Questionnaire about digital competence of the Volunteers

Final Report of Survey Results
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Executive Summary

This report presents selected results from the survey “Questionnaire about digital competence of the Volunteers”. The quest was created as part of KA2 project “eSkills for Volunteers”, Strategic Partnership in the field of Youth, supported by Erasmus plus Programme. The project is lead by Asociación Projuven and other partners organisations are: Associazione di Promozione Sociale Futuro Digitale – Italy, Associação Intercultural Amigos da Mobilidade – Portugal and Asociatia GEYC – Romania.

The main objective of the survey is to learn more about the needs of volunteers in the digital field and analyze the current situation at national and EU level. The resulting databases will be used to strengthen formal and non-formal learning for young people across Europe, to give the possibility to NGOs to count on volunteers/young ICT experts and to enhance association work, digital education, social inclusion, employability and empowerment of youth. All the results resource are collected and analyzed very carefully and the receive information will be used for building e-learning courses for the project (Intellectual Output 1). To those wishing to develop and improve their skills and practices in managing volunteers in the non-formal digital education space, will be available an open online course with video material.

This report covers a wide range of volunteer opinions on questions regarding the digital education, and begins with a summary of the key findings drawn from the survey analysis and strategic recommendations. The recommendations are followed by general conclusions and detailed findings.

Specifically, we examine:

• The importance of the digital skills for the volunteers in their daily work;

• The skill gaps that the youth workers/ volunteers face in their workplace;

• The level of public support, number of activities (university programmes/ NGOs workshops /private courses/public learning programmes) which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge; and

• The best way for the youth workers/volunteer to improve their digital skills;
Methodology

The "Questionnaire about digital competence of the Volunteers" was conducted online using a self-administered questionnaire that was available through an open-access link from February 15 to March 31, 2017. A total of 220 Volunteers and Youth workers across Europe participated and gave their opinion on competence needs and problems in the digital field. A copy of the survey instrument is available in the appendix. Respondents were not asked to provide their names, addresses, or contact information in the questionnaire. Almost all of the questions were optional, but there were two open questions. We wanted to explore some new ideas and also we had some doubts about other possible response. For this reason we gave surveyed the best way to answer.

The survey was conducted online and could be completed in multiple sessions. A typical respondent spent no more than 10 minutes to complete it. The questionnaire was created using EUSurvey service, an European Commission's official survey management tool, launched in 2013 and distributed to participants through the partner networks, web platforms, presented during the training sessions in different countries, professional discussions with colleagues, seminars, informal talks, staff meetings.

Key findings

*The numbers in brackets preceding statements refer to the survey question number as indicated in the main report.*

- (Q1) In 2015, the EU commission launched the campaign “eSkills for Job” under the programme Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, aimed to raise awareness of the opportunities that digital skills offer for employment and employability and especially to ensure that women are able to partake equally in the opportunities offered by the digital economy. However, the problem of equal participation and opportunities of women in digital economy is still on the rise, but regarding our database they are more interested in this topic. In fact, the first finding of our survey showed that 66,45% of the respondents are females.
(Q2) Almost all of the survey respondents who shared their opinion about the topic are between 18-25 years old (65.45%). This result follows our expectations, particularly it reflects the target group that we focused at the beginning of the survey design, related always to the aims of the project. However, 15.91% of the respondents are from people between 26-33 years old and the other 13.18% and 5.45% belong to the participants from the group 34-40 years old and to 41+.

(Q3) The survey was extensively disseminated among volunteers involved in the NGO sector and a select group of youth workers. Since program participants represented variety of countries, we made everything to ensure that the survey was understandable and the participants felt comfortable answering survey questions. Due to the partner consortium of the project composed of 4 different nationalities, we chose to translate the surveys into Spanish, Romanian, Italian, Portuguese and English. A significant percentage of those who responded to the questionnaire are participants from Romania (55.45%), so the results will be more orientated about the
opinion and competences of the Romanian youngsters and volunteers. The results showed that the second ones who answered the survey are Spaniard, followed by Italian and Portuguese. In the questionnaire also have participated people from other European countries as Bulgaria, Poland, France, Estonia, Denmark, United Kingdom, with total percentage of 21, 83%. Also two more countries which are not part of the European Union took part in the survey.

![Fig.3, related to Q3 * In which EU country do you live?](image)

- (Q4) Overall two third of the participants indicated that they consider digital skills as a very important for their job positions as a volunteer and a small proportion of people surveyed (29,09%) replied that the lack of digital skills could be a problem for their daily work. Based on this information, we will focus on reinforcement of the ICT digital knowledge in order to strengthen social inclusion and uniform the basis of work of ICT-active organizations.

- (Q5) Firstly, we asked the volunteers/youth workers, if they need to gain more digital skills and secondly, why they do. Of the total respondents, 37.27% of people said that it’s will help them to get a better job, 36.36% need them because it’s a “benefit from ICT for personal life tasks and objectives” and 16.82 % want to use them in everyday life, leisure time. For 21 persons involved in the survey research there is not necessary and they are not interested. However, Digital Skills are a major priority for Europe and that’s why with our project we aim to fostering them. Every day, there are new, well-paid jobs being created in Europe’s digital economy, but at present, half of all citizens in the European Union have no or low computer skills. In order for Europe to continue moving towards prosperity and growth, it needs to equip its citizens with the necessary skills for the jobs of tomorrow. Being active in
digital education and relying on volunteers in the ONG is fundamental, and we would like to resolve this problem, improving the youth work in that specific field.

Fig. 4, related to Q5 * Why do you need to gain more digital skills?

- (Q6) We were interested to know what kind of digital competence the volunteers use in their workplace. The most common answer is “digital skills for the general workplace”, which is 45.45% of the total result and other 30.91% of the respondents chose “digital skills for ICT professions”. As we know in the modern workplace, digital skills are highly valued and in the future, they will be so vital, so this percentage it’s not surprised us. However, an estimated 23.64% of respondents chose “basic digital literacy skills” which are required for every job position. As our modern industrial strategy sets out, a lack of digital skills is not only a barrier to people fulfilling their potential, but also a barrier to a more productive economy. For this reason we have to ensure that the young workers and volunteers have the digital skills they need for work.

Fig. 5, related to Q6 * In your workplace and everyday life activities you should use?

Everyday life activities

- Basic Skills
- Digital Skills for the general workforce
- Digital skills for ICT professions

30.91 23.64 45.45
(Q7) The survey has shown that a clear majority of respondents (59.55%) use Google Drive in order to share their contents on the web, but anyway the research indicated that also Dropbox and Onedrive are useful for the youth workers. Only 13.18% of people said that they prefer to use other tools to share their contents.

![Free tools for share contents](image)

*Fig. 6, related to Q7* *Which free tools do you use to share your contents (if any)?*

(Q8) When participants were asked about the most sought after digital skills among youth workers/volunteers in their country, the most commonly cited response was programming and web development (29.55%), followed by Social Media (27.73%). As is evident, those digital skills are considered very important for youth when they are looking for job, but also Project management (18.64%) is among the top 3 IT skills. We are living in a digital world where the project management is extremely valuable because more bigger and complex project, means better qualified project managers to manage those projects. It involves coordination between teams and precise expectation management. Digital marketing and smartphone apps development received only 12.27% and 11.82%, but anyway in our e-learning courses we will dedicated some modules with useful information on those skills in order to benefit each one of the participants.
Fig. 7, related to Q8  *What are the most sought after digital skills among youth workers/volunteers in your country?*

- (Q9) The question related to the number of activities (university programmes/NGOs workshops/private courses/public learning programmes) which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge cause confusion because 27.27 %, or this is 60 participants responded that in their country they defiantly have it, but on the other hand 58 people (26.36%) said that in their country there are a very few initiatives about digital skills and other 56 participants confirmed that the public sector is weak and doesn’t provide funds for organizations. We suppose that the result is due to the people with different nationalities involucrate in the questionnaire. How we already commented on the (Q3), the survey has shown that more of the participants involved in it, are Romanian (55,45%), but they are people from more than 10 different country who took part in the survey request. Because of the negative response about the number of activities which ensures young people to be up-date with digital knowledge, during the implementation of our project and after its end, we will focus on creating different initiative for the youngsters, on local and international level, in order to give them all the need digital skills for their professional development, enhance digital education, social inclusion, employability and empowerment of youth.
Do you think that your country has a number of activities (university programmes/ NGOs workshops/private courses/public learning programmes) which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge?

- (Q10) The three most popular skill gaps that the youth workers/ volunteers face in the workplace were “lack of Technical competence or office skills” (chosen by 49.55% of respondents), “the difficulty for the youngster to be always update and to acquire the latest skills that are required from the organization” (36.36%), and “lack of Social Media experience” (24.09%). Those facts can be used in relation to the previous interpretation of the question (Q9). Relevant volunteer opportunities should be provided and will be organized more activities in local communities in order to train young against challenges encountered in the workplace. One of our e-Learning modules for sure will be based on the social media skills, because surveyed participants indicate them as a very important part of the required digital skills in their workplace.
In your opinion which are the skill gaps that the youth workers/volunteers face in the workplace?

- (Q11) 55,91% of people said that Practical sessions (learning by doing) are the best way for the youth workers/volunteer to improve their digital skills, followed by “through online courses learning” (21,36%). Only 34 participants’ chose “face-to-face learning” and other 16 people said that they prefer to learn through reading a book on specialized topic. We strongly believe that the future of education lies with online learning. Having the option of taking online classes and studying on your own time is critically important. In today’s job market, taking online courses help youth workers remain competitive and give them opportunity to study 24/7 wherever they are. With our e-learning courses we aim to capacity the volunteers/youth workers give them flexibility to learn without need to take time off from their jobs and offer them a competitive edge when looking for work.
(Q12) We asked our participants, how they best learn online. A survey indicated that the vast majority of them do it through “practical activities (learning by doing)” (55.45 %), 25.91 % prefer “Video (one person explaining concepts)”, 9.09 % “Through video animation” and only 14 people, which is 6.36 % use “Slides + voice over”. The e-learning modules created during the implementation of the project will be focused on the method “learning by doing”. There is a wide range of design models that aim to embed learning within real world contexts. Project-based learning is one of them. It’s based around real needs and problems, which give students a sense of responsibility and ownership in their learning activities. We ensure that all the material prepared for the youngster needs will be use in our organization’s daily work. We will train our volunteers, youth workers with the most important digital skills and different workshops will be organized, based on digital competences, awareness raising activities, mentoring and other non-formal educative activities in order to provide digital education, empowerment of youth and attract lots of goodwill from volunteers and companies which want to get involved in the activities.

**How do you best learn online**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical activities (learning by doing)</td>
<td>55.45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides + voice over</td>
<td>6.36 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video (one person explaining concepts)</td>
<td>25.91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through video animation</td>
<td>9.09 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.18 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.11, related to Q12 *How do you best learn online?*

(Q13) We were interested to know what would be the most suitable duration for an e-Learning course that the volunteers/youth workers would attend. Unfortunately, we didn’t receive very clear opinion about that question because the difference between the percentages of the first three replies was very small. 30 % of people chose “6 weeks, 10 hours per week”, 24.55 % said “8 weeks, 7 hours per
week" and 22.27% of the responses were for “12 weeks, 5 hours per week”. Only 14.55 % prefer to have courses with duration of “6 weeks, 20 hours per week" and the other 8.64 % would like to attend "12 weeks, 10 hours per week”. We will take into consideration the dates received from the survey request and will create the modules in the best way possible in order to be flexible and comfortable for each one.

![Pie Chart: The most suitable duration for an eLearning course](image)

**Fig.12, related to Q13** *What would be the most suitable duration for an eLearning course you would attend?*

- (Q14) More than half of the participants in the questionnaire would like to get descriptive certificate in the end of the course (57.27%). 71 participants or 32,27% of people preferred to have certificate with a grade, followed by 10,45% who want another kind of certificate.

![Pie Chart: Most suitable sort of certification](image)

**Fig.13, related to Q14** *What would be the most suitable duration for an eLearning course you would attend?*
(Q15) One of the open questions in the survey was related with the experience of the youth workers/volunteers in organized ICT events. Most of the surveyed people said that they have never organized event related with the topic, but a lot of them would like to have a need competence and opportunity to do it. However, some of the participants indicate that already have organized ICT Course in their own country, different events related to digital competence, coding, crowdfunding and computer games workshops. We are happy to know that a part of the participants have experience in organized ICT events, and for those who are motivated to do it, we will ensure as much as possible opportunities to develop their skills in order to achieve every professional objectives in the field.

(Q16) We were interested to know on which ICT topics they love/would you love to work on. The most commonly cited response was related to social media (social media management, social media skills, how to create a learning course on social media marketing, how to use social media to advertise). Also project management was considered as very important topic and ability to carry out a number of benefits for the NGOs and volunteers professional development. Some of the participants indicated as interesting topics like web development, mobile application, programming and digital marketing.

(Q17) We asked the volunteers/youth workers what does it mean for them “Digital Literacy”. An estimated 42.72% said that this is “an ability to use information in multiple formats from a wide variety”, followed by “ability to use social media, organization, website, Smartphone apps” with 34.09%. On the other hand Digitally Literacy was considered as “participation in the Information Society and apply information to create and communicate knowledge” or just “being comfortable with digital communications” (24.55%).

(Q18) In order to prepare the most suitable e-learning courses for our target group we wanted to know what is the current competency level of each one involved in the questionnaire. We asked the participants about their competence on social media, integrating and re-elaborating digital content, Programming (office, linux, java, web development), problem solving, social, mobile and analytics skills. The youngsters could choose between 3 different competency levels (Beginner, Competence, Expert) or “Skip the topic”, if they are not comfortable to reply on it. A survey indicated that the vast majority of participants feel competent in all those skills, excepted Programming issues. The volunteers/youth workers face difficulties related to web development, java, linux, and office. Anyway, they are 36.82% of people who are able
to manage them and 6.82% said that they are expert in this sphere. Participants considered themselves as expert on social media and communications skills. Also youths indicated that they are familiar with mobile skills, which is not surprising. Nowadays, mobile phones have become a crucial part of our daily life. In total, around 5% of the participants selected “Skip the topic” which is good indicator who will help us to understand better the competence and problems of the volunteers/youth workers.
(Q19) We asked our participants if they are other digital skills vital for their work as a volunteer and their professional development, but seem that with previous questions (Q18) we described all the possible answers, so nobody add any other important digital skills.

(Q20) Finally, respondents were asked about their experience as a volunteers and if they duties in the workplace match up their expectations. Usually, most people do not communicate their expectations clearly, to the appropriate person, and at the most effective times and they often have unacknowledged and unspoken expectations. In fact, 42,72% of people chose “mostly”, followed by 31,82% “partially”. For 35 volunteers or 15,91% the task match up their expectation and 5% said “I did more than expected” and “Not at all”. We have therefore have identified new opportunities and challenges for capacity building and improvement of youth work in that specific field. Nevertheless we have also noticed that volunteering can often be under-exploited or not-well managed, particularly when it comes to current
ICT activities or when it comes to the concrete organisation of events or informal courses.

**Recommended improvements**

- Empower youth workers and volunteers to fully exploit all the potentials of digital education and digital skills.

- Ensure regular communication with the youth workers/volunteer.

- Provide more opportunities to volunteer/youth worker in their local community which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge.

- Run more training events for volunteers to improve their skills, focus on digital competence

- Support digital skills and carry out awareness-raising about the importance of digital skills for employability, competitiveness and participation in society.

- Strengthen formal and non-formal learning for young people across Europe.

**General conclusions from the results of the survey**

As it was explained in the introduction to the present report, the main objective of this research programme was to learn more about the needs of volunteers in the digital field and analyze the current situation at national and EU level, in order to build the most suitable e-learning courses (Intellectual Output 1) for our project.

The general conclusions that can be drawn from the questionnaire:

- For the needs of volunteers/youth workers will be created 4 different e-Learning modules on relevant topic.

  I. Social Media skills

  II. Project management

  III. Programming and web development

  IV. Digital Marketing (Mobile Marketing, Email Marketing, Content Marketing)
Regarding the negative answers about the number of activities which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge, during the implementation of our project and after its end, we will focus on creating different initiative for the youngsters, on local and international level, in order to give them all the need digital skills for their professional development, enhance digital education, social inclusion, employability and empowerment of youth.

We have identified new challenges for capacity building and improvement of youth work in that specific field, so with our work we will master these skills in order to fill the huge gap created by the digital revolution.
Annex 1

Questionnaire about digital competence of the volunteers

1. Please indicate your gender
   a/ Male
   b/ Female

2. What is your age group?
   a/ 18-25
   b/ 26-33
   c/ 34-40
   d/ 41+

3. In which EU country do you live?
   - Austria
   - Belgium
   - Bulgaria
   - Croatia
   - Cyprus
   - Czech Republic
   - Denmark
   - Estonia
   - Finland
   - France
   - Germany
   - Greece
   - Hungary
   - Ireland
   - Italy
   - Latvia
   - Lithuania
   - Luxembourg
   - Malta
   - Netherlands
   - Poland
   - Portugal
   - Romania
   - Slovak Republic
   - Slovenia
   - Spain
   - Sweden
   - United Kingdom
   - Others
4. Do you consider digital skills as a necessary for your job position as a volunteer?

a/ yes, they are pretty much necessary
b/ no, my work positions doesn`t require special digital skills
c/ the lack of digital skills sometimes could be a problem

5. Why do you need to gain more digital skills?

a/ it`s a benefit from ICT for personal life tasks and objectives
b/ will help me to get a better job
c/ to use in everyday life, leisure time
d/ I am not interested

6. In your workplace and everyday life activities you should use?

a/ basic digital literacy skills
b/ digital skills for the general workforce
c/ digital skills for ICT professions

7. Which free tools do you use to share your contents (if any)?

a/ Google Drive
b/ Dropbox
c/ OneDrive
d/ Other
8. What are the most sought after digital skills among youth workers/volunteers in your country?

a/ Programming and web development
b/ Project management
c/ Smartphone apps development
d/ Social Media
e/ Digital Marketing

9. Do you think that your country has a number of activities (university programmes/ NGOs workshops/private courses/public learning programmes) which ensures young people to be up-to-date with digital knowledge?

a/ Yes, definitely
b/ Public sector is weak and doesn't provide funds for organizations
c/ Taking private courses is the only way to improve one's skills
d/ In my country there are a very few initiatives about digital skills
e/ Other

10. In your opinion which are the skill gaps that the youth workers/volunteers face in the workplace? (multiple answers possible)

a/ lack of Social Media experience
b/ lack of Technical competence or office skills
c/ the difficulty for the youngster to be always update and to acquire the latest skills that are required from the organization
d/ Other
11. Which is the best way for the youth workers/volunteer to improve their digital skills?

a/ through online courses learning  
b/ Practical sessions (learning by doing)  
c/ face-to-face learning  
d/ learning through reading a book on specialized topic

12. How do you best learn online?

a/ Through video animation  
b/ Video (one person explaining concepts)  
c/ Slides + voice over  
d/ Practical activities (learning by doing)  
e/ Others

13. What would be the most suitable duration for an eLearning course you would attend?

a/ 6 weeks, 10 hours per week  
b/ 8 weeks, 7 hours per week  
c/ 12 weeks, 5 hours per week  
d/ 6 weeks, 20 hours per week  
e/ 12 weeks, 10 hours per week

14. What sort of certification of the course do you find most suitable?
a/ Descriptive certificate

b/ Certificate with a grade

c/ Other

15. Have you ever organized an ICT event? If yes on which topic?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. On which ICT topics do you love/would you love to work on?

(1= max preference; 5= min preference)

1. ............ 2. ............ 3. ............ 4. ............ 5. ............

17. What does it mean for you “Digital Literacy”? (multiple answers possible)

a/ being comfortable with digital communications

b/ ability to use social media, organization website, smartphone apps

c/ the ability to use information in multiple formats from a wide variety of sources when it is presented via computer

d/ participation in the Information Society and apply information to create and communicate knowledge

e/other
18. For every topic about your digital skills, please select your current competency level or select "Skip this topic".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginner</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Skip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media (facebook, twitter, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating and re-elaborating digital content</td>
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<td>Mobile skills (smartphone apps)</td>
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<td>Analytics skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programming (office, linux, java, web development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
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19. Are there any other skills you feel are vital for your work as a volunteer and also for your professional development?

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20. About your experience as volunteer:

Did your duties match up with your expectations?

a/ Not at all
b/ Partially

c/ Mostly

d/ I completely agree

e/ I did more than expected