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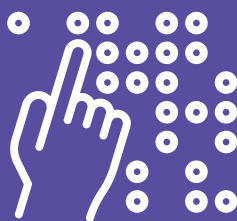
LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF HYBRID, BLENDED AND ONLINE MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

SALTO INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

JINT

DYW DIGITAL YOUTH WORK STRATEGIC NATIONAL AGENCY CO-OPERATION

Erasmus+ Enriching lives, opening minds.

SAFE, CONNECTED, CONFIDENT AND INSPIRED:
LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF HYBRID, BLENDED AND ONLINE MOBILITY ACTIVITIES
Conclusions of the expert group process[1]

BACKGROUND

Digitalisation is part of our lives! Digital learning gives many young people wide-ranging opportunities. However, for some, especially young people with fewer opportunities, digital learning opportunities may also present further barriers to participation, though we've learnt that new ways of engaging are also to be found in such situations. While the COVID-19 Pandemic stimulated an electronic shift, the process had already begun before the pandemic, with **National Agencies, SALTO RCs, youth organisations, youth workers** and **trainers** having already started to move their services online and re-design relevant parts of their delivery. This was with a view to targeting **young people** where they were and was an attempt to respond to the current youth needs and interests.

The **European policy framework**[2] had already been developed to support the **digital transformation** in the **youth field**, with investment in the development of **smart youth work** and **digital youth work**. Moreover, the **youth research projects**[2] had already started to reference digital youth participation or the link between the digitalisation of social inclusion and the need for capacity development in digital youth workspaces.

The findings of the Expert group set up under the **European Union Work Plan** for Youth for 2016-2018 defined digital youth[3] work as follows: "Digital youth work means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work. Digital youth work is not a youth work method – digital youth work can be included in any youth work setting (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work, etc.). Digital youth work has the same goals as youth work in general, and using digital media and technology in youth work should always support these goals. Digital youth work can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments – or in a mixture of these two. Digital media and technology can be either a tool, an activity or a content in youth work."

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[1] The expert group set up to support DYW SNAC, WP5.
[2] See Annex A.
[3] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f01e8eee-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1

Digital youth work also applies to **mobility activities, youth workers and youth organisations, as well as National Agencies** using tools and instruments to make learning possible, even during the pandemic, by integrating the principles of non-formal learning into digital settings. There was a great need for tools that would respond rapidly to digital adaptation; tools and techniques that would foster some of the elements of the residential formats young people were used to: intercultural experiences, fun, interaction, personal development, etc. But some maintained that the digital development was forced by circumstances and that long-term, some of the resources developed would not be sustainable.

THE PROCESS IN PLACE

In order to document the existent learning experiences and consider the future development of the hybrid, blended and online mobility activities, **SALTO Inclusion & Diversity**, within the framework of the **Strategic Co-operation between National Agencies on Digital Youth Work** (SNAC - DYW), gathered information and data about practices, methodologies and experiences. These could go towards setting out valuable guidelines for youth mobility activities involving digital environments, be they complete or partial ones. The data was based on a questionnaire, circulated to the **National Agencies**, through which valuable experiences from activities implemented in 2020 and 2021 were obtained, or from **experiences organised by NAs** (for instance with TCA/NET budget), **EU Youth Programme beneficiaries** or **other stakeholders** since the onset of the pandemic. The subjects reviewed their own experiences of this last year of the pandemic and identified digital activities which, in their opinion, included methodologies/structures/tools which made a substantial difference. They were not simply attempting to re-organise previous activities within digital platforms, but brought something new to those spaces, recreating non-formal learning interactions, informal connections among participants through innovative or unexpected solutions.

The findings of the survey are available **here** and are linked to the support needs of **National Agencies**, - such as training and additional resources, working methodologies and platforms for running better quality learning mobility activities, as well as guidance for **Programme beneficiaries** on how to organise blended, online and hybrid mobility activities, which address the learning needs of the **participants - young people and youth workers**.

To strengthen the process, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity Resource Centre also co-ordinated the work of an **Expert Group** composed of 15 experts from 10 countries, recruited due to their previous experiences of developing **Erasmus+ / European Solidarity Corps** activities involving one of the specified components or their involvement with different policy and research processes which had contributed to the advancement of digital, hybrid and learning mobility activities. The experts took part in two lots of working sessions in May and June 2021 and produced a set of findings which would support both the **National Agencies and the beneficiaries** (NGOs) in the running of better-quality learning mobility activities with a digital component. These would also feed into the policy development processes that the European Commission is set to continue or develop in its support of digital youth work.

This document is aimed at **policymakers** (European Commission) on the one hand, and at **Programme beneficiaries and NAs** on the other. It aims to provide a set of conclusions that address the **European Commission** and to offer a set of practical tips on how **to support National Agencies and their beneficiaries**. It intends to equip them with additional resources that will bolster the development of **quality learning activities with an online component**.

The current document is not a step-by-step/ comprehensive pedagogical guide for working with different digital formats, but rather a **set of recommendations based on the practices and experiences** of the participants involved in the process –taken from both the survey and the expert group. These findings highlight the needs of respondents to the survey, such as supporting beneficiaries, NAs, and SALTO in digitally implementing planned residential activities from one day to the next. They also explore the possibility of retaining online blended and hybrid mobilities, as one way in which the EU Youth Programme's actions can be implemented.

AIMS OF THIS DOCUMENT

The current document concludes the process and aims to encourage learners, both young people and youth workers, as well as youth organisations, National Agencies, SALTO RCs and the European Commission, to trust and use the digital learning processes – to stay:

SAFE and to use tools and platforms that ensure the safety of the participants,
CONNECTED in terms of technology and equipment, but also connected to the development of digital youth work practices,
CONFIDENT in using digital learning tools and
INSPIRED by the practices that are shared by the community and by the experiences which are shared by their peers -both individuals and organisations

It is divided into three parts:
- **Part A** contains recommendations, suggestions and ideas pertaining to future criteria, rules and funding for online, blended and hybrid youth work. It is aimed at the European Commission and the DG involved in the Programme.
- **Part B** contains support ideas and suggestions for quality and is aimed at National Agencies and Programme beneficiaries.
- **Part C** drafts possible next steps- ways in which we can capitalise on what we have learnt during the pandemic and create a vision where digital transformation meets youth work.

When referring to learning mobility activities in the document, one should be aware of the fact that the aim is that of the learning mobility activities for individuals, as defined in Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps.[4] It may be worth clarifying that when this document refers to activities that are partly online, the definition we use for **hybrid mobility activities** is: *where participants are meeting partly online and partly in-person at the same time– be the latter at local/regional or cross-border level, depending on the project.*

Otherwise, when **blended mobility activities** are referenced, the definition we use is: *where participants are together online or together in-person at different times.* When **online activities** are referenced, the working definition is: *where participants are all participating in the same online session at the same time.*

4 https://ec.europa.eu/Programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/learning-mobility-individuals_en

As already mentioned, this section of the document contains recommendations for The Commission, either from the Expert Group or the survey, arranged according to the following groups:

- PROVIDE PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL TOOLS

- RECOGNISE INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

- SHAPE FUTURE FUNDING - CRITERIA & FLEXIBILITY

- INVEST IN CAPACITY BUILDING, LEARNING PROCESSES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- PROTECT DIGITAL RIGHTS AND ONLINE SAFETY

- ENSURE INCLUSION MEASURES

- SUPPORT RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES/USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS

These recommendations are drawn from the results of many experiences and practices of online, blended and hybrid youth work, and they aim at drafting a future vision of youth work encompassing digital, smart and traditional forms. We are still in the early stages of adopting online, hybrid and blended formats of international youth work and training, but we can identify here some general trends and important issues, capable of acting as a starting point for a more extensive process of the digital transformation of youth work learning activities and mobilities.

PROVIDE PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL TOOLS

- Special attention should be paid to ensuring access to technology and internet infrastructure, including funding where necessary, and these conditions should be specified in the Programme (guides) and described as inclusion activities of exceptional cost.

- What the youth work community needs to run good-quality digital/ blended, or hybrid activities are tools and platforms that are adapted for youth work, aligned with European standards of privacy and safety, and able to support the experimental development and testing of these adapted technologies, tailored to each specific youth work.

- Support activities online, offline and in hybrid forms for young people. This means supporting access to the internet and to technology and acknowledging that special attention should be paid to the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities.

- Address online safety not only from a legal point of view (GDPR) but also from the participants' point of view to ensure digital safety and inclusion (i.e., etiquette when it comes to recording, pictures, dissemination, use of inclusive technologies and approaches etc.).

OPIN is an **all-in-one digital and mobile participation toolbox** for youth organisations or public administrations

Free online collaboration platform: https://framapad.org/en/

RECOGNISE INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

- Focus on quality criteria in NFE/European Youth Work: the basis is the same but we think there are specific criteria for the digital component of youth work: the online/hybrid/blended activities should have the same standards as physical mobility activities, including those targeted at youth participation, coaching and participatory learning; however, there needs to be an openness to experiment with and to support for beneficiaries to increase capacities in online/hybrid/blended activities.

- The sustainability of online/blended/hybrid learning formats could be guaranteed, so the competences developed during the pandemic can be embedded in European youth work practises in the long run. These learning formats are now part of the present and future work of the youth field.

- Create opportunities to reflect on digital transformation, in conjunction with other educational sectors: Include the experience and knowledge from the non-formal education sector in education policy and encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and expertise transfer in respect of digital transformation.

- Different formats are possible for carrying out activities according to time, structure, ways of participation and exchange, the needs and profile of participants, conditions and settings, as well as the particular purpose and aim of the activity/programme.

- Rethink and revise what is an "activity day" in an online, blended or hybrid activity might require flexibility in regards to structure/ implementation criteria needed to feed the creativity and innovation of young people in i.e. youth exchanges.

- As an activity (or complementary activity), the creation and/or support of an online community (building) can be crucial to project success.

- A participatory approach could be used to encourage the learners/ participants to share in the learning activities.

- End-user friendliness (for the youth workers and young people using it) of the portals used by the European Commission should be considered when they are being developed, so everyone who wants to use them can do so.

- The Programme (Erasmus +/ESC) priorities have to be interlinked. When considering digitalisation, take inclusion and diversity into account. Participation, environment, and the fight against climate change could be themes that cut across all online activities.

SHAPE FUTURE FUNDING: CRITERIA & FLEXIBILITY

- In the ideal situation, beneficiaries would have the freedom to choose from offline, online, blended or hybrid forms of mobility activity and could be supported accordingly. The focus should be on learning. The question that needs to be answered is whether the appropriate methodology (online, offline, hybrid, blended, etc.) is at the disposal of the group concerned.

- Fund and support critical infrastructural development strategically, such as applications, platforms within and by the youth work sector, and non-formal learning to ensure sustainability.

- Financially support online activities to a greater extent than face to face ones, allowing for the development of online approaches in all actions (not only in participation projects), encouraging the development of online/hybrid/blended approaches; digital activities should not automatically receive less funding than physical activities, as the human resources, preparation time and online platforms require as much support.

- Provide an additional category of digital costs (sustainable investments in materials, tools, etc.) for projects. The entire funding element could be a 'tray' of different kinds of grants based on different kinds of costs. One will be entitled to the grant if their project design includes the activity generating the costs.

- Change the philosophy on how funding & lump sums are allocated: do not penalise those who want to organise activities online by offering less money, on the contrary, incentivise the organising of online/blended/hybrid ones as a way of exploring other forms of learning.

- Additional resources are needed for cross-sectoral co-operation in the development of participatory and educational methods for online, hybrid and blended activities. Good practices could be gathered by the NA or working groups existing of beneficiaries and disseminated for further use. (Educational slides, video, social digital marketing.)

SHAPE FUTURE FUNDING: CRITERIA & FLEXIBILITY

- More flexible funding schemes and accountability could allow for the fact that it is not always possible to ensure participation on an individual basis, e.g. lump sums for individual mobility will not work well in online formats due to the probable drop-out rate.

- Consider the length of the activity/ day (E+), don't spend too much time at the screen just for the purpose of receiving funding for one day of the activity. (Commission to NAs)

- Ongoing funding should be prioritised for EduTech solutions- developed and carried out within the youth work and non-formal education sectors-, especially those in line with youth work and non-formal education approaches and values.

- Defining the expected impact of the online learning mobility activity could become an award criteria. Impacts on the participants' learning processes, other than those from the residential events, should be included as well.

- Consider the time needed for setting adaptations and supporting online communities, work & co-ordination with partners.

- Criteria could just be a lump sum (a sufficient one) based on the question of "will you do a blended/hybrid mobility", and then a guideline (minimum criteria) of how to report/justify it

INVEST IN CAPACITY BUILDING, LEARNING PROCESS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- The development of quality digital learning activities needs trainers/ trainers/ facilitators/ coaches/ mentors in the youth field, who are trained to run the 'new format' activities, but also organisations with trained staff (youth organisations and NAs). Some organisations have started their digital transformation processes and these processes are to be invested with resources and trust. Moreover, participants should have the option of being fully involved with the proposed activities and that requires developing competencies.

> Training toolkits and materials for youth workers to **deliver digital skills to young people:**
> - https://digipathways.io/resources/training-toolkit
> - https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/training-materials

- Develop an internal digital transformation strategy to support the digital transformation of youth/ youth work organisations -both approach and process- and include a section on the digital transformation of organisations in the accreditation/quality labeling.

- Incentivise digital youth work and training by offering an increased budget to cover the time and resources needed by organisers to transform/extend their learning mobility opportunities.

- Engage a coach (youth worker) in online/hybrid/blended youth exchanges. Or if not a coach, someone whose role is more "facilitative role" than leading (i.e. someone who enables young people to use technology and implement approaches they are perhaps not able to implement themselves, when it comes to the technical implementation of things).

- As an activity (or complementary activity), the creation/support of an online community (building) can be crucial to project success and funding should be made available.

- Adhere to the use of platforms and apps that are fully in line with European data and privacy standards.

INVEST IN CAPACITY BUILDING, LEARNING PROCESS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Stress the specificity of digital non-formal learning compared to formal learning.

- Develop new digital user-friendly tools to help young people apply for large projects to improve bottom-up participation and innovation.

- The European Commission is expected to support and empower innovation and further development of the digital and online ecosystem.

- Support the creation of a European Digital Education Hub.

- Give weight to output produced by young people when reporting- this can lend a creative dimension. Also, pay attention to what and who is behind the platforms – a broader approach to data protection.

PROTECT DIGITAL RIGHTS AND ONLINE SAFETY

- Address online safety not only from a legal point of view (GDPR), but also from the participants' point of view to ensure digital safety and inclusion (i.e. etiquette when it comes to recording, pictures, dissemination, etc).

> PEGI: an initiative that **evaluates digital content** not only on the basis of criteria from youth protection act but also on the basis of pedagogical issues

ENSURE INCLUSION MEASURES

- Ensure access to Internet & technology, so that all learners are being provided with the same opportunities and no one is being left behind (special focus should be on supporting the digital participation of young people with fewer opportunities).

- There is a greater need for staff and volunteers when supporting the involvement and participation of young people with fewer opportunities. Adequate resources can be made available for local support, even if the activity is international.

- Under inclusion funding support (or exceptional costs), clearly set out the support necessary for youth to participate in online activities, whether this be temporary access to hardware, software, additional internet costs, etc.

SUPPORT RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS

- Support research of online, blended and hybrid formats to identify what works and what can work better. Promote action research within the experimental projects.

- The added value of the type of activity (physical, digital, hybrid, blended) should be clear from the description/impact.

- Widen the organisational scope and length of online activities to best suit the expected outcomes, using a lump sum system to support its implementation.

- We have to keep in mind and analyse the implications of digitalisation on the living environment of young people, projects used to address children's rights?

- To further research and follow up on how E+ and ESC projects and TCA trainings and events, integrate the digital component, showing the number of projects that have a digital component.

Find more info on **Child's Rights in the Digital World**:
- https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/index.cfm

These recommendations and commonplace conclusions by NAs and beneficiaries contain tips on how online, hybrid and blended activities can be well-supported, starting from the premise that they should be made as inclusive and accessible as possible. They are grouped in the following sections:

- CREATE SAFE SPACES

- INVOLVE THE TARGET GROUP

- DISCOVER TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND PLATFORMS

- CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

- DEVELOP COMPETENCES, LEARN AND EXCHANGE

- CONSIDER THE FULL PROJECT CYCLE

Some parts are specific for National Agencies, while most of them are also relevant for beneficiaries. Where possible, examples and references to existing practices have been included as links.

CREATE SAFE SPACES

■ Seek to use digital solutions that are fully compliant with GDPR regulations and keep in mind the bigger ongoing debate about digital rights. While it is tempting to use tools that are offered for free, it is important to understand how personal data is used, where the information is stored and the privacy and safety policies of the company behind the tool.

■ Make sure to have an internal procedure that is compliant with the provisions of GDPR, as well all with national rules and regulations, and that participants and facilitators fully respect them. For a better learning experience, make sure you inform the participants - via e-mail or other chosen tool - about these guidelines.

■ Being safe online means young people build up their cyber resilience, keep their online identity secure, understand their digital footprint and are protected from cyberbullying.

■ Being connected means young people not only have the resources and skills to use technology and access the internet but also to build meaningful relationships. This can happen through the empowerment of young people, training them how to use the internet in a responsible way, what privacy means, and which strategies can work in instances of harassment online. When designing any online/hybrid/blended activity or process, fully respect digital rights. Encourage E+ & ESC beneficiaries to reflect on what digital rights are and how they can be safeguarded.

> For defining elements like the age of **digital consent, or other policies and practices when working with minors online**, check out the Child Protection and Children's Rights in the Digital World project and the Better Internet for Kids portal. Also, refer to national guidelines.

INVOLVE THE TARGET GROUP

- Invest time in planning and carrying out more activities aimed at creating good group dynamics, while also including all participants individually to facilitate exchange on various levels. Devise ways of getting the participants to relax and encourage a level of informal sharing in the activities, e.g. using extra channels (chats, disagreements etc.) and different communication codes (spoken/written words, drawings, etc.)

- Try out the platforms and tools with a test target group to make sure that the team members are familiar with all the functionalities before the activity and to gather feedback from testers on how inclusive they can be in relation to the special needs of the group, etc.

- When creating new digital content, platforms, or designing a new online, hybrid or blended process, review the accessibility criteria as highlighted by relevant organisations (e.g. accessibility guidelines created by the European Blind Union)

- Online & hybrid formats can be more inclusive spaces for young people with various disabilities when the right technologies are used. Consider the use and purchase of assistive technologies that can enable more youth groups to avail of such opportunities.

- Bear in mind that less privileged youth is also less able to access technology, so always try to find a solution that is affordable and manageable for the greatest possible number of participants. Also bear in mind resources like grassroots movements and groups (i.e. Right to Repair campaign activists, Makerspace or Hackerspace centers etc.) could support young people in accessing technology.

- Invite young people to share their digital competencies and knowledge on different tools and projects during the development phases of the learning mobility activities. Initiate a joint reflection on possible difficulties by using chosen digital tools.

- Participatory approach - engage young people in planning and designing activities, for instance, in identifying the needs prior to an event and the digital tools they prefer - especially for longer or blended online events.

- When leading an online activity, be sure to keep the young people engaged by supporting/promoting discussions and planning / allowing time for that. Divide your attention equally, just like you would in any other activity, and consider establishing a digital age of consent to determine from which age you will engage participants online.

DISCOVER TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND PLATFORMS

- Consider a meaningful use of digital tools (or a combination of complementary digital tools) and don't only use them because they are available.

- Analyse which tools best suit your interest and which ones provide most of the features you need- ideally, you should aim to have the smallest number of tools with the maximum number of features.

- Try out the platforms and tools with a test group, to make sure that the team members are familiar with all the functionalities before the activity.

- Allow for extra time at the beginning of the activity when participants are still getting used to the platforms and provide support to participants in using the platform/tools.

- When required, allocate sufficient funding to purchase relevant digital tools, do not expect to solely use free versions of such tools.

- Ensure that chosen platforms are accessible and suitable for all young people expected to join and participate in an online activity.

The **HOP platform** allows the creation of online asynchronous courses (or asynchronous learning elements of other types of activities (e.g. HOP Crash Course)

CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

- The implementation of online, blended or hybrid learning activities requires serious effort (some of the work having already been done during the preparation phase), ensuring the inclusion of disabled and less privileged participants and overall accessibility, - both in terms of equipment and the knowledge/training of the participants. All tools used should ensure the safety and protection of the participants. For this purpose, special attention should be given to ensuring the equal participation of ALL - youth workers and young people!

- Support a mix of group activities using digital devices and activities in the physical world, e.g. reflection walks, meeting somebody locally, providing materials for the activity that are sent by post, scavenger hunts led by online tools etc.

- Try to have diverse activities, even when they entirely take place online. For this goal, you can use multiple tools with various purposes (video, shared documents, sticky notes, ranking platforms etc.). Be mindful of the various tools that are used, so as not to overwhelm participants with too many technical issues when they're using them.

- Enable experiential learning - using digital tools and environments is experiential in nature, but when using them, one should always keep in mind the steps of the experiential learning cycle: reflection, generalisation, application. When aiming to develop digital skills for youth workers or young people, refer to the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) & the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp).

- Refer to EPLM Quality Framework for learning mobility or other Frameworks and only add elements that are specifically relevant when using online tools.

- Regardless of the type of activity being organised, keep the non-formal learning principles in mind and apply them actively in the design and implementation of the activity, enabling methodologies that are learner-centered.

> The main focus should be on learners and empowering them to make the best use of the digital space. Find here some guidelines on **how to create learner-centred online space/activity.**

DEVELOP COMPETENCES, LEARN AND EXCHANGE

- Search existing platforms devoted to youth work and if not successful, search other sectors and /or contribute to the creation of new platforms (developed in co-operation with governments and, when and where possible, with the private sector).

- Foster co-operation between the youth sector and other communities in new formats such as hackathons, ideathons or makerspaces. Find an example here.

- Develop a set of criteria when choosing other tools that would help learners.

- Promote existing online communities and/or create new ones to support the learning process, for instance, Facebook groups, etc.

Specific for the NAs

- NAs and other players need to invest in the training of youth workers to develop their skills for working online with groups, such as creating and holding space, supporting meaningful engagement, and ensuring online safety.

- Develop long-term training programmes for youth workers, trainers, mentors, coaches, facilitators, where experiences can be shared. Consider the possibility of organsing them on a periodical basis- as the youth sector needs to stay up to speed with rapidly changing technology.

- Integrate digital thinking across other major youth work themes, for instance, provide specific training opportunities for youth workers, using existing resources from the Programme (i.e. SALTO PI advisory board on digital transformation) as well as ones from external sources (i.e. Coderdojo clubs network).

- Explore how emerging digital innovations can enable youth work in the future.

- Support the development of community spaces around the beneficiaries' groups/participants.

- NAs and youth field organisations with enough expertise should establish some set of practices at the national level, such as experiences, contacts in accessible/open formats.

DEVELOP COMPETENCES, LEARN AND EXCHANGE

Specific for the NAs

- Establish a peer-learning online exchange at the national level, where NAs can invite beneficiaries/trainers/facilitators with success in online/hybrid/blended mobilities to share their good practices in a forum with other beneficiaries/trainers/facilitators looking to learn/exchange. Then scale it up to a European level for trainers and facilitators engaged with a similar topic, such as the TEC training cycle.

- Consider creating/ appointing a structure or resource centre to bolster the digital transformation of youth work and give training support, share ideas, establish online and offline learning communities, curate lists of expert organisations etc.

CONSIDER THE FULL PROJECT CYCLE

Include all the project phases: From planning, to preparation, to evaluation and impact assessment, from the activities to the follow-up phase. All project phases should pay attention to the specific digital format aspects. Keep in mind that an online learning mobility activity is not a copy-paste version of a residential one. It involves the design of an educational process, the use of different, adequate methodologies, and can include a wide range of technologies.

- The hybrid, blended and online formats are not simply an adaptation of the former residential ones to the digital working environment. Like in residential formats, they are purposed to open participants up, both young people and youth workers, to learning possibilities; to allow them experiment and learn and develop their competencies with the use of online learning tools and technologies.

- The planning phase should reflect how digital content, tools and activities may enrich/ enhance learning opportunities.

- During the preparation phase, when assessing the necessary resources, make sure that you are aware of the required tools, platforms, equipment and human resources.

- Creating one or more backup plan during the preparation stage is crucial in the event that technology fails; have it ready for every online/blended/hybrid activity and be sure that all facilitators/ organisers are familiar with it, should issues arises due to internet/technical platform malfunctions/etc.

- When choosing the digital tools, consider the learning outputs and outcomes you wish to achieve with each tool. See 'Digi Youth Portal' for inspiration.

- Include the end-user in the activity's design process. For example, enquire about preferred platforms for communication, presentations, etc.

If it is your first time organising an hybrid, blended and online mobility, such as a youth exchange, you can look at existing resources such as 'The Star of Europe'

CONSIDER THE FULL PROJECT CYCLE

- Come to agreements with the participants regarding the use of digital tools and send on guidelines beforehand, regarding the use cameras, microphones etc.

- Create a safe space for the learners to meet before, during and after the activity: offer training to facilitators to ensure they are kept continuously updated about what constitutes a 'safe space'. Together with "whitelists"[5] of tools recommended for activities, give the participants a choice, where possible, of platforms, camera on/off, etc. and give the participants the opportunity to expand on their choice.

- Consider that interaction through online tools has considerable limitations, hence specific time has to be set aside for building and maintaining online communities.

FLOW - Facilitating, Learning, Organising and Welcoming! A critical Training of Trainers" was a project implemented by the Service Civil International , which focused on increasing trainers' capacity for inclusive trainings and facilitation, online facilitation techniques and method studies for difficult discussion themes such as gender and discrimination.

[5] https://tacso.eu/publication-list/manuals-on-digital-and-ict-tools-useful-in-csos-work-available-now/
https://www.ict4youthwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/O2-EN-REPORT-1.pdf

CONSIDER THE FULL PROJECT CYCLE

Specific for the NAs

- Collect and share case studies at the local level: communicate the possibilities, scope, scale, values. Give practical examples of what is possible.

- Translate, curate, and share checklists (give some examples) and resources gathered from digital youth work projects.

- Expand the Q App with digital mobility-related content obtained from NAs & beneficiaries, and with examples, resources, checklists etc. After resources have been compiled in English (checklists), they can subsequently be translated into other languages.

- Support communities of practice and provide the space where processes that support online, hybrid or blended activities can be designed.

- Facilitate dialogue and co-operation between youth actors and other stakeholders (e.g. technology experts) with the aim of creating and testing innovative ideas for new formats.

- The mobility project is not finished once you log off! Essential to quality digital mobility activities is the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation system that not only helps track the learning achievements of the participants but also evaluates the activity and develops a consistent follow-up plan!

- Youth organisations should be provided with support or even templates to evaluate their digital activities - especially the blended and hybrid formats- designed in accordance with transversal quality criteria.

CONSIDER THE FULL PROJECT CYCLE

Tips for the NAs

- include post-activity call for updates/catching up;
- use open communication channel (using communication platforms such as Discord, Viber, Whatsapp, Facebook groups, etc.) for staying in contact after the activity;
- provide online evaluation forms beforehand, as well as following and some time after (a few months) the activity for monitoring purposes;

For qualitative assessment:

- ask for a short feedback at the end of the workshop, a brief 'mood picture' of the participants (can be created with tools like Kahoot! or Mentimeter);
- assess the personal attitude of the participants towards online/hybrid/blended activities before and after the workshop;

For quantitative assessment:

- number of participants taking part in activities (development over a specific time frame);
- number of requests for activities;

These conclusions reveal many concerns and issues emerging from youth work practice. Those concerns must be integrated into a long- term approach where policy makers, researchers, NAs and practitioners join forces to support the innovation and the development of digital competences amongst young people and youth workers through learning mobility.

Building a vision where digital transformation is incorporated into learning mobility activities is a necessary step. It is time to shift the focus from online to digital learning mobilities. During the pandemic, we were forced to opt between going fully online or offering no activities. However, as our exercise shows, there are possibilities other than providing fully online activities.

We are still in the early stages of adopting online, hybrid and blended formats of international youth work and training. There is a need to gather further examples of practices, especially of hybrid and blended forms of learning mobility activities, as well as a need for further surveying and more reflection. A proper analysis should be done of what works well for what format (training, youth exchange, youth workers mobility, seminars, volunteering ...).

NAs will have to create a strategy for evaluating projects with a digital component, how to train NA staff and project assessors, how to showcase good practices and how to support beneficiaries and trainers. Moreover, practical details such as wider eligible costs, or new forms of lump sums in instances of online, blended or hybrid activities need to be discussed and proposed by the whole network of NAs.

The European Commission is invited to join the discussions on how EU programmes can support the digital transformation in the youth field. Adapting funding rules and criteria will be necessary to promote the inclusion of a digital component which can be then extended to all actions in the programmes.

With the resumption of residential mobility activities, a new dynamic will unfold where both in-person and online-based learning and co-operation will be intertwined. The post-COVID international mobility mustn't neglect the lessons and experiences learned from the pandemic. Instead, we should create conditions that bolster the potential of digitalisation to transform youth work mobility and reduce the environmental impact of residential mobility activities.

When designing projects aimed at achieving digital transformation, we should concentrate on the technological learnings we've acquired and not primarily focus on tools that were developed to enable digital youth work during the covid crisis; long-term these may not be sustainable, as youth work will predominantly revert to taking place in residential settings. Instead, we should focus on the experience and learning outcomes that we would like to avail of in future, which will be sustainable and which may even contribute to further sustainable behaviours going forward (for instance reducing mobility when unnecessary etc.).

National Agencies and other players need also invest in the training and evaluation of facilitators for digital learning - we cannot assume that all our experienced youth workers (trainers, facilitators, coaches, etc.) know what they are doing online, how to create and hold space and how to make it meaningful outside of video conferences.

ANNEX (FRAMEWORK)

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