



Newsletter

Newsletter #3 – April 2024

In today's connected world, not everyone has equal access to or familiarity with digital technologies. According to EUROSTAT's 2019 survey, a significant percentage of people aged 55-74 in the EU-27 hadn't used the internet in the previous three months (the Community survey on ICT usage, EUROSTAT, 2019). Despite ongoing efforts to bridge the digital generation gap, older adults are often reluctant to adopt new technologies. While activities such as email, health information searches and online banking are commonplace among seniors, their engagement with social media platforms lags behind younger demographics.

SENIOR VLOG

"SeniorVlog Pilot Programme: Reflections and Lessons Learned"

Recognising this digital divide, the Erasmus+ SeniorVlog project aims to improve the digital storytelling skills of adults over 60, thereby increasing their visibility in the virtual world. Our mission is to empower seniors aged 65 and over by improving their digital literacy and fostering active engagement in online communities, particularly on social media platforms. Through our innovative SeniorVlog training and mentoring programme, we aim to equip senior learners with essential digital skills, enabling them to confidently create content and influence in the digital sphere, just as they do in their physical communities.

The adoption of digital tools by the over 65s has multiple benefits. It promotes social connectivity, reducing feelings of isolation as seniors interact with loved ones and participate in online communities. In addition, access to digital resources facilitates lifelong learning, allowing seniors to cultivate new skills, knowledge and interests. Digital tools also provide convenient access to essential services such as health care, banking and shopping, enhancing seniors' autonomy and overall quality of life. In addition, engagement with technology can enhance cognitive function and mental acuity, promoting well-being and vitality in later life.

THE TRAINING COURSE

To achieve this goal, the partnership has committed to developing a training programme aimed at providing the basic knowledge and tools necessary to enter the world of vlogging. This programme has been carefully designed and tested in the partnership countries, including Poland, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus. In this newsletter, we're delighted to share the first-hand experiences of both the facilitators who ran the courses and the active participants who engaged with the material.

PILOT EXPERIENCE IN POLAND

The training programme for Polish seniors, entitled "Internet without secrets - how to become a vlogger", ran from July to November 2023. Over the course of six sessions at PCG's headquarters in Łódź, seniors engaged with vlogging trainers in four comprehensive modules. Expert sessions covered essential topics such as recording equipment, video editing software and public speaking techniques tailored for camera presence. The participatory nature of the programme allowed for approximately eight seniors per session, with two people joining remotely via Zoom, reflecting the preference of the participants. The most enriching aspect of each session was the practical exercises embedded in each module. While feedback from seniors highlighted a desire for a more practical focus on technical aspects, participants eagerly embraced the homework assignments, recording and editing videos that were shared on the group's YouTube channel. As part of the gamified approach, videos were reviewed at subsequent meetings, with stars or badges awarded to recognise progress. While none of the participants went on to create individual YouTube channels or achieve widespread popularity as vloggers, the programme successfully imparted valuable knowledge and provided ample opportunity for skills practice and development.

PILOT EXPERIENCE IN GREECE

In Greece, the pilot of the training course was done through 5 dynamic sessions. From the initial invitation to this moment, it has been a remarkable journey of discovery, education and empowerment.

Over the course of these sessions, more than twenty people aged 65 and over have delved into the world of video storytelling, tapping into their passions and using technology to amplify their voices. Covering a wide range of topics, the sessions combined theory with hands-on experience, deepening participants' understanding and honing their video creation skills. Our comprehensive programme consisted of five sessions of approximately three hours each, in which participants, guided by experienced facilitators, immersed themselves in a wealth of knowledge, acquired technical skills and opened up new avenues for creative expression. These face-to-face sessions, facilitated by two experienced trainers, were held in the Chalandri community from January to February 2024, in collaboration with the community itself. This collaborative effort not only provided an optimal learning environment, but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and encouragement among the participants.

From art lovers to local history enthusiasts, each individual brought a unique perspective to the table and enriched our community with their creativity and dedication. With a focus on vlogging, the programme served as a catalyst for personal and artistic growth, equipping participants with the necessary tools to thrive in the digital landscape.

To all our participants, especially our seniors, a heartfelt thank you for your enthusiasm, perseverance and unwavering commitment to fostering creativity. Your voices are invaluable and the next chapter of your journey is eagerly awaited!

PILOT EXPERIENCE IN PORTUGAL

The training programme in Portugal called "SeniorVlog: Use Your Voice on Social Media" attracted a total of 12 participants, with an average of 10 trainees per session. The programme consisted of 8 theoretical-practical sessions of about 3 hours each, with an emphasis on practical, hands-on activities, and an average of 1 hour of independent work by the trainees. Facilitated by 2 trainers, all sessions were delivered face-to-face at the Ílhavo Ageing Laboratory in Aveiro, a community centre where older people meet to acquire new skills and socialise.

The positive feedback from the participants highlighted their enjoyment of the final segment, where they had the opportunity to create and edit a video. However, many participants also expressed a desire for additional training time to further consolidate their newfound knowledge.

Reflecting on this experience, several considerations emerge for future iterations of the SeniorVlog training programme. These include a greater emphasis on hands-on activities to facilitate experiential learning, increasing the frequency and topic specificity of sessions, allowing time for participants to share personal stories and address questions, using user-friendly tools to streamline activities, and robust, targeted promotional efforts to increase programme visibility and participation.

PILOT EXPERIENCE IN CYPRUS


The Senior Vlog pilot programme took place in Cyprus from 3 November to 2 December, with a total of 5 meetings. Initially there was low attendance, with two sessions having no participants, so it was decided to move the programme to a meeting place for older people, which resulted in increased participation. Starting with 10 older people at the first meeting, attendance gradually decreased to 8 at the following meetings.

Throughout the programme, seniors were taught basic video search and creation techniques, as well as how to set up their own TikTok channels. Key lessons included camera handling, equipment use, finding resources for video production and basic video editing methods. Emphasis was also placed on online safety practices, including the selection of essential cookies, a topic that was deemed important by the participants.

The highlights of the training were undoubtedly the practical exercises and demonstrations led by the four trainers, which encouraged meaningful interaction between participants and facilitators. Although the seniors were still reluctant to upload videos to social media due to feelings of embarrassment or anxiety, they created accounts and shared short videos with each other in subsequent sessions. Participants emphasised the importance of the training programme and expressed a desire for further initiatives focusing on information technology. For the future, it is recommended to streamline the length of the modules and the theoretical content in order to maintain the participants' engagement in the practical exercises.

PILOT EXPERIENCE IN ITALY


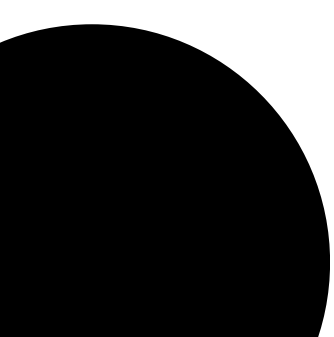
In Italy, the pilot phase of the training programme and mentoring pathway was divided into two distinct phases. In the first phase, the training course was piloted between May and June with six participants in five dynamic sessions of lectures and practical exercises. During this phase, the participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the course content and enthusiastically participated in the creation of numerous pieces of content. They particularly appreciated the empathetic and welcoming approach of the trainers, who skilfully guided participants through topics that were either new or unfamiliar to them.



In the second phase, the programme was extended to the 'Società Cooperativa Sociale SCAI' in Carpi, an organisation that runs a nursing home and a day centre in the same facility, involving seventeen elderly people. The teaching material was adapted to facilitate accessibility, as all the participants, aged between 80 and 99, were retired and had no previous experience of vlogging or social media, except for using applications such as WhatsApp. Although no formal questionnaires were administered due to the frailty of the participants, qualitative feedback revealed considerable enthusiasm and unanimous approval of the activities.

The decision to involve older people in this training stems from the recognition that their voices are important in today's society. The wisdom and experience they've gained over the years are an invaluable and often overlooked asset. Allowing them to share their knowledge, passions and experiences not only allows for personal expression, but also bridges generational gaps. Their practical skills, often passed down through generations, enrich the lives of younger people and deepen their understanding of historical, cultural and social contexts.

In addition, providing a platform for older people to share their stories and skills validates their identity, fosters a sense of belonging, and encourages continued integration into the fabric of the community. It also provides invaluable learning opportunities for younger generations and fosters stronger intergenerational ties, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and culturally enriched society.



WHAT TAKEAWAYS DO WE HAVE?

In conclusion, the pilot phases of our Senior Vlog training programme in different European countries have provided invaluable insights and successes. We've seen first-hand the transformative power of empowering older people to use digital tools and share their stories. The enthusiastic participation and positive feedback from participants underline the importance of bridging the digital divide and fostering intergenerational connections. Together, let's continue to celebrate the wisdom, experience and contributions of our older generations and ensure that their voices are heard and valued in our increasingly digital world.

Stay tuned to find out what comes next!

To learn more about the project and to get involved in our future activities, visit our [website](#) or follow us on the most popular social networks with the hashtag **#SENIORVLOG**