WP2. Focus Group National Report
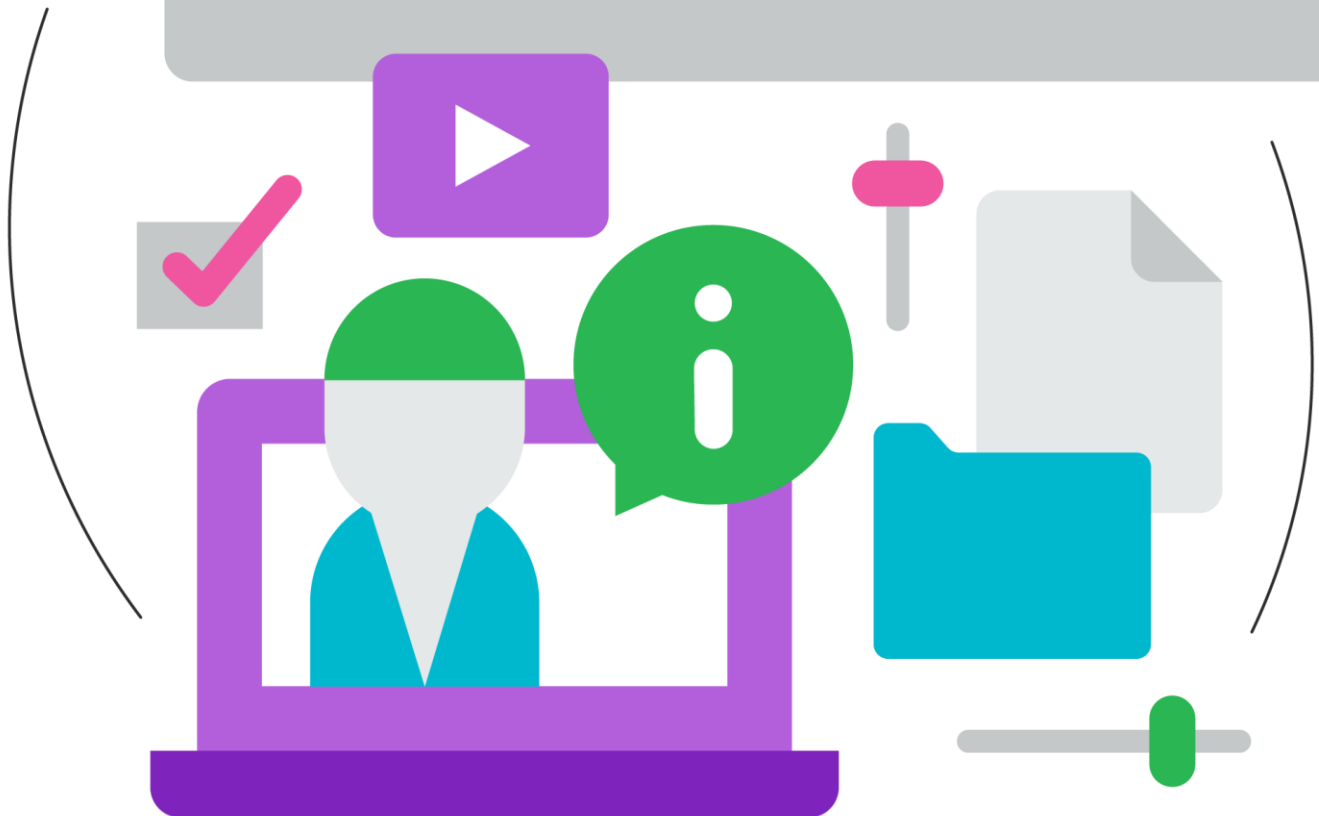
A.3. Young Migrants Focus Group Analysis Report from Ukraine

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Introduction

The global expansion of the Internet has made knowledge and information accessible to almost everyone with a computer or smartphone, contributing to a more inclusive information landscape. This accessibility is particularly beneficial for marginalized groups, providing them with the opportunity to access pertinent information and engage in learning through informal channels. However, this widespread accessibility has also led to an increased dissemination of fake news and disinformation online. In an interconnected digital environment, effectively navigating the vast amount of daily information is crucial. Recognizing reliable sources becomes imperative for individuals to make well-informed choices in the realms of social, political and economic decisions, free from bias and malicious intent.

The Digital4All project is designed to empower youth workers with knowledge in critical thinking, tiny habits and digital competences to support migrants in improving their ability to evaluate online information. In the project's second phase, focus group sessions were conducted in each country by internal workers from partner organizations. These sessions aimed to assess the digital experiences, habits, preferences and strategies of young migrants related to online information navigation, critical thinking, and media literacy. This report focuses on the key findings regarding the obstacles and facilitators that influence safe access and responsible navigation through digital information, as perceived by young migrants residing in Cyprus.

Methodology

Participants

We selected 4 youth migrants from Ukraine who currently live in Bonn and are under temporary protection by Germany as a result of the war (Appendix A.).

The group included 2 men and 2 women. Their average age was 22.6 years. All of them have been in Germany for more than 1.5 years.

The selection of participants was carried out using the publication of information on social networks in groups and chats of migrants who are in Bonn.

An informed consent was first introduced so participants would be aware of the purpose of the focus group, confidentiality of the gathered information and the volunteer nature of their participation (Appendix C.).

Measures and Procedure

Data collection was organized in two stages. The first phase included the collection of socio-demographic data using a Socio-Demographic Questionnaire. In effort to balance the characteristics of the final sample, it was asked participants the gender they identified with, nationality and the number of years that they have been in migration. The second phase focused on the facilitation of the focus group, where participants were instructed regarding of what could be expected from a focus group and from their performance. The focus group was organised in person, on the 4th of November 2023 in one of the educational institutions in Bonn.

Focus Group Moderation

The focus group discussion initiated with a "Break the Ice" activity to make participants more familiar and comfortable with each other. The activity comprehended of a couple of questions regarding sociodemographic information, personal interests, cultural characteristics and personal likings regarding their home and new country. The activity was followed by the focus group discussion of key-questions imposed by the facilitator, regarding the project's aim (digital competences, motivational and critical thinking needs, strategies to find and identify reliable information online…).

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Key questions:

● "As migrants, what were the main difficulties you expected and encountered in moving to a new country?".

● "What were the main tools and methods you used to obtain information on how to overcome these obstacles?".

● "Were any of that information obtained online? What online means did you use?".

● "What were the main barriers you found in the online access to these types of information?"

● "Did it ever happen to you to be deceived or misinformed online during this search for information? In what cases? What type of misinformed or erroneous information was present?" (Give examples if needed, such as images, statistics, overall text, deceiving title, …).

 ● "What strategies do you often use to not be misinformed or deceived online?".

● "How did you assess the adequacy and efficiency of this strategies accordingly to 'achieved results'; 'time', 'complexity' and 'feasibility'?".

● "Can you think of any factors that makes it difficult for you to do an evaluation of information online?".

● ["Did you ever feel that motivation was a barrier for you to proceed to an evaluation of information online? What are some possible reasons, in your experience, that may have led to this lack of motivation?".

● "What are your thoughts on developing a training program on digital literacy, critical thinking and motivation strategies regarding the assessment of information online for migrants?".

● "What are some barriers that you can find in participation of migrants in this training program? And in another note, what are some advantages in developing and participating in this program?

Results

The focus group was audio-recorded to ensure that everything said was recorded, but no one will be identified by name unless consent is given. In the absence of consent, anonymity will be guaranteed in all documents developed for this study.

Experiences of Migration

Difficulties expected by migrants when moving to a new country:

P1:   generally unexpected difficulties, she drove and everything, already on the way, what were the questions, she solved them. I did not think about problems at the time of arrival at all.

P3:   It was very scary, not understanding what I would be living on.

P4: There was a choice immediately: whether to go to work or study. I thought that it would be better to study so that it would be easier with the language later. In any case, language is needed to develop further.

P2: Language barrier, two-way: people here do not communicate in English at the level I expected, not everyone communicates in English, you need to learn German.

List of difficulties encountered

P4:   with documents, with an understanding of the system, absolutely everything is different, unlike the Ukrainian system, the system of receiving refugees, the system of creating documents when you go to work.

P3: Ukrainians who like to complain and a lot of bureaucracy

P1: search for housing, documentation, how the process of submitting documents is organized, what documents are needed, there is no structured information on points, what a migrant needs to do from a to z. Essentially, everyone has the same questions. It would be great to structure this information so that there are answers for each specific point.

P2: when you start internet research, the first thing you encounter is lack of knowledge of the language, even if you translate into English, it is an online translation that does not give you anything, the difficulty of many terminologies, I think everyone has come across a letter from the job center that no German can understand . None of the Ukrainians had gone through this before, so there are no Ukrainian articles. There is a lot of misinformation in the informative space, because the experience is very individual.

Access to Information

The main tools and methods used to obtain information about how to overcome these obstacles: dating, the Internet, NGOs, churches, educational institutions. That is, all reliable sources.

A lot of information was received on the Internet, the following channels were usually used: Telegram, YouTube, Google, official websites, blogs on Instagram.

The main barriers in online access: terminology, it is not always clear what is being said, it is difficult to find a broader explanation

Experiences of Disinformation and Fake News

The participants of the focus group say that they constantly encountered misinformation, especially if the resource is Instagram or unreliable websites. They had to choose several sources to compare information.

The most frequent type of misinformation was present in: images, statistics, misleading title of the article - the text does not match the title and unreliable information.

To overcome misinformation, migrants used verification through primary sources, official websites, and turned to trusted persons for advice.

Perspectives on the Digital4All Training Program

The participants of the focus group noted that such a training program on digital literacy, critical thinking and motivational strategies will be very useful for young migrants, as they will have a reliable source that will have much less risk of disinformation than on the open Internet. They also noted that this course will save a lot of time, since it will not be necessary to search for everything on various resources, and it will be possible to take the first steps in the above topics thanks to the course. This will provide additional motivation to the participants to encourage self-development and deepen their knowledge.

Also, if there is an opportunity to update and adapt the course during the next time, it will also be useful and ensure its sustainability to new challenges

It is important that it is written in an accessible language. They also noted that it is very important to spread information about such a platform and course so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to learn about this course.

Conclusions

Taking into account that since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine as a result of aggression from the Russian Federation, according to the UN, millions of young migrants have been forced to leave Ukraine and face new challenges in adapting to a new environment, the development of a course on digital technologies and online tools is vital for providing the necessary knowledge to young migrants.

A focus group conducted with young Ukrainians who are currently under temporary protection in Germany showed the high interest of young people in mastering new and reliable information, since the greatest difficulties they had in finding information were due to the lack of complete information, distortion of facts, and fake news.

The participants shared their experience and vision of how the course should be compiled, what points and nuances need to be paid attention to so that the course is accessible, understandable and easy to use for young migrants and can be highly effective

Annexes

Appendix A.

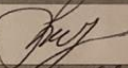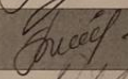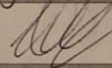
Digital4All – Building a Digital World for All

Activity "Focus group"

04/11/2023, Bonn

Signing in-Sheet

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Co-funded by the European Union

Appendix B.

Appendix C.

Focus Group Consent Form for Erasmus Plus KA2 Project

Project Name: Building a Digital World for All (Digital4All)

Project No: 2022-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000097932

Research Project Aim: Promoting digital and media literacy in migrants and fostering their competences to critically and efficiently evaluate information online.

Moderator: Iro Nestoros

Date and Place of the Focus Group: 27.11.2023 - Nicosia (Cyprus)

Estimated Duration: 2 Hours

Risks: There are no risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop or withdraw from the focus group at any time.

Advantages: Your participation is highly valuable for the quality and the impact of our results.

Confidentiality: The focus group is intended to be confidential, and all efforts have been made to ensure confidentiality. For the purpose of producing reliable results, the focus group meeting needs to be photographed. Any transcripts produced, if disseminated, will be done in a manner where no identifiable characteristics are revealed. Visual images will only be shared in websites or events if you consent to it.

Data Protection: Only the partner's organizations will have access to the transcripts and visual recording of the focus group meeting. This information will be available for the two years of the project, but after that, it will be eliminated.

Voluntary Nature: The participation in this questionnaire is voluntary.

If you have any questions you can contact Iro Nestoros through the following e-mail: iro.nestoros@cardet.org.

Please check the box, if you agree to be photographed:

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

Please check the box, if you agree to be quoted with your name in our project material, after the consultation with you and with your agreement for the specific publication or other medium before publishing it:

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

Please check the box, if you agree to share your image in news articles, websites, project's social media, spoken presentations, feedback events or others.

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree