



## WP2.

### *A.1. Youth Workers Needs Assessment Report from Cyprus*



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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.

In response to the frequent reliance of migrants on digital platforms for integration information, the Digital4All project strives to provide youth workers with expertise in critical thinking, tiny habits and digital competences. This training is designed to empower youth workers in supporting migrants to critically assess information online, enhancing their intentions and abilities in this regard. The project's initial phase involved conducting working group sessions in each participating country to evaluate the needs, knowledge, and overall perspectives of youth workers concerning these essential concepts. This report specifically underscores the key findings derived from the needs assessment carried out in Cyprus.

## Methodology

A working group discussion was prepared with the aim to analyze the knowledge, needs and general perspectives of youth workers regarding the concepts of critical thinking, tiny habits and digital competences. The discussion used active and participatory methods such as brainstorming and open ended questions, as well as, self-assessment tools for creative thinking and digital competences, and audiovisual resources. An attendance list was distributed and signed by the participants (Annex 1).

## Participants

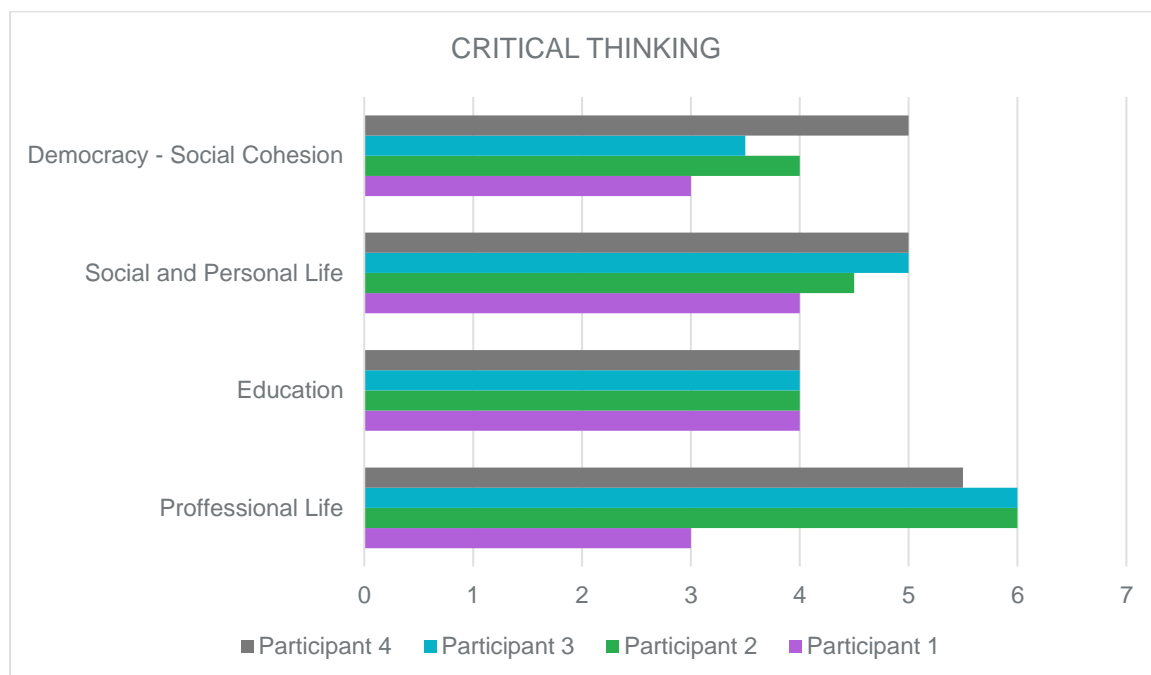
Four (4) youth workers participated in the needs assessment workshop - all from diverse backgrounds in order to ensure inclusivity. Collectively, these youth workers are rather experienced in the field of youth work

## Results

### Critical Thinking

Most youth workers were familiar with the term of **critical thinking**. Overall, participants characterized this high-order cognition as a process in which observation, analysis, comparison, reflection and decision making are part of. Youth workers associated critical thinking with the ability to view and reflect on multiple perspectives with the absence of personal bias. The outcome of critical thinking was presented as the ability to express one’s opinion in a well-structured, cohesive and rational manner.

Critical thinking is perceived by youth workers as relevant in all sectors of life whether that is someone’s personal and family life or professional life. It has also been mentioned by a one (1) youth workers that education and intellectual development is also closely linked to critical thinking. Participants have highlighted that the need for critical thinking varies across settings with even a single participant stressing that there are areas in which the competency of critical thinking is frowned upon.



Youth workers perceive critical thinking as a learned competency and therefore a process that can be acquired with time. Participants have stretched the importance of growth, time and experience in

developing one's critical thinking competency. The participating youth workers have proposed a number of techniques in developing critical thinking including I. debates and open discussions and II. reading and furthering one's studies. Most importantly participants have pointed out the importance of curiosity and keeping an open mind.

Finally, participants were prompted to share the key challenges to critical thinking. Participants have mentioned I. confirmation bias, II. information bubble, III. denial for diversity and IV. excessive boundaries enforced by societal structures. Participants agreed that these are challenges that are universal and experienced in different degrees and intensity. These challenges might never be fully overcome but conscious work can definitely diminish them.

## Creative Thinking

Participants were prompted to define creative thinking and how it might differ from critical thinking. They characterized creative thinking as an outside the box process which involves a problem-solving mentality and a unique take to existing issues. Participants envision creative thinking as the step right after critical thinking - where the competency and confidence with critical thinking can lead to creative thinking. Then, youth workers had the opportunity to take the Creative Thinking Skills Self-Assessment. Youth workers scored an average of 96 points (min 0-120 max). Although self-assessed, this score reveals confidence of participants in their skills to thinking creatively.

## Tiny Habits

When participants were asked about the Tiny Habits concepts half of them were aware of it. Those who were familiar with this concept described it as a habit that is slowly being developed by altering one's behavior. It was characterized by some as an unintentional behavior - in the sense that it takes little to no effort - whilst others have labelled it as a ritual. From this perspective all youth workers consider Tiny Habits a good method for developing new routines in youth.

## Digital Competences

The digital competences of youth workers were evaluated on five (5) big domains - Information and Data Literacy, Communication and Collaboration, Digital Content Creation, Safety and Problem Resolution ranged mostly from an Intermediate to Advance level accordingly to the MyDigiSkills assessment test.

As for Information and Data Literacy all youth workers to be advanced in. Regarding Communication and Collaboration, participants revealed to be advanced across all the thematic areas. What appears to be slightly more challenging for the participants is engaging in citizenship through digital technologies. When it comes to the Digital Content Creation domain all participants revealed to be advanced in developing digital content, but more intermediate in programming, as well as, in copy right and licenses. Youth workers had an overall intermediate digital competence in the Safety Domain - comparably lower to the rest of the domains. Finally, similarly to most domains, youth workers have a rather high prevalence of advanced digital competences in the Problem Resolution domain whereas they are appearing to be more confident in identifying needs and gaps rather than solving problems and being creative.

## Relevance for Labor Context

It was unanimously expressed that critical thinking and creative thinking, as well as tiny habits and digital competencies are essential competencies for the labour context. Participants have highlighted that these skills are of even greater significance to young people who have recently entered the labour market or who will soon be. The competition nowadays among young professionals is unparalleled due to the nature of the labour market and the development of such skills is essential.

## Conclusions

The Internet, originally conceived as a tool for global connection and education, has evolved into a complex phenomenon. While it remains a powerful facilitator of learning and a means to bridge knowledge gaps, it has also become a platform for the rapid spread of misinformation and falsehoods. Migrants, who heavily depend on digital information for their integration into new societies, encounter the formidable task of discerning truth from falsehood. Hence, it is imperative to prioritize

the development of critical thinking and digital competences as essential skills to effectively navigate and counteract misinformation within this demographic.

This report delineates the discoveries concerning the requirements, perceived significance, and expertise of a diverse set of youth workers with a specific emphasis on critical thinking, tiny habits and digital competences. The objective was to pinpoint gaps and facilitators related to critical thinking and evaluate the necessity of training in these fundamental concepts.

Youth workers stressed the significance of adaptability and critical thinking skills. The availability of varied information and experiences was recognized as a factor promoting critical thinking. These observations are consistent with the anticipated results of the Erasmus+ initiative Digital4All encompassing training programs for youth workers designed to boost critical thinking abilities among migrant populations.

Amid an ongoing digital transformation with no apparent endpoint, competencies like critical thinking and digital skills are imperative to ensure that individuals do not lag behind. This is especially crucial for young migrant populations navigating this transition in an entirely unfamiliar and foreign environment. These are the individuals who require the utmost support and tools to successfully navigate and thrive in this evolving landscape.


# Annexes

## Annex 1

 <https://digital4all-project.eu/>

**Digital4All - Building a Digital World for All**  
**Activity 2.1: Capacity Building for Youth Workers**  
**Attendance List - 10.11.2023 (Nicosia, Cyprus)**

Name	Youth Worker Role	Email	Signature
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 Co-funded by the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project Number: 2022-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000097932



## Annex 2



