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WE START IO1 „GUIDE“- RESEARCH REPORT:

The aim of this research paper is to provide the project team with information on the use of electronic media by women who shall be addressed by the project. The research was carried out in spring 2019.

The "Guide" - the initial research - of WESTART used a mixed method approach i.e. a combination of quantitative questionnaires for institutions, semi qualitative guided interviews with learners as well as a collection of so called good practice examples and the minutes and comments of the Territorial Working Groups installed in each partner country and used as a sounding board and extra source of expertise for the project. This approach was decided upon for two reasons, one mainly pragmatic as the questionnaires could be sent out by the institutions and collected and evaluated centrally by lernraum.wien, and second, because the different perspectives achieved by this approach allow for triangulation and a multi-perspective view of the data. Like pieces of a puzzle, the individual components of the research are supposed to produce a complete picture.

I. INTRODUCTION

I. 1. QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INSTITUTIONS

The questionnaires were designed by lernraum.wien, following an example of research carried out by the basic skill networks MIKA in Austria¹ .

I. 2. INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS

The guidelines for the interviews were originally designed by lernraum.wien, then debated with all partners and consequently translated. There were some “closed questions” and some open ones. The interviewers also provided comments about the interviewees and their backgrounds and contexts (see below).

I. 2.1. Comments on women interviewed and their contexts provided by project partners and interviewers

The women interviewed remain anonymous but some remarks about the Interviewees are added here in order to make the contexts in which the women were interviewed and live more clearly and less one-dimensional (all the women are referred to by “she”):

She has a degree in high school; she has worked in hotels and restaurants. At the moment she is unemployed.
She has only held temporary jobs (part time).
She came from Morocco; she arrived in Italy and got married in 2014. After 2 years she decided to get a divorce and to start finding a job. Now she's working as waitress in a restaurant, has studied for a driving licence, rented a flat. For 2 years she hasn't gone back to Morocco. Her desire is to live in Italy.
She was born in Venezuela. 3 years ago she arrived in Italy. She has married in Italy. She holds degrees in computer science and graphic design. At the moment she is unemployed.
She was born in Bulgaria but has lived in Cyprus for the past 15 years. She did not study anything and she has been working for many years. Only in the last 6 months she is not working anywhere as she tries to find out her next step, working out different ideas and things (work and learning related). She suggested that applications and the media in general are very useful for personal development and for spending your leisure time in

¹https://www.netzwerkmika.at/application/files/7214/9130/5248/Auswertung_IKT_Interviews_Homepage.pdf

<p>a fun way. However, you need to be careful when it comes to learning new things to cross check your sources in order not to learn the wrong things.</p>
<p>She is a Cypriot woman who studied English Literature.</p>
<p>She is a Cypriot woman who studied Political Sciences and finished her internship at the Cyprus Youth Council 10 months ago. At the moment she is looking for further training and a job.</p>
<p>She is a Somalian woman living in Cyprus since 2016. She did not go to school in her country and in Cyprus she attended school for few months to learn the language mostly. She is using her smartphone mostly but she is comfortable using other devices as well. She is interested in fashion blogs, food and sometimes she uses her phone to learn Greek by watching movies, reading news, etc.</p>
<p>She is a Serbian woman living in Cyprus and looking for job since she arrived in here. She is trying to network and educate herself through Digital devices; especially as it comes to the learning of Greek language, using apps like Duo lingo and quiz's to advance her skills. Her husband works in Cyprus and she is a stay home mum of 2 children since she is finding it very difficult to find a job or even being involved in vocational training. However, she tries to attend some seminars in order to update and improve herself.</p>
<p>She comes from the Philippines and lives in Cyprus and works in the field of domestic service. The reason why I chose to interview her is because even though she has a job, she is self- motivated to advance herself and skills and contribute in her community; something that is a great example to follow. Specifically, she is networking through the social media in order to create opportunities and share news with other women (the community of Philippines and other migrant women) about the procedures they need to follow and help them in general.</p>
<p>She is from Lebanon living in Cyprus and looking for a job as a teacher/ professor. She uses the devices and applications mostly for learning purposes. To read articles, news, information about various topics, etc. She rarely accesses social media to socialise.</p>
<p>She is a Turkish woman with no formal training attending a basic skills course at the moment.</p>
<p>She is a Kurdish woman attending the same course as the women described above</p>
<p>She is a young woman attending a preparatory course for the compulsory school leaving exam in Vienna.</p>

II. 3. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

There were clear criteria for the selection of good practice examples laid out from the beginning:

- *easy access by learners*
- *participatory dimension*
- *usability*
- *practicability*

The good practice examples were not evaluated as it seems unfair and impossible to critically assess the above criteria from project descriptions and a more thorough examination of the examples was outside the scope of this report.

II. 4. MINUTES FROM TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUPS

The Territorial Working Groups were installed in each partner country in order to access expert knowledge on different levels, i.e. local administration, local politics, NGOs and people working with so called marginalized women.

The Meetings of the groups more or less followed a common procedure (see below). The minutes of the meetings are added in this report as they include important information for the design and development of the social learning platform.

Local Working Group (LWG)

The main objectives of the Working groups were:

1. to define the methodological approaches that improve access and participation of target women to training;
2. to indicate the most innovative methods that favor social inclusion through the development of transversal skills and some key competences;
3. to indicate the digital tools that reduce the gender gap.

II. DATA ANALYSIS

II. 1. QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INSTITUTIONS

The questionnaires were drafted by lernraum.wien and translated by the partners, who also contacted institutions they are cooperating with and sent out the questionnaires. These were filled in, returned and analysed using "survey monkey". In total 25 questionnaires were filled in. The number of returns in each country were: Austria 3, Cyprus 4, Germany 4, Greece 3, Italy 9 and Romania 2.

The availability of electronic media in general is quite impressive, we can observe that on average, institutions of adult education and NGOs participating in the survey have all devices that we asked about, except for the fact that only institutions in Italy and Germany have smart white boards: Smart phone 56%, tablets 44% PCs 88% and smart whiteboards 36%.

A closer look into the distribution among the countries, though, shows quite significant differences: **The distribution of electronic devices is rather uneven and seems to reflect the economic status of the participating "countries"**.

Smart whiteboards are exclusively available in Germany and Italy; Smart phones and PCs are available in all countries with the exception of Romania, where only PCs are available for work in classrooms.

Yet, not only the distribution differs in the individual countries, but also the degree of availability. We can observe that in all partner countries PCs, smartphones and tablets are available to almost the same extent whereas we can observe a relative "dominance" of PCs in Greece and an absolute "dominance" of PCs in Romania.

Availability alone cannot be considered as a criterion for easy access, hence there was a follow up question about the easiness of availability of devices.

From a perspective of usage, **we can observe that PCs are predominantly used in all countries and institutions, followed by tablets and smartphones and in some cases learning platforms.**

II.1.2. Participatory use of electronic media

In the following paragraphs some answers to the question are listed (the complete answers can be found in the appendix). The answers show a wide spectrum of uses and abundant creativity and space for participation.

Question No.12 of the survey *"Do you consider your use of electronic media in learning / teaching activities participatory and providing room for active participation of the women? If yes, which of your use of electronic resources and tools do you consider an example of good practice. Pls. provide a short description."* was answered as followed:

We integrated the smartphones of our students learning process in order to encourage them to get involved in co-development of our educational material. In specific our students in Second Chance School, after selecting one of the common identified thematic topics, build the material by using their smartphones (as a mean for learning). For example, they search for relevant resources or literature online, or they search elements of the topic in the city environment and they take photos of these elements in order to make a presentation afterwards in the classroom, working in groups via forum or apps i.e. Facebook messenger and WhatsApp

The use of Mentimeter: Our participants, mainly women, are invited through a message with a link to get involved actively by expressing their own opinion on topics identified. The results are appeared in a direct interactive way encouraging further discussions, reflections and further elaborations (differentiations, etc.). In this way, we create a cooperative environment that provides opportunities and food for further thoughts and considerations.

The electronic devices are clearly used with the purpose of the direct participation and expression of the opinions of women form vulnerable groups. The good practice which is above referred, is about women coming from the Roma community who are invited to participate in courses on business plan and IT, in order to become capable in marketing online their business idea.

Certainly, the use of the WhatsApp group is widely used for information exchange and document sharing.

The TEAL (Technology Enhanced Active Learning) methodology which involves face to face lessons, simulations and laboratory activities on computers, for a lively learning experience based on collaboration.

Generally, I could say that, above all, the social networks make relations, the dissemination of information and the possibility of asking for clarification
tablets and smart phones for the creation of online material
An online platform with texts, videos and other useful links.
They can use some app games for example Kahoot, to learn something new. They can give their devices to each other to play some games (app games)
In the WhatsApp-group useful links to learning pages and other relevant resources are shared.

II.1.3. Innovative use of electronic media

Answers to question No13 „*What aspect of your use of electronic resources and tools do you consider innovative, and why? We would be grateful if you could provide us with a brief description*“ are listed below:

The contribution by the learners in the composition of the educational material through the use of smartphones is absolutely innovative.
The use of smartphones for educational purposes is an innovation because it is broadening the information capacity and usability of this information and also makes women to learn and self-evaluate their needs and their priorities, for written communication and express clearly their opinions.
I don't know if I could characterize it innovative but surely facilitates in tremendous way the participation of the learners and the group synthesis (dynamics).
In class study groups, flipped classroom.
The platforms dedicated to teaching, videos that through the use of cartoons, facilitate learning, and the cooperative works that can be carried out remotely, such as on Padlet or Drive, are precious in the context in which we operate, they maintain inclusion and cohesion of the group and facilitate participation and learning.
The use of the IWB, i.e. the electronic board connected to a computer. It is a useful tool because it stimulates attention through different media channels, it favors students' manual ability and makes abstract concepts through digital representation.
I consider the methods to be more innovative than the tools. I use them a lot for some Italian lessons or audio texts, we listen to almost all the classics of literature through the Rai website. This well-structured activity promotes learning by facilitating those who have difficulties related to dyslexia, which is a very common learning disability among evening course participants.

But not everywhere and at all times are electronic media used and available, institutional constraints seem to play a major role:

As I am working for an institution with a very limited budget there are hardly any innovative aspects in my work, Our PCs are old and so I work with paper based material most of the time.

My participants are not used to learning and have no competencies. Their fear of technology should be overcome and fun of learning fostered.

II. 2. INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS

In this section, the data from the interviews will be presented; a total of 32 interviews were carried out by all partners in the 6 partner countries within the context of their own institution or in contexts familiar with the partners.

We intend to highlight the diversity of the group addressed by the project; first by the age ranges, followed by both so called first languages and additional languages, i.e. the language repertoires used by the group.

II. 2.1. Diversity

Although the group of women addressed by the project is situated in the age range of 25 to 40 years, some women were interviewed who were younger or older than this. The data are included in this report as we consider the "outliers", i.e. women younger than 25 or older than 40 interesting and relevant to the overall results. Especially women older than 45 show different media use and access than the younger ones, a fact that could be considered in other projects.

The main age groups represented by the research are between 18 and 39 years.

The women in the „groups“ speak 20 different „first languages“ with no apparent dominance of any language apart from Greek (20%) or Italian (16%).

The other first languages ranging from Amharic to Thai are used by 3% (or one) of the interviewees.

The additional languages also show an impressive range from English (42%), German (17%) Italian and Greek (7%), French and Turkish (2%) as well as others such as Dutch, Kazakh, Tamil or Hindi (1%) each.

Yet another area of diversity is the level of education, which surprisingly is rather high: **16 out of the 32 interviewees have university degrees. And five more have 12 years of schooling.** There are only 2 interviewees with hardly any or no schooling at all, these are also older than the average group and the envisaged group of the project. "Marginalisation" for the highly educated women means no access to jobs adequate to their level of education.

II. 2.2. Availability of electronic devices

All interviewees have a smart-phone; fewer possess computers and even fewer tablets. (29 out of 32 interviewees use their smartphone every day; if we include the answer "more than once a week" **we can observe that 30 interviewees use their smartphone quite regularly. Which, in combination with the wide availability, is quite a significant result for the continuing project work.**

We can see clearly that neither tablets nor computers have the same function in the lives of the women as smartphones.

The women interviewed use their smartphones predominantly for private purposes (88%) and social contacts (75%). Almost 40% use them for work and 63% for learning.

Possession and availability of smart phones only tells half of the story. Hence we need to take a closer look at the purposes for which these are being used:

We can observe that smartphones are predominantly used for private purposes but also for learning (63%), which in the context of the project seems to be of relevance.

A more detailed description of uses for the smartphones (and tablets) shows that *watching videos* (100%) *communication with family and friends* (97%), *taking photos* (91%), *getting information* (94%), *listening to music* (91%) and the *timer function* (88%) are the dominant functions of the devices. *Calculating using the smartphone* (75%) and the *dictionary function* (78%) also rank quite high. The active function of *making videos* ranks lower at 59%. *Playing games* rates lowest with only 43%.

In this respect, we see a clear divide in age groups: The age group 18-29 seems to be the most independent users, followed by the age groups 30-39. Women who are older than 40 seem to be much more dependent on the help of others.

One of the key questions for the project was whether electronic devices are used for learning and the result is encouraging in our context: 81% of the women use their devices for learning at home (this number is higher than the one given to question about smart phone usage).

Not only do women own and use their smartphones, they also feel comfortable using it, with the exception of one person.

Counter to the experience with women in basic skills context (see report of expert board of Austria appendix p.73 in the long version of the Guide), most **(i.e. 91%) of the women interviewed for this survey, have an e-mail address.**

II 2.3. THE MAIN RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

The availability of electronic media in general is quite impressive. On average, institutions of adult education and NGOs participating in the survey have all devices that we asked about, (except for the fact that only institutions in Italy and Germany have smart white boards).

A closer look into the distribution among the countries, though, shows quite significant differences:

- The distribution of electronic devices is rather uneven and seems to reflect the economic status of the participating "countries".
- PCs are predominantly used in all countries and institutions, followed by tablets and smartphones and in some cases learning platforms.
- PCs are the most easily available devices in the classrooms which depicts a rather conservative picture of media use.

30 interviewees use their smartphone quite regularly. Which, in combination with the wide availability, is quite a significant result for the continuing project work.

The women interviewed use their smartphones predominantly (88%) for private purposes and social contacts (75%). Almost 40% use them for work and 63% for learning.

We can see that most women are quite independent in their handling of electronic devices, all women use apps, and they use a variety of different apps.

An indicator of the self-determined use of electronic devices is the fact that 80% of the women downloaded their apps themselves

Not only do women own and use their smartphones, they also feel comfortable using it.

91% of the women interviewed for this survey, have an e-mail address.

16 out of the 32 interviewees have university degrees. And five more have 12 years of schooling.

It seems that media usage, at least in a quantitative way, i.e. how often and to what purpose and which devices are being used, is not totally dependent on education alone.

The main problems and obstacles in the training courses for women between 25 and 40 years are conditions of fragility.

Women use apps to great extent: 31 out of 32 answer that they do use apps, only one person says she doesn't and explains this with lack of time: *„I do not have the time to post pictures and/ or posts. However, I use Messenger and Viber to contact family. As for Instagram and Facebook, I do use them occasionally just to scroll down a bit but I hardly ever post something myself.“*

III. GOOD PRACTICES WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF NEW MEDIA FOR LEARNING PURPOSES IN ADULT EDUCATION

The partnership has collected a number of so-called good practice examples of electronic platforms and tools, as well as training material for ICT which is listed below. All examples follow the criteria elaborated at the start of the project (see p. 7), albeit to varying degrees (the complete descriptions as provided by the partners can be found (in the appendix p. 47) in the long version of the Guide):

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Adult Education to Acquire Basic Skills in New Technologies "Heron-2"
Adult Education Centres
Development of digital competences for and in cooperation with migrants (in basic skill education)/ Digitale Kompetenzen in der Basisbildung mit Migrant*innen authentisch erarbeiten
DIGITALIANO
E-Book Design Tool
EPALE
E-TRAINERS: new skills and tools for vet
GET UP, Gender Equality Training to overcome Unfair discrimination Practices in education and labour market,
iLearnGreek
I want to learn (dt. Ich will lernen)
Life Skills for Europe
Mediterranean Migration Network (MMN)
MUPYME Project - Employment and women on the 21st century in Europe: From household economy to the economy of SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises)
Padlet (App)
RIACs – Acceleratori di Integrazione nel mercato del lavoro regionale di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo
Vocationally oriented program for literacy and basic education: „BELUGA“

IV. IDEAS FROM THE TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUPS (SUMMARY)

A- identify the main problems and obstacles in the training courses for women between 25 and 40 years in a condition of fragility

- linguistic barriers and cultural differences, illiteracy, inadequate educational content, self-censorship and/or lack of motivation on the part of the trainees, and so on.

- The women encounter specific problems (linguistic, cultural, and financial barrier, specific access problems, etc.), therefore, it is necessary to adapt methods and contents to their needs.
- social isolation and lack of a personal networks can be an issue for migrant women
- Time, financial reasons, lack of flexibility of employment and educational system, Lack of vocational opportunities, Racist behaviors (Cyprus)
- economic factors (lack of money)
- women live "in a world of their own"
- women are not schooled ()²
- women are afraid of confrontation, "of mixing"
- (Italy)

Vulnerable women as identified from the participants (working) experience are considered the ones with limited access to opportunities due to:

- migration background
- functional or organic illiteracy
- socio cultural barriers (Roma community, single mothers, unemployed etc)

These women need further motivation to participate in training opportunities than the 'traditional' learners.

²see above 50% of the group have university degrees, this is not true for women in basic skills contexts and may be a result of the specific situation in Cyprus (the editors)

Barriers for their active participation in learning activities

Lack of information: They are not aware of what is offered. Usually the information doesn't reach them even if it is relevant for them and about them – it is usually circulated internally among professionals; or women already in education – or it happens once and it is not systematically and repetatively provided

Lack of network from groups in reference (i.e Training Centers, Social Workers, School, Parents Assosiations, etc): Most of the women follow a routine in their social networks with people sharing the same nterests or problems or even barriers, hence they perceive their individual sitation as normal.

'norm' barriers: For most of them, the tradition of the women staying at home, being housewives or even just get out to share a coffee in a coffee house – is the norm. Everything out of this norm is exceptional and probably to be excluded by their familiar / friendly networks if they do something out of this norm

Low confidence: A common answer by women from marginalized environments is "Training? This is not for me. "I am too old (at the age of 35!!), I have a lot of house work .. I am not that clever, etc.

Lack of conceptual understanding: sometimes they feel insecure about not understanding 'new concepts' or 'technology oriented' words – or English words, etc.

Financial obstacles: Confronting limitations due to unemployment or limited resources and still having in mind that to participate in a learning activity you need to be well dressed, well prepared and to have some personal items, this is a behaviour that needs money (in their opinion. As example look at an extracted by a gypsie woman who was invited to participate. *"I am not that eager to come, I am afraid of bullying. that I am dirty, poor .. I don't feel well to feel being different in my way of appearance '.*

Time: many of the women are working on demand, ie as house cleaners or baby sitters etc. they don't have a regular agenda and they are on standb .. so they cannot be reliable to participate in pre scheduled meetings (Greece)

B-Identify the main methods, tools that can facilitate access to initial and ongoing training for women between 25 and 40 years of age in a condition of fragility

- Erzählcafé. This initiative is carried out by the Equal Opportunities Officer/District administrative office Cham in cooperation with the VHS Cham and takes place once a month (7-20 persons). It offers women the opportunity to make new contacts, to practice German in casual atmosphere.
- promotion of access to rights for migrant women and mitigating effects of previous violence as well as education of women about their rights to work, education, health etc.
- the e- learning courses, courses offered by the open University with not fees to pay, to provide accredited courses and generate certificates after learning is finished. (Cyprus)
- Women often have access to some exercises provided or downloaded with help of the teacher (for example learning apps) but they rarely used outside the courses.
- PCs are still popular among teachers and students because of the bigger screens and keyboards, whereas smartphones are preferably used for learning apps.
- There are few (actually no) learning apps for mathematics for AE or - if there are - they are didactically useless.
(Austria)

Understanding what women like (their interests and their motivations); subsequent active involvement of women in the selection of their greatest needs and how to achieve them.

Information campaigns that can be attractive to women

- make-up; fashion; kitchen; music-themed
- a festival of traditions

C- Best approaches and methods for orientation and development of basic and transversal skills

- flipped classrooms
- learning through development
- interpersonal teaching
- providing internships
- traditional approach to skills
- working in groups
- the didactic approach focused on action
- learning based on the project

We should embed Google translator in the Social Learning platform to assist women with translation when necessary in other languages than the ones we the partners will translate the material to.

Some methods as mentioned above - part of non- formal activities- are the Theater4Living, role play, Networking hubs and Cognitive Behavioral therapy

D-Identify if target women have access and use digital tools and what use they make of them

- most of the women use smartphones or tablets, use of computers is rather limited and mostly linked to the current job (Germany)
- Provision of e-content via smartphones or tables can have a potential in increase of knowledge and skills
- According our survey smartphones or tablets are used mostly for social contact, in some cases for learning reasons. Provision of e-content via smartphones or tables can have a potential in increase of knowledge and skills. (Germany)

- women are very active on social networks (Instagram, Facebook), although these are not channels to look at the world but rather to give/build their own image.
- Digital tools are not seen as an opportunity for growth but as an additional means of social confinement (Italy/accademia)

- Quite rarely and without continuity. There is a clear need to deepen and broaden the range of digital tools that women in the target group have access to. Despite years of investment in ICT infrastructure throughout the adult education sector the use of emerging technology and social media to support day to day teaching practice remains low. (Romania).

Also, audiovisual content, apps for treasure hunt, information applications for learning, webinars and videos as well as websites of public services and online guides (e.g. for Cyprus) can and do empower and

There is a lot of communication going on, apps are usually not installed by the women themselves. Sometimes it is a great enlightenment for the women that there are settings for the phone that can be changed (Austria)

E-Identify programs to encourage the learning and continuous training of target women and/or if the technologies are known

- Try to keep the complexity low so that certain group of people can benefit from it. In other words, the platform should work as simple as whatsapp or facebook, because that is what most people know and can handle.
- Social learning means that there must be moderation.
- Multilingualism is very important on all levels of the platform; there must be access to the platform in various first languages (should also be possible through voice input -- > could this be a technical option to assure multilingualism?
- Also audio description for un-practiced readers should be provided
- The platform should be able to be used and understood without support
- But:
 - Before using it should be introduced and explained by teachers/trainers
 - Before using online training tools there should be exercises carried out in the course before they can be practised online
 - The platform should provide useful and interesting content and information
 - Parallel to the platform there should be an app developed for better access for everybody
 - **Access to the platform: access with e-mail address is a significant barrier for many. The access must be possible with username and password.**

V. CONCLUSIONS AND (SOME) RECOMMENDATIONS

As we observed from the data we see that with two exceptions diversity is the main combining factor; the exceptions being 100% use of smartphones and 100% use of apps. All the other factors are quite diverse with a tendency that younger women are more independent in their use of electronic devices and in acquiring the skills to do so.

We observe an abundance of languages used both as so-called first languages or as additional languages which raises the question of a multilingual or "open" platform on which tasks and texts can be uploaded in different languages and perhaps also as audio files.

The varying educational backgrounds also make it mandatory to offer "entrance points" to the platform on different levels of complexity.

It can be observed from all the data of the research is the omnipresence of smartphones and - surprisingly the availability of email addresses which will make the registration process for the platform easier than originally assumed.

The general context of marginalized women is dominated by financial, social and legal insecurity and sometimes violence.

Multilingualism is an important factor, as most women speak the language of the country they find themselves in, in addition to their first languages – a way to deal with this multilingual situation will have to be found so that the social learning platform can serve and be used by women in all participating countries.

From a methodological point of view we can observe that the key parameters that render activities successful are participation, interest and relevance to the everyday lives of the women.

Marginalization and use of electronic media seem to be independent from educational backgrounds, social factors and the concrete living environments are more important – at least as far as the results of the present study are concerned.



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