service of the Greek ministries, organisations, authorities and the country’s regions, which are already provided online and support the older population to independently use the following digital services provided by the public and private sector, among others:

- the internet navigation,
- the use of social media and
- the digital communication.

Some seniors, within the group of citizens 60+, find it difficult or are unable to follow the changes and benefit from technological developments. The support and empowerment of these citizens is an important priority of the state, so that they can respond and integrate into the digital age and make effective use of digital services.

Contact

The Friendship Clubs of the Municipality of Athens

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Contact person:

Mrs. Anna Kostopoulou

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Website

[3rd e-age](#)
[National Digital Academy](#)

“Technology is a gift that has value when it makes the lives of all of us better and easier - without exception.”

Needs addressed

The primary reasons for offering this project include:

- Reducing the digital divide
- Empowering seniors
- Providing access to information, services and healthcare data
- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- Promoting lifelong learning

Positive results

The changes brought about by the country’s digital transformation are significant. The use of digital services improves many areas of daily life and reveals a new reality for older citizens. Today, more than ever, the development of citizens’ digital skills is an important factor not only for the utilization of digital services but also for avoiding social exclusion.

“Our goal is for everyone to feel active and self-sufficient”

“Ψηφιακός γραμματισμός στην τρίτη ηλικία” (Digital Literacy for the Elderly) | Greece / Thessaloniki



Organisation

The *Digital Literacy for the Elderly* programme, a collaboration of NOESIS with the Independent Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support of the Region of Central Macedonia, is funded by the Region of Central Macedonia.

Within the framework of the programme, educational seminars are implemented both in the premises of NOESIS, and in the premises of the Municipalities and Communities of the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, but also in KAPI.

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal and social barriers: By providing free seminars to elderly citizens over 65+ in a specially designed library room using computers that were provided to the participants for their training, this programme successfully overcomes various personal barriers such as “not having enough money to afford courses” (19,6%) and “I have to bring my device with me” (13,7%). In the comfort of being able to bring their child or grandchild, aged from fourth grade and above, the programme tackles the personal barrier of “I am not used attending training courses” (17,6%) and the social barrier of “I have to look after my grandchildren” (19,6%). This model provides the elderly with confidence and trust of their ability to learn something new supported by a family member.

Description

The *Digital Literacy for the Elderly* programme acquaints the trainees aged 65 and over in an easy, understandable and entertaining way in basic processes and other digital applications. During the two years that the action lasted, a total of 40 seminars were held, which were attended by more than 380 people. Fifteen of them took place in the NOESIS library room.

The participants in the courses held at NOESIS had the opportunity to visit and take a guided tour of the permanent exhibitions, while they were offered refreshments and snacks. As part of the digital literacy action, twenty more courses were held in collaboration with municipalities of the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, but also in central locations, such as in the Alexandria Innovation Zone.

The aim of the programme was for those interested to become familiar with digital media and to be able to use it to communicate via the internet, both with the services and organisations, as well as with their relatives or their doctor.

Contact

Mrs. Claire Grigoroudi
Tel.+30 2310 483 000, ext. 126

Website: [Free Digital Literacy for Seniors - Information and Registration](#)

Needs addressed

- Developing the digital literacy of older people.
- Providing high quality learning opportunities tailored to older people
- Improving and strengthening social connections for older people

Further information:
[Meet NOESIS](#)

Video:
[Digital Literacy for the Elderly- NOESIS](#)

Lessons learnt

The courses/seminars have been developed in such a way that even users who are not computer and internet savvy can navigate through the e-gov portal, for instance to issue an affidavit, authorisation, enable a prescription, issue a public registry certificate or notarial acts.

The possibility of video conferencing with a KEP representative (MyKEPLive) was also introduced, so that the use of electronic procedures became even more accessible.

“The care and concern of the Region for the people of the Third Age are integral elements of its moral and political commitment, that it will leave no citizen alone, no one behind”

Positive results

During the course, the elderly successfully performed basic tasks digitally using a computer or other compatible portable device (e.g. mobile phone, tablet).

Participants learned, among other things, to issue responsible statements, authorizations, activate the possibility of intangible prescribing or to issue municipal certificates or notarial deeds. Also, the way of processing requests through a video conference with a representative of KEP (MyKEPLive) was presented.

The "students" of the small-member departments could use the NOISIS computers or tablets, while in the courses held in municipalities there was a similar provision.

**“Μάθηση μέσω υπολογιστή στην Τρίτη Εποχή”
(Computer Learning in the Third Age) |
Greece**



The familiarization of today's elderly with digital technology not only contributes to their psychosomatic health, but also constitutes an inalienable right to knowledge, to freedom of choice of information sources and to equal participation in social events, without age and racial exclusions

Organisation

The programme is implemented by the “University of Citizens” under the supervision of the Municipality of Larissa and started in 2021 and continues to this day.

Contact

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learning-city@larissa.gov.gr

Website

[Computer Learning in the Third Age - UNIVERSITY OF CITIZENS](https://www.universityofcitizens.gr/computer-learning-in-the-third-age)

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal and social barriers: The programme addresses personal and social barriers such as “not having enough money to afford courses” (stated by 19,6% of survey respondents) and “I have to pay a fee to participate” by being freely available. By providing short classes the programme also addresses the barrier “not having enough time because of many other commitments” (18,6%) the older people are engaged in.

Physical barriers: The courses offered are short (2 hours each, delivered two days a week), thereby addressing the barrier “I can’t sit for long” (17,6%% of respondents) allowing the seniors to learn the digital skills at their own pace

Description

The innovative programme, which is currently in its third phase, was implemented by the “University of Citizens” under the supervision of the Municipality of Larissa and started in 2021 and is still ongoing. The aim of the programme is to learn and strengthen the sociability of the Third Aged people in a pleasant and friendly environment.

200 adults over the age of 65 have participated in this specific action since 2021. The seminars are offered free of charge by volunteers, certified Adult Trainers, and held face to face 2 times a week with a duration of 2 hours each time (30 hours in total) in modern IT laboratories of the Municipality of Larissa.

Lessons learnt

Having Adult Trainers teaching the digital classes has helped the people of the Third Age understand how to use technology and create a favourable lifestyle for them.

It was of great importance to cover various needs the participants had to create a positive outcome for the programme, thus, some more in-depth topics that were covered were:

- Description and demonstration of internal part and peripheral devices of a computer,
- Analysing computer maintenance methods
- Understanding importance of safe surfing and supervision of children.

Needs addressed

Digital empowerment addresses various needs identified by the MADIS survey, including having a better quality of life, greater independence, better information, and above all greater social inclusion in society.

Further information:

[Facebook | Larissa Learning City - Η Πόλη που Μαθαίνει](#)

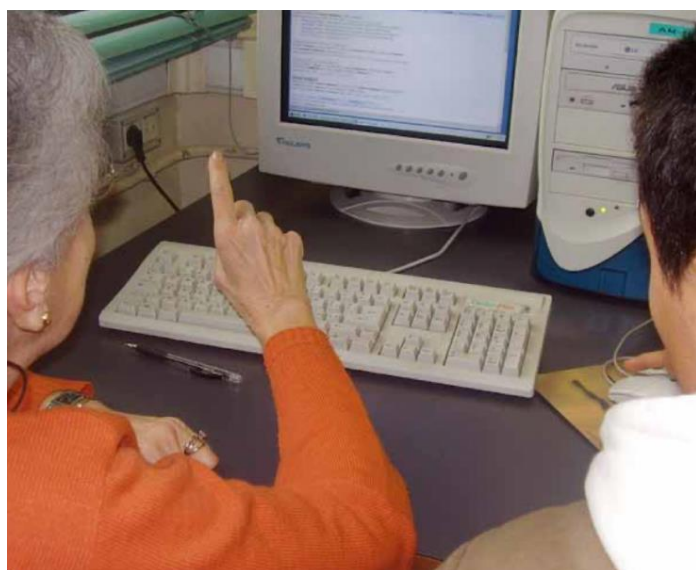
Positive results

The learning of digital skills and the strengthening of the sociability of people of the Third Age were the positive results of the programme. Participants became knowledgeable in:

- Installing programs.
- Learning various methods on internet connectivity
- Communicating over the Internet and how to operate programs such as Skype
- Creating accounts on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter.
- Navigating and searching the Internet
- Learning about digital photography

3.3 ITALY

“Nonni su Internet” Italy



Grandmother and tutor at the I.T.I.S. 'G. Armellini' School in Rome

Organisation

The project was founded by Fondazione Mondo Digitale. The Fondazione Mondo Digitale ETS, registered with the Runtus, is a knowledge-oriented non-profit organisation, established as the Gioventù Digitale Consortium in 2001.

Contact

Fondazione Mondo Digitale
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Project Coordinator: Cecilia Stajano
c.stajano@mondodigitale.org

Website

[Nonni su Internet \(mondodigitale.org\)](http://Nonni su Internet (mondodigitale.org))

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal barriers: With the support of local circles and senior centers, which act as intermediaries between individuals and the school, various personal barriers are successfully overcome: grandparents are invited to the free courses, which take place in the computer labs of schools of all levels, thus addressing a concern that 30,4% of survey respondents mentioned (“I have to pay a fee to participate”). In this complex network of new roles and functions, grandparents overcome the personal barrier of “I do not know if I am able to attend training courses on these topics” (14,7% of survey participants) by learning new knowledge and technical skills but also successfully adapting to new environments and effectively relating to others, even when they are so different. The barrier of “I am not used to attending training courses” (17,6%) is overcome by implementing students of actual grandparents or members of elderly social centers and other associations to teach the courses and help the participant gain more confidence and competence. The optimal teaching ratio is one tutor for every two elderly participants in the group.

Organisational barriers: By offering the courses in the computer labs of schools of all levels *Nonni su Internet (Grandparents on the Internet)* addresses the organisational barrier of “I have to bring my device with me” as stated by 13,7% of survey participants. The presentation of the various peripherals that can be connected to the pc (webcam, scanner, etc.) also provide the occasion to assist

Needs addressed

The programme addresses various needs elderly participants identified by the MADIS survey, including connecting with family and friends online, reducing feelings of isolation, and enhancing their overall well-being by using the newly acquired digital skills.

Further information:

[Grandparents' manuals on the Internet \(mondodigitale.org\)](#)

[Manuals and Guides – Senior Citizens online \(terzaetaonline.it\)](#)

senior citizens in gaining familiarity with new communication technologies (mobile phones, digital terrestrial television, iPod, IPTV, etc.).

Description

The project *Nonni su Internet* aims to bridge the digital divide among elderly citizens over 60 from the local community by providing them with access to technology and digital literacy training. The project focuses on empowering grandparents in the community, enabling them to embrace the benefits of the internet and digital tools.

The program of the course for absolute beginners is structured to provide a complete introduction to the use of the computer in just 15 lessons, from navigating the Internet to the use of email and social networks. The duration of the free course is 30 hours, divided into 15 weekly lessons of 2-hour duration each. Participating seniors, student tutors, and teacher supervisors all receive an attendance certificate at the end of the course.

In 2002 the first official agreement with the Ministry of Innovation and the Municipality of Rome kicked off the *Nonni su Internet* project in the Capital. In the 2021-22 school year, this intergenerational learning model was applied in 20 Italian regions and 11 different nations. Today, the intergenerational learning methodology is a national and transnational intervention model.

Instructors: The instructors are students from the schools, supervised by a teacher who is experienced in information technology and telecommunications. In *Nonni su Internet*, tutors are absolutely crucial, but they need to be properly managed. Essentially, this means providing them with training that enables them to 'meet the grandparents' in the best possible way (because managing grandparents is also a challenge).

Lessons learnt

The project fosters a sense of community and understanding between different generations:

- Engaging young volunteers or students as mentors creates a positive and supportive learning environment, fosters social connections, and promotes mutual learning.
- Active promotion and collaboration with community organisations, senior centers, and local schools are essential to reach a wider audience of older adults.
- The students, by directly experiencing the difficulty of conveying the subject matter to their grandparents, learn to reflect on their own knowledge, to reflect on themselves, their attitudes, and their own resistances, often quite similar to those of the grandparents.

"The digital literacy of those segments of the population at risk of exclusion from the benefits of the knowledge society is essential for the dream of an inclusive knowledge society. This dream is the beating heart, the raison d'être, of the project, and it calls for the implementation of social and educational innovations based on established knowledge and learning processes, as well as a deep commitment to work with and for others."

[University of Edinburgh, Scientific Director, Fondazione Mondo Digitale]

Video

[Nonni su Internet: l'apprendimento intergenerazionale per l'inclusione digitale - YouTube](#)



Lesson at L.S.S 'I. Newton' in Rome

Positive results

Participants in courses reported increased digital literacy as grandparents gained confidence and competence in using digital technologies and the internet. Their improved digital communication skills lead to better connections with younger family members and friends. Thus, the elderly participants become more socially engaged and active in the digital world.

With this project, grandparents are not just recipients of teaching - a situation already unusual in itself - but, in their relationship with the tutors and the coordinating teacher, they become educational tools themselves to teach the tutors what teaching is, how challenging and fascinating it can be, all at once

“Pane e internet” | Italy – Emilia-Romagna Region



Organisation

Pane e Internet is a project funded by the Emilia-Romagna Region, within the framework of the Regional Digital Agenda, to foster the development of digital skills and full access to the information society.

Contact

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Website

[Il Progetto - Pane e Internet](#)

17

Implementation barriers addressed

The *Pane e Internet (Bread and Internet)* project in the Emilia-Romagna Region addressed various implementation barriers specific to older people (seniors) to ensure their successful participation and digital inclusion:

Physical Barriers: By ensuring that the training venues were physically accessible and user-friendly for seniors with mobility or sensory impairments this programme successfully overcomes the barriers of “I can’t sit for long” (17,6% of survey respondents), “I don’t hear well” (16,7%), and “I don’t see well” (11,8%). The teaching materials provided are designed to be printed and read on paper: this choice is motivated by the fact that the learners to be literate do not have the minimum skills to learn ‘with technologies’, if anything, they are in the ‘technology’ learning phase

Personal barriers: Facilitating peer support and mentorship opportunities, where experienced seniors help newer learners, was beneficial in building confidence while addressing the stated barrier “I do not know if I am able to attend training courses on these topics” (14,7%). In addition, the teaching materials are designed for individual study/practice.

Description

Pane e Internet is a project within the framework of the Regional Digital Agenda aimed at enhancing citizens’ digital skills for full digital citizenship.

From 2009 to 2018, it conducted 850 free basic courses on PC and Internet use, training around 13,000 individuals at risk of digital exclusion. These courses were held across various locations (public schools, vocational training centres, libraries, civic centres, etc.), involving 237 teachers and 85 tutors. The 20-hour digital literacy courses, designed for

Needs addressed

- Reduce the feelings of isolation
- Encourage seniors to participate in group activities and socialise with others.
- Build confidence to master daily activities
- Promote overall well-being.
- Gain additional support by involving family members or caregivers in the learning process.

Further information:

[Bread and Internet Catalogue](#)
(paneinternet.it)

12-14 participants, covered topics ranging from basic computer functions to internet navigation and online service utilization.

As of 2020, the project transitioned to online training, focusing on digital citizenship and extending participation to all regional residents, aiming to leverage advanced services and opportunities in the digital realm.

Lessons learnt

The *Pane e Internet* project highlights the importance of digital inclusion initiatives to ensure that citizens, including seniors, have access to digital skills and opportunities, fostering social cohesion and empowering individuals to participate in the digital society.

While basic digital skills are initially acquired through literacy courses, there's a continuous need to further develop knowledge and abilities for adopting and using digital tools and services. This ongoing journey towards increased autonomy, usage, and effectiveness characterizes this process.

The project's impact extends beyond individual beneficiaries, as it has led to heightened demand for digital literacy courses and ongoing skill acquisition. This has also spurred local administrations and stakeholders to recognize the importance of creating fresh avenues for enhancing citizens' digital citizenship skills.

Positive results

The survey methods used were both qualitative and quantitative in nature and revealed firstly a strong need to continue learning after the first digital literacy. The interviews carried out at the end of the course on a sample of 250 people showed that 90% of the trainees interviewed three months after the conclusion of the courses continue to use the Internet, of these:

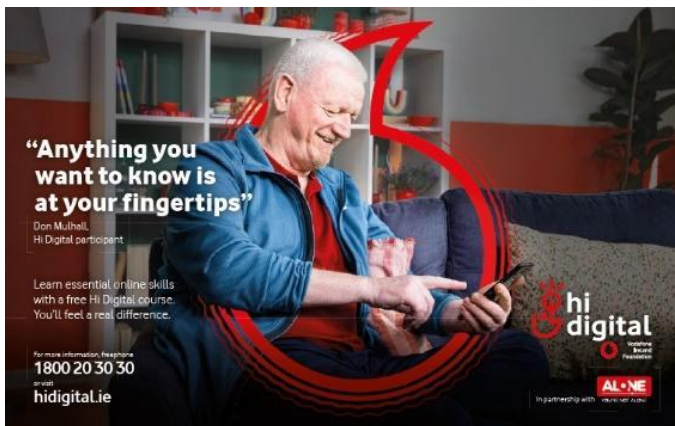
- 40% feel they have little mastery of the use of the Internet
- 60% admit they have asked for help in using the Internet and
- 55% feel they need help to be able to use the Internet as they would like
- 78% are interested in acquiring further skills in relation to the use of computers and the Internet

“Pane e Internet is a project that aims to bridge gaps: territorial, generational, social, as well as digital and technological. It is a project that, first and foremost, addresses the rights of citizens and promotes social cohesion within the community!”

[Councilor for Material and Immaterial Infrastructure Networks, Emilia-Romagna region]

3.4 IRELAND

“Hi Digital” | Ireland



Organisation

Developers: Vodafone Ireland Foundation, ALONE, Active Retirement Ireland.
Current charity partners: ALONE, Irish Girl Guides.

Contact

Vodafone Ireland Foundation
Hi Digital Project Manager:
Stephanie.casey@vodafone.ie

Website

[Hi-digital-Digital-Skills-Training-for-Elderly-People](https://www.hidigital.ie)

Implementation barriers addressed

Financial barriers: The courses are free for participants. Therefore, two of the most prevalent implementation barriers that address financial issues are addressed, which taken together affect 50% of survey respondents (having to pay a fee to participate and not having enough money to participate in courses).

Personal barriers: *Hi Digital* delivers one-to-one or small group classes. It therefore addresses personal barriers based on “not wanting to attend training courses with other people” (6,9% of survey respondents) and on “not being used to attend training courses” (17,6% of survey respondents), and on “I do not know if I am able to attend training courses on these topics (14,7% of survey respondents).

“In Ireland, digital literacy amongst over 65 year olds is one of the lowest in Europe – 19% vs 25% average elsewhere (Eurostat 2020). Hi Digital aims to play a key role in ensuring that our older citizens can actively engage online and access services, communicate with friends and family and feel confident and more connected to their community.”

Description

Hi Digital is a 5-year program (2021-2027) developed by the Vodafone Foundation, that seeks to increase digital literacy and confidence in using the internet amongst the over 65 year olds. In Ireland, the initiative aims to improve the lives of 230,000 65 year-olds. It is also being delivered in the UK, Czechia, The Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Among other things, *Hi Digital* offers in-person classes through which, to date, the lives of approx. 9k older people have been improved. Charity partners train ‘Digital Champions’ who are volunteer tutors via digital champion workshops, who then deliver one-to-one or small group classes to older people. *Hi Digital* provides access to free tablets and WiFi via its charity partners.

Needs addressed

- Combat loneliness and alleviate isolation
- Promote mental health

Further information:

[Vodafone Ireland Foundation launches Hi Digital](#)

Lessons learnt

- There are transport difficulties for people in rural areas
- Access to WiFi and devices can be a challenge for seniors
- Larger groups do not function as well as one-to-one or two-to-one; several tutors are needed for larger groups
- The social aspect of in-person training is crucial for older people

Positive results

There are pre- and post-course surveys. So far, over 90% of course participants report feeling somewhat or very confident about doing activities online.

“Hi Digital is a great course to inspire confidence in using smartphones and other tech that is lost on a lot of people scared of technology.”

3.5 SLOVENIA

“Symbioza – Digital Inclusion Initiative” | Slovenia

Implementation barriers addressed

Organisational barriers:

Symbioza Mobiln@ offers mobile classrooms in urban and rural areas addressing the mobility barriers such as “I have no means of getting to a course (no access to public transport, no driver’s license, etc.) as stated by 11,8% of survey respondents. By working with the team of the Institute for Intergenerational Cooperation, *Symbioza*, conducts digital literacy workshops for the elderly in local rural environments with qualified experts. The free ICT workshops tackle the barrier of “I have to pay a fee to participate” (30,4%).

Personal barriers: *Symbioza BIT Centres*, which are community hubs for digital literacy training, provide access to digital resources and support for individuals to improve their digital skills overcoming the barriers of “I do not like attending training courses with other people” (6,9%) and “I am not used to attending training courses” (17,6%).

Description

The *Symbioza* initiative, established in Slovenia in 2011, is a digital inclusion project centred around three main concepts: enhancing e-literacy for the elderly, fostering youth volunteering, and encouraging intergenerational collaboration. Operating across 326 locations, the initiative engaged 4,816 participants and 3,516 volunteers. Led by young volunteer trainers, workshops are held in existing facilities like schools, libraries, and senior citizens' homes. Notably, *Symbioza* successfully connected over 9,000 individuals in five days across 300+ locations annually. Since 2014, *Symbioza* has evolved into a sustainable social enterprise, comprising five significant projects: *Symbioza Schools*, *Intergenerational Centre*, *Symbioza Moves*, *Symbioza Digital Academy*, and the technology innovation hub, *Symbioza BTC City Lab*, which doubles as a FabLab.

Introduced in 2021, *Symbioza Mobiln@* is Slovenia's First Traveling Classroom, enhancing digital literacy for those over 55 through modern ICT workshops. Backed by the Ministry of Digital Transformation, it aims to bridge the urban-rural ICT education gap and address technological challenges faced by elderly.

Symbioza employs an intergenerational approach to digital literacy training, with younger volunteers instructing seniors by providing:

- **Hands-on Workshops:** focus on practical digital skills, covering computer use, the internet, online communication, and mobile devices;

Organisation

Symbioza started off as a project, but after three consecutive successful years became a social enterprise., *Symbioza Genesis*, that was founded in 2014 as a way to ensure long term sustainability of an organic growth of a project ‘*Symbioz@ e-literate Slovenia*’, which started in 2011. It receives support from the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the team of the Institute for Intergene-rational Cooperation.

Contact

ANA PLEŠKO
Director and co-founder
ana.plesko@symbioza.eu

Website

[Symbioza](#)

Needs addressed

- Empower seniors to navigate the digital world and use technology to:
 - communicate
 - access information
 - use online services
- Reduce loneliness and isolation
- Foster intergenerational connections by pairing seniors with young volunteers

Further materials:

[Our History - Symbioza](#)

- **Customized Training:** based on participants' needs;
- **Simbioza BIT Centres:** serve as community hubs for digital training and support, enhancing access to resources for skill improvement.

Lessons learnt

The *Simbioza* project has encountered a few challenges during the development of its digital literacy courses for elderly people. Some of the common drawbacks/problems faced by the organisation include:

- **Fear and resistance:** some older people have been reluctant to learn new technologies due to fear, lack of confidence or scepticism. Overcoming this resistance required patience, empathy and the creation of a favourable learning environment.
- **Accessibility problems:** The older people encountered had physical or cognitive problems that affected their ability to use digital devices effectively. This required the organisation to adapt training materials and methods to meet different accessibility needs
- **Language barriers:** Language was in some cases a barrier for older people who were unfamiliar with digital terminology. Translation of materials and multilingual support helped to overcome this challenge

“The idea arose while me and my grandmother were having dinner, and she asked me in an angry voice: ‘Žiga, what the hell is www?’ So the question arose: why not show the elderly generation that computers are not scary? This time around we decided that our intergenerational cooperation should focus on moving.”

Positive results

Simbioza’s workshops are based on evaluations of the participants and of the volunteers that are done after every training is completed. That’s how they follow statistics, improve their programs and scale the activities.

According to the data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the share of daily computer and Internet users among older people are three and seven times higher than five years ago (between 2009 and 2014). *Simbioza* contributed importantly to this increase, so this was a huge success for the team.

The progress in digital skills is seen in upgrading the curricula, for example, 7 years ago computers were a total hit and today, the most popular workshop is “How to use smartphones”.

3.6 NEW ZEALAND

“Better Digital Futures for Seniors” New Zealand



Organisation

Funded by the Office for Seniors at the Ministry of Social Development, the total funding for training 5000 seniors in 2023-25 is NZ \$1.3 million. This funding is distributed across six providers, of which the Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa (DIAA) is one.

Contact

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 52 Pitt Street, Wadestown
 Wellington, 6012 New Zealand

Website

[Programmes - Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa](https://www.digitalinclusionalliance.co.nz/)

Needs addressed

The programme addresss all needs identified by the MADIS survey, including combatting loneliness and alleviating isolation, managing everyday tasks such as online banking of shopping online, and promoting health. It focuses on building the digital skills and confidence of seniors to use digital technologies to improve their lives.

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal and social barriers: By working with trusted delivery partners that are located where seniors live, gather and socialise such as libraries, ethnic community trusts, libraries, social housing providers, retirement villages, marae and community training providers, the programme *Better Digital Futures for Seniors* successfully overcomes various personal barriers: it works with non-English speaking communities, thus addressing a concern that 32,4% of survey respondents mentioned (“not being able to understand English well enough”). Importantly, the programme also addresses personal barriers such as “not having enough money to afford courses” by being freely available. It also addresses the barrier “not being used to attending training courses”, which - based on a perceived “challenge of the unknown” - is addressed by taking ‘digital’ out of the programme communications and offering courses in small groups of 4-8 people. In addition, delivery partners are trained to understand how older people learn; this is based on the principle of ‘ako’, which emphasises that we all have role as teachers and learners, thereby furthering addressing challenges related to personal barriers such as “I am not used to attending training courses” (17,6% of respondents). Finally, the courses offered are short (8

“This course is successful for 2 key reasons:

- 1) It is delivered by trusted local people and organisations;*
- 2) These organisations can provide ongoing digital literacy support after the programme ends”*

hours each, delivered in one to two-hour sessions), thereby addressing social barriers such as “not having enough time” and “having many commitments” (38,2% of respondents).

Physical barriers: The programme works with local delivery partners some of whom cater for people with disabilities, thus addressing physical barriers such as “I can’t sit for long”; “I don’t hear well”, etc., which 46,1% of survey respondents mentioned.

Organisational barriers: Because it also offers local courses and support in remote rural villages as well as in places where older people socialise, the programme addresses mobility barriers such as having limited access to public transport, no driver’s license, etc., barriers which 11,8% of survey respondents quoted.

Description

The programme was developed by the Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa and has been delivered at over 160 locations throughout New Zealand by 59 delivery partners from 2020 to 2023. It is continuing for a further 3 years (2023-2025). Delivery partners receive funding for trainers to deliver classes. Google Classroom is used to share training resources, made up of pdfs, videos and example websites. Participants complete a pre and post training survey to help measure changes in their digital skills and confidence.

The programme is open to any older person aged 65 and over (or 55 and over for Māori and Pasifika); Seniors participate by registering [online](#) or by getting in touch with their nearest delivery partner. 4000 seniors have already participated in at least one course; a further 3000 are expected to engage during the next 2-3 years. Participants choose one (or more) of seven courses called “Digital Pathways”, each course targeting groups of seniors at different stages of their digital journeys.

Further information:

Delivery partners:

[Better Digital Futures - Stepping UP](#)

“...digital skills is no longer just a ‘nice to have’”

Lessons learnt

- The level of community engagement of delivery partners is key to success! Public libraries are great at this, providing steady-demand for just-in-time help to solve basic user problems
- Many older people prefer the ‘comfort of the familiar’; there is a definite challenge in explaining to them how digital technologies can improve their lives
- A series of professional development workshops for delivery partners has helped them understand how old people learn; also training programmes have been useful in helping trainers leverage the available training resources
- A focus on sustainability when selecting delivery partners, that is, embedding digital skills training with partners who have ongoing funding, helps ensure programmes are likely to continue
- A mobile learning center (Digital on Road Access) has helped engagement with the hard-to-reach, working with local community partners and focusing on digital banking

Positive results

Participants in courses reported a significant increase in digital skills: [1]:

- Social Connection: 64% participants can use digital technologies for social connection[2]
- Basic Skills: 68% participants have basic digital skills
- Online transactions and activities: 66% participants can work online confidently
- Online safety: 86% participants can keep themselves safe online

[1] These figures are averages based on a number of individual skill measures; the increases for some individual measures are much higher.

[2] Changes in confidence levels were measured by aggregating percentage increases in ‘very confident’, ‘confident’ and ‘somewhat confident’ responses

3.7 UNITED KINGDOM

“AGE UK – Digital Champion Programme” | United Kingdom

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal barriers: The various *Age UK* locations provide Digital Skill sessions for seniors with lack of confidence in attending training courses (17,6% of survey respondents) or group sessions (6,9%) by offering remote or in-person, individual or group-based support. There are no set lesson plans; learners choose their own topics, which can be repeated for better understanding and reinforcement.

Organisational and physical barriers: The *Digital Champion Programme* aims to tackle digital exclusion by providing loan technology to be used at home addressing the barrier of “bringing one’s own device” (13,7% of survey respondents quoted). The programme’s goal is to engage and motivate older people to overcome various mobility barriers, for example “I can’t sit for long” (17,6%), “I don’t hear well” (16,7%), “I don’t see well” (11,8%) by raising awareness about the benefits of being digital

“What I found was, having that group setting creates almost a buddy system. People start working together.”

Description

The *Digital Champion Programme*, to be implemented between 2022 and 2026, is a digital inclusion programme that is working with 50 *Age UKs* to engage with seniors aged 65 and above to address these barriers and focuses on supporting high-risk groups, including those with lower income, individuals over 80 years old, those living alone or with mobility challenges, those with memory problems, older people from ethnic minority groups, and those who identify as LGBT+.

Digital Champion: Individual who is a registered member of the Digital Champions Network, has undertaken the required online courses, and volunteers to engage, support and encourage older people to develop their digital skills and confidence. The volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds and have varying levels of digital experience themselves, from IT professionals to people who are ‘newly converted’ to digital technology and want to share their enthusiasm. They may be staff and volunteers from local *Age UKs*, employees at local businesses or local community organisations, or other older people themselves.

Organisation

The *Digital Champion Programme* is managed by the Digital Inclusion team at *Age UK National*, and delivered on the ground by local *Age UKs* across England and Wales. The *Age UK* network is a partnership of independent charities which includes their national partners and over 120 local *Age UKs*. The programme is funded by multiple donors, charitable foundation and Santander (bank) and Currys (technology provider).

Contact

Age UK
Project Support Officer
servicesdigital@ageuk.org.uk

Website

[Age UK - Digital Champion Programme](#)

Needs addressed

- Meeting friends and family online
- Promote mental health
- Manage everyday tasks

Further materials:

[Helping older people improve their digital skills | Age UK](#)

Lessons learnt

- Group sessions were also appreciated for their social aspect, as older people enjoy meeting other people and helping each other.
- Participants of training courses report that they use their newly learned digital skills to, for example, participate in online discussions, use online banking, play online games, meet friends/family online, and find recipes.

“It is very rewarding; I’ve got to meet some really fascinating people and the stories that they tell. My volunteering hours contribute to the [country’s] economy, it gets me out and about, it’s a win-win all over for me, I can’t see a negative.”

Special focus

The programme's strengths included the reassurance of the Age UK brand, additional resources provided, access to borrowing and purchasing devices, assistance on personal devices, and a safety network for ongoing support.

“They [Age UK] told me I can contact them. It’s given you a friend in an alien world. For us who are not from a digital age. It is an enlightening little torch. We pick up the flame and carry on.”

“One Digital Programme” | United Kingdom

25

Implementation barriers addressed

The *One Digital* programme has addressed several implementation hurdles commonly encountered in digital inclusion initiatives. Some challenges the project addressed were:

Personal barriers: *One Digital* provided Digital Skills sessions for seniors with lack of confidence in attending training courses (17,6% of survey respondents) or group sessions (6,9%) by offering 1:1 support in older people’s homes and IT drop-in sessions at large scale community events. Older individuals might face challenges in understanding and using digital technology due to limited prior experience. The programme focused on improving digital literacy by offering tailored training and support.

Organisational barriers: The programme aimed to bridge the digital divide by providing older people, who may have limited access to technology (13,7% of survey respondents) or lack digital skills (14,7%), with the resources and support needed to participate in the digital world.

Fear of Technology: Fear of technology or concerns about online safety can discourage older adults from using digital tools. The programme addressed these fears by educating participants about online safety and privacy

Organisation

One Digital is a partnership between several organisations, including Age UK, Digital Unite, SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations), Clarion Futures, and Citizens Online. This collaborative approach allowed the programme to leverage the expertise and resources of multiple organisations to achieve its goals.

One Digital was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, which provided financial support for the programme’s activities and initiatives.

Contact

One Digital

du@digitalunite.com

Website

[One Digital \(onedigitaluk.com\)](http://onedigitaluk.com)

Social barriers: The flexibility of *One Digital* is also considered to be a strength as it addresses the barrier of high cost that 19,6% of survey respondents claimed “not to have enough money to afford it”. People are able to attend when they feel able to and wish to, and there is no charge.

“Well, it’s a necessity ‘cos everything is online and it drives me crackers. You see, if I was a few years older I could say, ‘I don’t want to do it, I don’t want to know’, but I’m in the bit that does need it to carry out my life, really.” (Ruth, 77, Leeds)

Description

The *One Digital Programme* was a collaborative digital inclusion programme in the United Kingdom implemented between 2015 and 2020. It aimed to promote digital inclusion by empowering and supporting trusted intermediaries or Digital Champions to help individuals, particularly older people, develop their digital skills and access online resources. *One Digital* uses the UK Government’s Essential Digital Skills Framework as a core reference point. This Framework defines the digital skills adults need to “safely benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world”

Since the start of the partnership in 2015, *One Digital* engaged with over 3,900 organisations, recruited over 4,700 Digital Champions and supported over 61,000 people to learn new digital skills, and these numbers continue to grow. *One Digital* employed various methods of delivery to provide digital skills training to older people and promote digital inclusion by conducting in-person workshops at local community centres, libraries, and senior centres; small group training sessions, personalised one-on-one support, and follow-up support allowing elders to seek assistance after the formal training sessions.

Digital Champion: The ‘golden thread’ of *One Digital* was the use of Digital Champions – individuals who have been trained to support others to improve their essential digital skills. The programme recruited and supported over 600 specialist Digital Champions who were focused on the needs of older people and who acted as mentors and provided ongoing support and encouragement to elder learners. Digital Champions come from a range of different backgrounds and have varying levels of digital experience themselves, from IT professionals to people who are ‘newly converted’ to digital technology and want to share their enthusiasm. They may be staff and volunteers from local Age UKs,

Needs addressed

- Connect with family and friends online
- Promote health and well-being
- Manage everyday tasks – schedule online appointments

Further materials:

[Evaluation Reports – One Digital \(onedigitaluk.com\)](#)

[One Digital Case Studies 2017-2020 Lessons Learned](#)

[Video-Digital drop-in centre for older people](#)

Lessons learnt

- Tailoring the course content and delivery to meet individual learners’ needs was crucial for effective learning and engagement.
- Digital Champions played a vital role in supporting older learners. Investing in their training and providing ongoing support helps ensure a positive learning experience for participants.
- Engaging with digital technology provided mental stimulation, contributing to improved cognitive health and preventing cognitive decline for older learners.

Special focus

Identifying and addressing digital barriers, such as limited access to devices or internet connectivity, was essential to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for all older learners.

Older learners felt more socially included in the digital age, being able to participate in digital conversations and activities alongside younger generations

“One Digital has had a great year, building on our past successes to help even more people learn useful new skills. Working in partnership means our projects are better able to grow, improve and be more successful.”
[Programme Director, *One Digital*]

3.8 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

“Senior Planet” | USA



“We’re a distinctive, diverse collection of people aged 60 and older who are busy changing the way we age by embracing opportunities to reshape our lives, connect with and help one another, and change the world for the better—all while learning, growing, and having fun!”

Organisation

Senior Planet is the flagship programme of the national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organisation Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP. In 2004, OATS Executive Director Tom Kamber and a group of dedicated volunteers launched the organisation with a mission to help older adults learn and use technology so they could live better in the digital age.

Funding for the programme has been provided by various generous companies and organisations supporting the programmes for older adults, from exercise for seniors to financial fitness education.

Contact

Senior Planet from AARP
info@seniorplanet.org
 Senior Planet hotline:
 +1-888-713-3495

Website

[Welcome to Senior Planet - Senior Planet from AARP](#)

[Senior Planet from AARP - OATS](#)

Implementation barriers addressed

Personal and social barriers: By working with trusted delivery partners, the Senior Planet programme offers free classes open to any person aged 60+ who would like to develop their digital literacy and confidence, thus addressing the personal and social barrier, stated by survey respondents, of “having to pay a fee to participate” (30,4%) or “not having enough money to afford it” (19,6%). In addition, the organisations’ one-on-one sessions overcome the barrier of “I do not like attending training courses with other people” mentioned by 6,9% of survey respondents. Senior Planet also works with non-English speaking communities, thus addressing a concern that 32,4% of survey respondents mentioned “not being able to understand English well enough.” The courses offered are short (between 30 and 90 minutes per class) and at different times of the day and days of the week, thereby addressing the social

Needs addressed

This initiative addresses all needs identified by the MADIS survey, including

- Combating isolation and loneliness
- Reducing the generational digital divide that exists and its effects on the mental health of older people
- Engaging with the older person in an environment that is familiar and removing so

barrier “not having enough time because of having many commitments” (18,6% of respondents).

Physical barrier: From the MADIS survey 17,6% of respondents stated that “I can’t sit for long” and 16,7% “I can’t hear well either. By offering the brief courses at different times of the day and on different days of the week the programme addresses these physical barriers to the individual needs of participants.

Organisational barriers: *The Senior Planet at Home* initiative serves homebound seniors, who are not able to travel to attend classes at programme sites, thus addressing the organisational barrier of “I have no means of getting to a course” (11,8% of survey respondents). With the support of OATS trainers, a model for five-week courses was developed and delivered to interested participants at their own homes. The “Tech Spot,” a rural alternative to computer labs, a technology exploration and training environment that can be installed directly into the common space of a senior services site addresses the barrier of “I have to bring my device with me” (13,7%). The lending program enables participants to learn on reliable devices and determine if they were interested in subscribing to home internet.

much of the fear factor towards getting online

- Supporting creative expressions through all media

“Senior Planet feels like a gift. It’s been life-changing for a lot of us.”

[Wendy, Donor]

Description

Senior Planet is a non-profit organisation with the purpose to enable older adults to come together and find ways to learn, work, create, exercise, and thrive in today’s digital age. In 2022 OATS reported 33,000 in-person programme engagements with 160 active licenced partner sites in 25 US states, 4 *Senior Planet* centres across 3 US states and an increase of 93% of unique individuals served from the year 2021 to 2022. In 2019 the rural programme of *Senior Planet*, *Senior Planet North Country*, engaged nearly 900 participants and delivered more than 500 class sessions, representing one of the country’s largest-scale projects to provide technology programmes for rural older (2019 *North Country Rural Report*).

The programme offers free one-on-one, group, and online classes to any person aged 60+ who would like to develop their digital literacy and confidence. Seniors can choose between one-time lectures or 3, 5 and 10-week courses with lectures of 2,5 hours per week. In addition to structured, multi-week courses, *Senior Planet* programming also includes a robust series of lectures, workshops, guest speakers, and special events, high-quality online content, and participant-driven affinity groups.

Each highly skilled trainer has a unique story of what brought them to *Senior Planet* and why they love helping older adults integrate technology into their lives in new and innovative ways.

The programmes are designed around five impact areas representing opportunities in the lives of older adults where technology can have a transformative effect.: financial security, social engagement, creative expression, health and wellness, and civic participation.

The classes can be found at physical locations in five regions:

- [New York City](#)
- [North Country, New York](#)
- [Montgomery County, Maryland](#)
- [Denver, Colorado](#)
- [San Antonio, Texas](#)

Further information:

[Our Locations - Technology Classes -Senior Planet from AARP](#)

[NoCo2020Report.pdf \(oats.org\)](#)

[Connecting Rural Older American with Technology \(report\)](#)

Delivery partners:

[Our Sponsors - Funding Classes for Seniors - Senior Planet from AARP](#)

Video:

[Aging with Attitude - YouTube](#)

[Introducing OATS - YouTube](#)

Lessons learnt

OATS has learned many invaluable lessons regarding the advantages and challenges of working in low-density rural communities and in vibrant cities. In general, the services were well received, and existing curriculum offerings (with minor modifications) proved relevant to the lives of rural and urban participants. Working with local partners bringing *Senior Planet* into their communities was of great importance. Local elected officials and press took great interest in the initiative and provided valuable support and publicity.

Home visits reflected a new programme approach at OATS, one that would expand the reach of *Senior Planet* to include substantial numbers of isolated older adults in rural areas who needed home-based programmes and were enthusiastic about learning new technologies. Working with Meals on Wheels and other outreach channels, interested participants could be identified and approached by the trainers.

Senior Planet centres are vibrant social environments filled with friendly, curious older adults, and lots of the latest tech gadgets covering various topics seniors can learn about and engage in:

- new digital skills (Zoom, Google Workspace, Protection, YouTube, Wearables, Gmail, Google Photos, Graphic Design Tool, Photo Editor);
- discovering ways to save money (Digital wallets, selling online, ebay & PayPal);
- finding a community where you can get in shape and make new friends (Instagram, TikTok, Messaging Apps);
- Health (Mobile Health Apps, Telemedicine).

“Let there be no doubt: Social isolation is a killer.”

Positive results

The learning of digital skills and the strengthening of the sociability of people of the Third Age is reflected in the numbers* of the five impact areas:

FINANCIAL SECURITY

- 44% saved an average of \$51-100
- 15% increased their income

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- 39% reported better health
- 56% reported better sleep
- 44% lost weight, averaging 1-5 lbs

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- 33% engaged more with politics
- 40% read or signed a petition online

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 76% felt more connected
- 11% made reliable new friends

CREATIVE EXPRESSION & LIFELONG LEARNING

- 38% learned a new skill

**Data provided by the 2019 Program Summary of OATS ([OATS-2020-Report Abridged.pdf](#))*

“Technology isn’t easy, but, with the help of Senior Planet, I’ve persisted. Now, when I go to my iPad, I can go anywhere in the world.”

[Sylvia, age 93]

4. PARTNERS

4.1 DATEY Eyrich GmbH (GERMANY)

DATEY is an established private training company (GmbH) registered and headquartered in Germany. It has been providing education and training and related services nationally and internationally (NATO, United States Armed Forces in Europe, foreign ministries) since 1986. With a focus on skills training and labour market integration measures, DATEY works under contract for the German Ministry for Labour and its agencies, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees as well as for other public bodies and private entities. In addition to adult education courses, DATEY provided vocational training and skills transmission activities in a wide range of sectors to both youths and adults, including initial education and re- and upskilling courses. It currently employs over 50 staff in different locations across Germany.

DATEY has been offering ICT training from basic to advanced levels since the mid-eighties and has provided courses on digital competencies for the German employment agencies for people of various ages seeking to (re)-enter the job market. Digital skills seminars, upskilling and coaching sessions for different groups of society, including single mothers, seniors and health care staff are continuously being carried out in DATEY's various locations. DATEY's training activities are targeted at a diverse group of learners, including all age groups and levels of education.

Website: www.datey.com

4.2 ARETES SOCIETA COOPERATIVA (ITALY)

Aretés Societa Cooperativa is structured as a private research and planning centre. Since 1999, it has worked to develop specific expertise in research, planning and communication, and proposing participative intervention methods and solutions characterised by the logic of innovation. In particular it focuses on applied research, European planning, organisational consultancy and communication and marketing.

Aretés proposes research actions aimed at designing change paths both within public, private and social organisations and within territorial or community contexts; it supports public, private and social private organisations in submitting European projects; proposes organisational consulting as a way to foster communication and therefore efficiency among the identity components of a company: defines skills, ideas, relationships and values; and it proposes traditional and digital communication strategies as support actions for the promotion and marketing of the products / objectives of organisations.

The staff of Aretés has many years of experience in applied research, European project development and management, organisational consultancy and communication & marketing. In recent years, Aretés has developed innovative projects, developing and spreading a new way of thinking about DIGITAL as a tool for everyday work, making available new digital products, strengthening the methodological and professional skills of educators and teachers. It is currently working on various European projects: gender stereotypes and behavioural changes, training and guidance for disadvantaged adults, critical and responsible use of smartphones by young people, social innovation, etc. The characteristic trait of Aretés is to use two specific methodologies of intervention: Media Education and Socioterapy.

Website www.aret.es.it

4.3 DIGITAL IDEA (GREECE)

DIGITAL IDEA is a non-profit scientific association, representing higher education graduates and professionals with an established interest in the application and diffusion of new technologies in Education, Health, Culture and Environment. Its members are professionals in large public and private organisations, university professors and high school teachers. The general purpose of the association is to improve the skills of using and implementing New Technologies to upgrade education, health, culture and the environment, and to promote and disseminate modern technology methods in educational processes.

The staff of DIGITAL IDEA has expertise in Digital Tools and Digital Transformation, learning-by-doing and e-learning, VR and AR, Robotics and STEM, CAD, CAM and 3D Printing, coding for applications and games, Web Development and Cyber Security. The organisation runs several activities, such as workshops, start-up events (SEW) and participates in several EU projects on the topics of learning and teaching as well as digital skills and training. It has ample accredited experience acquired through its activities and ongoing participation in Erasmus+ KA2 programmes. This experience includes delivering structured training courses (@coursesKA1), developing Open Educational E-Learning Resources, and creating Mobile apps, web pages and platforms as creative tools for learning.

Website: www.digitalidea.gr

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CONTRIBUTORS

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