

Desk research.
Compilation of partners'
reports
Includeme+



www.includememedia.eu

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01

Introduction

INCLUDE ME+ uses inclusion through mediation to develop a new education programme and empower higher institution educators, digital media providers, civil society organisations, and students to become responsible and active collaborators in shaping the future of digital media so that it contributes to inclusion, participation, and peace-building across Europe.

This report is part of the WP2 that focuses on identifying the most crucial elements that are involved in the digital inclusion of vulnerable groups. Its objective is to gather the main elements of discussion and reflection in the framework of the complex process of digital inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion, especially refugees and migrants.

The identification of these elements will allow to establish a base line for providing new ideas about content creating while working with content creators and key institutions as HEI and CSOs.

The findings of this report will be the foundations for the IncludeMe+ educational programme. This report is a compilation of the main results of the report focused on the European context and 7 national reports

(Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine) generated by the IncludeMe+ project partners in the framework of a desk research carried out between May and December 2024.



02

Methodology



For the development of this study on digital media and inclusion, the project partners have adopted a qualitative methodological approach that combines a literature review with in-depth interviews with experts in the field. This approach aims to ensure a comprehensive analysis, providing both an overview of the state of the art and a detailed approach based on the specialised knowledge of experts in the field.

Literature review

Firstly, a systematic literature review was carried out with the aim of understanding the current state of research on digital media and inclusion in 7 countries, in alphabetical order, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine. A report on the wider European context is also included.

This process took place in several phases:

- Search and collection of sources: Academic databases, institutional and policy documents, studies by government agencies and independent bodies, reports

- NGOs specialised in digital rights and media, as well as scientific publications in specialised journals were consulted.
- Selection and classification: Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to select the most relevant studies, prioritising those that specifically addressed the subject of digital media as well as issues related to the representation and participation of groups at risk of exclusion.
- Analysis and synthesis of information: A critical and comparative reading of the selected sources was carried out, identifying key trends, challenges and opportunities around digital inclusion. The findings were organised into thematic categories to facilitate analysis and discussion.

In-depth interviews

To complement the findings of the literature review and enrich the research with expert perspectives, semi-structured interviews were

Methodology

conducted with three experts in the field of digital communication and social inclusion.

The semi-structured interviews were designed to explore in greater depth the perceptions, experiences and analysis of the participants in relation to the

inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion in digital media. Issues such as barriers to accessing information, the representation of these groups in the digital sphere and initiatives that seek to encourage their active participation were addressed.

Data triangulation and analysis

The combination of these two methodological strategies - literature review and in-depth interviews - allowed for a triangulation of data that reinforces the validity and reliability of the study. The information obtained from the literature review served as a basis for contextualising and contrasting the opinions and experiences of the experts interviewed, which made it possible to identify convergences, divergences and new lines of reflection.

This comprehensive approach not only offers an up-to-date diagnosis of inclusion in digital media, but also provides valuable inputs for the development of strategies and policies that favour a more equitable representation of underrepresented groups in the digital environment.

In order to align the approaches of the different partners, a workshop was held with the aim of specifying contents and approaches, as well as a common report structure. The national report structure, which this compilation will follow, consists of:

1. What is Inclusive Digital Media?

- Definition and Scope according to national data (experts, articles, etc)
- Role of digital media in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

2. Respectful Coexistence in Digital Media

- Fostering Respectful Interactions Online
- Addressing Hate Speech and Online Harassment
- Building Digital Communities Based on Mutual Respect

3. Social Inclusion through Digital Media

- Digital Divide and Social Inequality
- Accessible Design and Universal Design Principles
- Empowering Marginalised Communities through Digital Platforms

4. Learnt lessons, Challenges and Opportunities

- Initiatives at national level. Experiences and impacts. Learnt lessons
- Future Trends and Directions
- Lessons Learned and Success Factors

5. Conclusion

- Summary of Key Findings
- Implications for the PAR

Partners developed the desk research by adapting it to the geographical and thematic context..

The current report is the systematisation of the data and main elements of discussion of the national and European context reports.



03

What is inclusive media?

3.1. Prior concepts: digital inclusion and intersectional discrimination

Before introducing definitions of inclusive digital media and the potential of digital media in terms of inclusivity, it is important to address the concept of digital inclusion.

What is digital inclusion

The United Nations defines digital inclusion as "equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere."

In this regard, the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade, Chapter II - Solidarity and Inclusion

recognises that: "Technology should be used to bring people together, not divide them. The digital transformation should contribute to a fair and inclusive society and economy and should benefit all people. It should benefit everyone, achieve gender balance, and include notably elderly people, people living in rural areas, persons with disabilities, or marginalised, vulnerable or disenfranchised people and those who act on their behalf. It should also promote cultural and linguistic diversity".¹

1. European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023C0123\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023C0123(01))

What is inclusive media?

It is important to mention that some of the literature consulted and the experts interviewed introduced a key element in digital inclusion that is not explicitly mentioned in any of the previous definitions and is key to the development of strategies aimed at promoting digital inclusion. This key element is intersectionality. Literature and experts pointed out that patterns of discrimination and inequality that occur in the physical sphere are reproduced and replicated in the virtual space: "There is discrimination, racism, harassment on social networks because they are a reflection of what we are experiencing as a society. The virtual world becomes a mirror, a reflection, of the physical world". In this way, it is understood that the overlapping of situations of inequality (intersectionality) prevents the exercise of a healthy "media diet" and this allows to think about the space in which each person (depending on their privileges / accumulation of inequalities) accesses, produces, consumes content and relates in the digital sphere.

What is intersectional discrimination

The term intersectional discrimination is defined by the Council of Europe² as "reflects the understanding that the interaction of two or more grounds of discrimination can produce a disadvantage which is qualitatively different to the operation of those grounds separately. It differs from "multiple discrimination", which is an overarching term for all instances of discrimination on several grounds: intersectional discrimination includes the idea that the interaction of the grounds is synergistic in

nature". Age, gender, colour of the skin, income, religion, sexual orientation, ... can be elements that overlapped can result in a discriminatory action. For instance, hate speech addressed to gay black women.

3.2. Definitions of inclusive digital media

National reports reflect the richness and diversity in the understanding of phenomena related to digital media and inclusion. This extends to the definition of inclusive digital media itself. There are commonalities and differences in the definitions.

Common elements include:

- Accessibility for All: All three definitions emphasize ensuring that digital media is accessible to everyone, regardless of abilities or background.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Each definition highlights the need to represent marginalised or underrepresented groups, ensuring equitable participation.
- Elimination of Barriers: They all recognize the importance of removing obstacles—whether technological, societal, or systemic—to foster an inclusive digital environment.
- Promotion of Diverse Perspectives: The definitions stress the need for digital content to reflect a wide range of voices, including minorities.

² Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/committee-antidiscrimination-diversity-inclusion/intersectional-discrimination>

What is inclusive media?

Among the differences:

- Some definitions focus on digital transformation and the role of experts and researchers in advocating for inclusivity. While accessibility is mentioned, the emphasis is broader, highlighting the need for diverse perspectives in digital environments.
- Other definitions point to the importance of national policy frameworks, which actively shapes inclusivity in public broadcasting.
- Other definitions provide a more detailed and comprehensive approach, explicitly addressing technological barriers, socio-economic inclusion, and the avoidance of stereotypes. It goes beyond representation, stressing the integration of diversity in all aspects of digital media and encouraging active participation from marginalized communities.

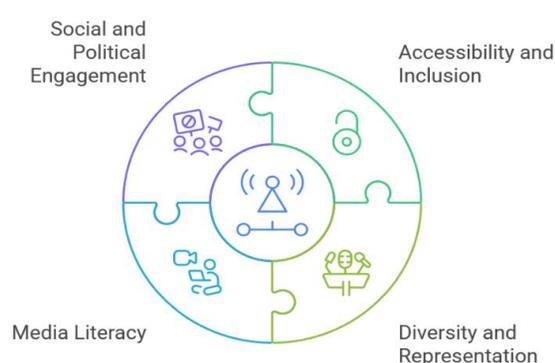
For this report, the characteristics of inclusive digital media will be defined in the following terms: Inclusive digital media are digital platforms, tools and content designed to ensure equal access to information and participation for all people, regardless of ability, identity, ethnicity, gender, age or socio-economic status. They are based on the removal of technological and social barriers, ensuring that digital environments are accessible, diverse and representative of all communities.

These media should not only reflect diversity, but actively integrate it in their design, production and dissemination, promoting equity, representation of groups at risk of exclusion and respect for plurality of perspectives. They should also be supported by regulatory frameworks and policies that foster inclusion in the digital ecosystem, promoting practices that reduce the digital divide and avoid the reproduction of stereotypes, prejudices and inequalities.

Ultimately, inclusive digital media seeks to create an accessible, participatory and fair digital environment where all people can express themselves, contribute and benefit fully.

3.3. Role of digital media in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Role of digital media in promoting inclusion. Common topics



There are common topics across country reports:

1. Accessibility and Digital Inclusion
 - Emphasys on the need of accessibility to digital platforms, ensuring that all the individuals can be part not only as consumers but also as creators of content. Link between digital media's role in fostering civic engagement and education.
2. Diversity and Representation
 - Focus on increasing representation for marginalised groups in digital media.
 - Role of media in shaping social and cultural perspectives.

What is inclusive media?

3. Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking

- Priority on investing and developing digital literacy skills to navigate online spaces effectively.
- Risks like algorithm-driven content personalization and use of disinformation which can reinforce biases, prejudices and stereotypes.

4. The Role of Digital Media in Social and Political Engagement

- Identification of the potential of digital media in promoting dialogue, political activism, and awareness on social issues.

The following table shows the main characteristics and potential of digital media in terms of inclusiveness for each country analysed

Country	Main Characteristics	Potential
Spain	Immediate access to information, audience interactivity, content personalisation, risk of disinformation and fake news, democratisation of media, and emerging formats (podcasts, streaming).	Strong potential for independent digital media and audience participation but faces risks like misinformation, polarization and digital fragmentation.
European Union (EU)	Digital tools can promote the activity of social movements, mediation, peacebuilding, and activism, but also risks of disinformation.	Can be a powerful tool for promoting diversity, inclusion and lasting peace, citizen engagement, and conflict resolution, but digital ecosystem can also spread disinformation and fake news.
Germany	Media plays a key role in shaping opinions, political discourse, and cultural understanding.	Can be a driver of democratic participation and inclusion if diverse perspectives are adequately represented.
Turkey	Digital platforms can promote representation, cultural dialogue, and educational awareness on inclusivity.	Potential to connect diverse ethnic and social groups, enhance minority rights, and provide accessible digital education.
Denmark	Digital media in Denmark serves as a platform for fostering diversity and inclusion by amplifying voices from underrepresented groups	Strong media policies ensure inclusivity and social cohesion through diverse storytelling.
Ireland	Digital literacy programs for marginalized communities; focus on digital accessibility.	Enhancing digital skills can reduce inequality and promote economic inclusion.
Finland	Digital media is a tool for education, critical thinking, and civic engagement.	A well-developed media landscape can foster informed citizens and social cohesion.

What is inclusive media?

The different reports show the multiple perspectives and approaches towards social media as a powerful tool to enhance diversity and inclusivity. The shared challenge across them remains the balance between accessibility, diversity, and reducing the risks of replicating social and economic inequalities/stereotypes, misinformation and polarization.

Respectful coexistence and hate speech



4.1. Fostering respectful interactions online

The European context and national reports show the experiences among countries in promoting respect and inclusivity in digital media. The main elements identified across these reports include legal frameworks, education and digital literacy, social inclusion efforts, digital engagement of communities and the impact of hate speech and online harassment

Common Elements Across Countries

1. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

- All the reports show the existence of a legal framework or legal mechanisms to address hate speech and ensure accountability for online behaviour. At European level, the EU has introduced legislation such as the Digital Services Act (DSA), the Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence, and the AI Act, which hold online platforms and corporations accountable for mitigating and preventing online hate speech. At national level, all the

Penal Codes address hate speeches.

- Likewise, all reports identify the challenges in enforcing regulations. It is a fact that hate speech often spreads almost freely due to the lack of monitoring, lack of use of particular tools to identify and eliminate harmful content and the existence of anonymity. It is extraordinary worrying the escalation of hate speech and other forms of discrimination on the digital field and the existence/persistence of online harassment that affects disproportionately people because for their gender, colour of their skin, sexual orientation, religion, etc. On the other side, it is interesting to notice the debate between freedom of speech and the regulation of harmful speech that is taking place in the European Union or Turkey.

Respectful coexistence in social media and hate speech

- Some identified strategies to address hate speech, misinformation, etc include the use of friendly reminders about discussion tone; acknowledgement of negative criticism, and fact-based clarifications with respectful tone, sincerity and honesty in the communication from moderators to the public.
2. Education and Digital Literacy as a pillar for respectful online engagement
 - Reports emphasize digital citizenship education, aiming to foster responsible digital engagement and combat misinformation. Finland and Denmark are pioneering in integrating media literacy in their education policy. Nevertheless, the introduction of these measures hasn't stopped the presence of hate speech or digital harassment, as the
1. Digital Media, Social Inclusion and Marginalised Communities
 - Key role of digital media in amplifying marginalised voices while recognising the risk of reinforcing inequalities. It is an ambivalent phenomenon in which legal accountability from digital platforms, community engagement, digital literacy, digital divide and active commitment of content creators are key.

The potential of digital media in terms of cultural diplomacy and civil dialogue is highlighted as well. There is a positive result on using digital platforms to promote coexistence among ethnic and religious groups. However, all reports recognize the existence of a digital divide that affects, in particular, groups in situation of vulnerability.

Country-Specific Characteristics and key challenges

Country	Main Focus Areas	Key Challenges
European Union (EU)	Legal frameworks to regulate hate speech and promote online respect.	Online anonymity fuels intolerance and incitement to violence. Enforcement of regulations and balancing freedom of speech and hate speech remains challenging.
Germany	Emphasis on clear communication to prevent misunderstandings and promote empathy.	Need for a broader societal commitment to respectful digital discourse.
Turkey	Encourages civil dialogue and cultural diplomacy through digital platforms. Introduces digital citizenship education.	Balancing free speech with hate speech regulation remains a challenge. Increasing collaboration between government and NGOs to track hate speech trends
Finland	Laws and policies support social inclusion and democracy in digital spaces. counter-speech strategies	Hate speech against journalists is rising, and legal action is difficult to pursue. Expanding arts-based counter-narratives to address hate speech.

Respectful coexistence in social media and hate speech

Country-Specific Characteristics and key challenges

Denmark	Digital Dannelsen integrates teaching respectful online engagement.	Ongoing efforts to ensure its effectiveness in reducing online harassment.
Spain	Digital rights protection and combating misinformation Digital media as a tool for inclusivity and diversity; importance of media literacy.	Digital platforms can reinforce biases and inequalities. Promoting responsible digital influencers to counteract hate narratives
Ireland	Digital inclusion programs aim to reduce the digital divide for marginalized communities.	Online anonymity increases the risk of racism and xenophobia. Marginalized groups struggle with digital access and literacy. Differences in language and cultural norms complicate the identification and regulation of harmful behaviour

Effective strategies to promote respectful digital coexistence need a holistic approach in which education, public policies and the support from public administrations or community engagement (with the active participation and contribution of those who are in a vulnerable situation) play a major role. On the other hand, freedom of expression must be balanced with responsibility (from platforms and individuals), while improving digital literacy to enable people to critically analyse the information they consult and/or create, as well as to manage online interactions.

4.2. Building Digital Communities Based on Mutual Respect. Empowering Marginalized Communities through Digital Platforms

National reports have identified multiple experiences developed to foster inclusive, respectful and educational digital environments. The different countries count on specific public policies, some of them related to strategies to overcome the digital divide, cross-collaboration among different public-private and community-based organizations are key in the construction of

digital communities-based experiences. Examples of these experiences are:

Inclusivity and Respect:

- Denmark promotes inclusivity through platforms like Mødrehjælpen and Børns Vilkår, which create supportive digital spaces for vulnerable communities and children.
- Ireland emphasizes digital citizenship, encouraging mutual respect in online communities.
- Spain supports moderated discussion spaces and content creator training to prevent stereotypes.
- In Germany, neighbourhood-related digital platforms and social media have emerged as diverse, ever-changing spaces for fostering connections. These platforms allow individuals to connect, share information, and participate in local initiatives, often bridging gaps between different social groups and fostering a sense of community.

Respectful coexistence in social media and hate speech

- The #ATodoColor campaign was launched to combat hate speech targeting migrants and other marginalised groups in digital media. Recognizing the pivotal role of young people, the campaign empowers them to not only consume content but to become creators of messages that advocate for tolerance, equality, and respect.

Digital Education and Professional Development:

- Germany's "UndiMeS" programme offers flexible and modular digital training for educators which combines micro-learning units with a community of practice, enhancing their ability to engage with students in the digital era.
- Turkey's BTK and collaborations with educational institutions provide structured training on online etiquette, safety, and

ethical digital behaviour.

- Digital4All focuses on strengthening the capacity of universities to design and deliver inclusive digital learning experiences.

Online Safety and Awareness:

- Turkey integrates digital ethics education into national programs and university curricula.
- Spain and Ireland advocate for responsible online behaviour through structured discussions and initiatives.
- Børns Vilkår (Children's Welfare) focus on creating safe spaces for children online, promoting the development of respectful and inclusive digital spaces.

05

Social Inclusion through Digital Media



5.1. Digital Divide and inequalities

The digital divide remains a significant challenge across various European countries, impacting different social groups and geographical areas, in particular rural areas.

According to the UNESCO report "Digital Inclusion for Low-skilled and Low-literate People. A landscape review"³ "The main barriers to increasing digital inclusion are:

- lack of infrastructure
- low incomes and affordability
- lack of digital competences and digital skills (lack of basic literacy and digital literacy)
- lack incentives to use digital tools, which is known as lack of appropriation of internet. This can be the result of a lack of cultural and social acceptance of internet use, lack of awareness and understanding of the internet, or not perceive as attractive the online content.

Unequal access to technology perpetuates the exclusion of certain groups. This disparity in access to and use of information and communication technologies limits their full participation in the digital society.

3 Zelezny-Green, R, Vosloo, S, Conole, G & Curran, S (eds) 2018, *A landscape review: digital inclusion for low-skilled and low-literate people*, UNESCO, Paris, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261791>

*Social networks and
social capital
significantly affect
digital inclusion*

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Three types of digital divides are identified:

- A first digital divide focused on the access to technology. Access to technology is conditioned by the socio-economic situation of people in society. In this sense, the worse the socio-economic situation, the greater the difficulties in accessing technology and the infrastructure necessary to use it: access to a computer, access to internet connection, quality of technological material or maintenance of the technology.
- The second digital divide is related to "attitudes towards technology, motivation to use it or perceived difficulty or usefulness".
- The third digital divide is related to the appropriation of technology, its use and the "unequal possibilities for people to take advantage of new technologies".

The EU has designed a specific strategic framework to face digital divide. The European Parliament, on the Resolution of 13 December 2022 on the digital divide recognised the social differences created by digitalisation, stressed the need to tackle the digital divide and the financial exclusion of vulnerable social groups so that the digital transformation leaves no one behind, in particular those who are most at risk of lacking the digital skills they need to make the most of the potential of the digitalisation of public and private services, so as to enable the inclusion of all citizens in the digital society, regardless of their income, social situation, geographical location, health or age. In this framework the EU launched the [Digital Decade 2030 Strategy](#) and the [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#) that states the EU's commitment "to a secure, safe and sustainable digital transformation that puts people at the centre, in

line with core EU values and fundamental rights".

Under this framework, country reports recognize the existence and prevalence of a digital divide among vulnerable groups, such as migrants and refugees with low socioeconomic status. The digital divide among migrants and refugees is shaped by intersectional discrimination, meaning a combination of factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, academic level, knowledge of the language, digital literacy, social networks or social capital, all of which influence their access, use and appropriation of digital technologies. Gender plays a crucial role, as migrant and refugee women often face additional barriers due to cultural norms, family responsibilities, and limited economic independence, which restrict their exposure to and confidence in using digital tools. Age also impacts digital inclusion, with younger migrants generally being more familiar with technology, while older individuals may struggle due to a lack of prior digital experience and learning opportunities.

Socioeconomic status is a key determinant since migrants with lower incomes often lack access to reliable internet connections and digital literacy training, limiting their ability to obtain the maximum benefit from the internet and the resources that can be found there. Academic level further influences digital skills. Those with higher education are more likely to adapt quickly to digital environments, while individuals with limited schooling may face difficulties in navigating Internet, especially if they experience language barriers.

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Social networks and social capital significantly affect digital inclusion. Strong social connections help migrants gain support in learning digital skills and accessing online opportunities, whereas those with limited networks may struggle to integrate digitally, reinforcing social and economic exclusion. Social media platforms can serve as vital tools for communication, job searches, and access to essential services, but unequal access to these networks further deepens the digital divide.

Ultimately, the intersection of these factors (intersectional discriminations) determines how migrants and refugees can engage with the digital world. Without targeted policies to bridge this gap, they risk being further marginalised, limiting their access to education, employment, and essential public services. Comprehensive digital inclusion strategies that address these inequalities are essential to ensuring their full participation in society.

National reports show that countries have implemented different policies and approaches to addressing the digital divide, focusing on access to connectivity and devices, improving digital skills, and fostering digital engagement. In Denmark, despite its advanced digital infrastructure, the digital divide still affects older populations and those with lower socioeconomic status. Telecentre Denmark plays a crucial role in bridging this gap by offering digital literacy education and access to technology for underserved groups. Finland leverages digital media to promote social inclusion by providing platforms for education, communication, and civic engagement. However, digital inequalities persist, with disparities in access, skills, and attitudes toward technology continuing to exacerbate social exclusion, highlighting the need for initiatives that improve digital literacy and ensure equitable access to resources.

Ukraine faces significant challenges in rural areas and among older populations, where limited access to high-speed internet and digital devices

restricts participation in the digital economy and society. In Germany, the 2019 Digital Pact for Schools represents a major step toward enhancing digital infrastructure in education, providing funding and support to upgrade technology in schools to bridge the digital divide among students. In Spain, offline social inequalities are mirrored in the digital world, leading to what has been described as "digital stratification," which particularly affects migrants and refugees facing economic hardship. Language barriers, lack of digital skills, and restricted access to devices and connectivity make integration and access to essential services more difficult for these groups.

Ireland's National Digital Strategy addresses multiple aspects of the digital divide by ensuring access to broadband and high-speed internet for low-income and rural communities while also providing digital literacy training through the Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme. Additionally, efforts are made to bridge the gap between digital skills and employment opportunities, especially for marginalized communities. Turkey has taken a proactive approach to reducing digital inequalities by expanding infrastructure, implementing digital literacy programs, offering inclusive e-government services, and providing targeted support for disadvantaged groups to create a more equitable digital environment.

A comprehensive, intersectional approach within a cross-sectoral strategy is essential for promoting digital inclusion among individuals facing digital exclusion. This approach ensures that various actors of society (public administrations, NGOs, private organisations, digital platforms, social movements, individuals,...) collaborate to bridge the digital divide, overcoming the reproduction of inequalities of the offline world and addressing not only access to technology but also the skills, confidence needed to actively and effectively engage in the digital world.

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

In terms of promoting access to technology and the internet, reducing the costs of digital devices and connectivity while expanding free access points (libraries, for example) would be crucial for those at risk of digital exclusion. Regarding the promotion of digital skills, training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives must be designed to accommodate diverse social backgrounds and intersectional discriminations, ensuring that language barriers do not hinder migrants and refugees from acquiring essential digital competencies. Digital engagement and sense of appropriation should also be reinforced by involving communities in vulnerable situations in the design of digital tools, ensuring that their needs and specific challenges are addressed. Furthermore, raising awareness of xenophobia and misogyny in digital spaces, particularly in the context of misinformation, is vital. Encouraging counter-narratives and supporting alternative perspectives can challenge existing stereotypes and prejudices. Lastly, fostering the participation of marginalized groups in digital spaces can help promote a more positive and humanized representation, encouraging empathy, respect, and greater social inclusion.

5.2. Accessible Design and Universal Design Principles

The European Union has implemented a range of legislative measures to ensure an inclusive digital environment. The EU Web Accessibility Directive enforces accessibility requirements for public sector websites and mobile applications, ensuring uniform standards across member states. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive enhances accessibility in traditional and on-demand media services, while the European

Electronic Communications Code mandates equivalent services and affordable access to specialised equipment for users with disabilities. The eIDAS Regulation secures cross-border digital transactions by ensuring accessibility in digital identity services. The Marrakesh Directive and Regulation improve access to printed materials for individuals with disabilities, and the European Accessibility Act removes barriers to accessible products and services, including web and operating system accessibility. Digital accessibility means that web content such as texts, images, forms, sounds, etc. should be accessible and understandable by as many people as possible without discrimination.

Denmark leads in accessible digital design by adhering to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Danish designers integrate universal design principles, ensuring digital products and services accommodate all users, particularly those with disabilities. These initiatives reinforce Denmark's commitment to digital inclusivity.

Finland enforces the European Accessibility Act, requiring both public and private sectors to provide accessible digital services, including telecommunications, e-commerce, and self-service terminals. The Act on the Provision of Digital Services ensures public digital platforms are accessible to all users. Finland's national policies emphasize equality, non-discrimination, and the active participation of individuals with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health oversees accessibility legislation, incorporating feedback from stakeholders to create a comprehensive framework.

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Germany prioritizes inclusive digital education by applying Universal Design for Learning principles in universities, ensuring students of all abilities have equal access to digital education. Teachers require additional resources to create accessible digital materials, fostering a more inclusive learning environment. The broader "Design for All" approach promotes the development of technologies that accommodate diverse needs, enhancing accessibility in digital education and media.

Spain emphasizes accessible digital design and media literacy. Digital platforms integrate features such as subtitles, screen readers, and inclusive language options. Media literacy initiatives educate citizens on recognising biases in algorithms and verifying information credibility. Educational programs, including EU-supported initiatives, equip students with skills to identify misinformation and critically engage with digital content.

Ireland focuses on digital inclusion through government and community collaboration. The National Digital Strategy enhances connectivity, digital skills, and access to technology. The Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme offers free training to individuals with low digital literacy, especially older adults and disadvantaged groups. Media Literacy Ireland (MLI) promotes media literacy, while the Data Protection Commission (DPC) establishes accessibility standards for digital content. Citizens Information services assist marginalized communities in navigating public services and digital platforms.

Ukraine leverages digital media to provide accessible information to internally displaced persons (IDPs), helping them integrate into new

communities. Ensuring digital accessibility in information services enables IDPs to access essential resources, easing their transition and promoting social inclusion.

These diverse strategies demonstrate that a combination of legislation, education, and community engagement is essential to achieving digital accessibility for all citizens across Europe.

Digital literacy

CEDEFOP defines digital literacy as the "ability to use information and communication technologies to find, critically assess, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills". This concept has three dimensions:

- **Practical skills:** The ability to read, write, and understand different types of digital content, such as text, images, videos, and sounds. This also includes knowing how to use digital tools to communicate effectively.
- **Cultural awareness:** Understanding how to use digital media appropriately in different situations, like building relationships online for social, educational, or work purposes.
- **Critical thinking:** Being truly digitally literate means not just using digital media well but also questioning and improving the way it works, "developing the ability to transform them actively and creatively".

In the European context, digital literacy is recognised as an essential skill for full participation in society, including technical, cognitive, social, civic, and creative competencies. These skills should allow individuals to engage in the economic, social, and cultural aspects of life while playing an active role in democratic processes.

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Media literacy, and, in particular, the dimension of critical thinking, is closely linked to democracy, ensuring that individuals can critically evaluate digital content and participate responsibly in digital spaces.

The Council of Europe reinforces this concept through digital citizenship, which promotes responsible and respectful online engagement, access to reliable information, and the defence of human rights. The European Commission highlights the importance of media literacy and has responded with initiatives such as the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), which aims to create high-quality, inclusive, and accessible digital education, and the Digital Citizenship Education Handbook, which provides guidance for educators and policymakers on fostering responsible digital engagement.

Denmark's digital strategy prioritizes inclusion, ensuring digital literacy for all citizens. Initiatives like Digital Post, which mandates digital communication with the public sector, have faced challenges, particularly among older adults and immigrants. As a result, Denmark has increased investment in digital skills training to bridge the literacy gap and ensure broader participation in the digital economy.

Finland integrates media literacy into its national education system, ensuring that individuals develop critical digital skills from early childhood to adulthood. The National Audiovisual Institute leads media literacy initiatives, fostering responsible media consumption and civic engagement. Public libraries and social organisations support lifelong media education, helping adults and seniors improve their digital literacy. The government also emphasizes media literacy to combat misinformation, particularly in areas related to national security and immigration.

Germany promotes media literacy through large-scale campaigns organised by federal states. These campaigns raise awareness about responsible digital engagement and provide citizens with tools to navigate digital environments safely. The focus is not only on access to technology but also on equipping individuals with critical skills to evaluate information and protect themselves from digital threats.

Spain has implemented a comprehensive approach to digital inclusion. Since 2013, the country has developed initiatives focusing on accessibility, digital literacy, gender equality, and employability. Spain Digital 2026 prioritizes media literacy and algorithmic literacy, helping users understand digital content biases and engage critically with online information. Educational programs teach students to assess source credibility and detect misinformation, supporting informed civic participation.

Ireland fosters digital literacy through collaborative efforts between the government, non-profits, and community organisations. Media Literacy Ireland (MLI) promotes critical media evaluation, while the Data Protection Commission (DPC) sets accessibility standards for digital content. The National Digital Strategy emphasizes connectivity, digital skills, and technology access. The Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme provides free training to disadvantaged groups, ensuring that all citizens can benefit from digital advancements.

Ukraine underscores the importance of digital literacy in promoting inclusion, particularly among internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Digital media helps individuals integrate into new communities by providing accessible information about essential services.

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Comprehensive digital literacy programs, focusing on children and adolescents, aim to enhance critical media skills and foster responsible digital engagement.

By enforcing protective laws and supporting grassroots initiatives, Ukraine leverages digital media to build an informed and connected society.

Turkey has launched the Digital Turkey Project to improve digital infrastructure and literacy. Digital media platforms play a vital role in public discourse and social inclusion, especially for underrepresented groups such as ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities. Government initiatives focus on expanding access to digital resources, while civil society organisations advocate for media inclusivity and literacy programs to bridge social gaps.

Each country carries out different strategies to improve media literacy and digital inclusion using a policy and strategic framework and focusing on educational initiatives and, in some cases, creating and fostering community development opportunities. These diverse approaches highlight the overall importance of media literacy in fostering democratic participation, critical thinking and digital resilience. In this context it is key to underline that the challenges faced by these policies are linked to the risk of perpetuating inequalities. For this reason, an intersectional approach is essential to address the 'bone' of digital inequalities.

Digital literacy is essential for empowering vulnerable communities. Moreover, digital literacy can foster community-building and collective action, improving the cultural and social capital of those who are in a vulnerable situation. The ability to use digital media

effectively allows to share experiences, advocate for rights, collaborate on projects aimed at improving their social standing. Addressing the cultural and social capital through the community-building is essential for creating equitable opportunities and fostering a more inclusive digital society in which all voices are heard and represented

5.3. Empowering Marginalised Communities through Digital Platforms

Internet and Digital platforms play a crucial role in fostering community connections and inclusion. Different countries have developed initiatives that leverage technology to empower marginalized groups, facilitate peacebuilding, and strengthen local networks.

In Germany, digital platforms serve as tools for local social inclusion. Neighbourhood-related platforms, ranging from volunteer-run blogs to professional nationwide networks, create spaces where people can connect, share information, and participate in local initiatives. These platforms help bridge social divides by bringing together different community members, allowing those previously excluded from local discussions to engage actively. Denmark has identified Red Barnet Ungdom (Save the Children Youth Denmark) and Ungdommens Røde Kors (Youth Red Cross Denmark) as key platforms focused on mentorship for at-risk youth.

In Finland, technology is used for conflict management and peacebuilding. The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) employs network analysis and big data to model conflicts, improving conflict analysis and decision-making processes. It also develops web-based tools to enhance inclusive decision-making and foresight

Social Inclusion through Digital Media

Social Inclusion through Digital Media during peace processes. Finland's peacetechnology ecosystem focuses on collaboration, continuous learning, and impact assessment, making it a highly innovative approach to peacebuilding.

In Spain, community-building efforts focus on social empowerment. Experts highlight the importance of collective work in amplifying the voices of excluded communities. Platforms like Afroféminas and Afrocolectiva create their own content to challenge dominant narratives and promote representation. Studies show that digital platforms are key to improving the social, economic, and cultural inclusion of marginalized communities.

In Ireland, several initiatives promote digital inclusion and conflict resolution. The SICAP programme provides targeted support to disadvantaged individuals, helping them access digital tools and services. The New Communities Partnership (NCP) offers digital literacy workshops for refugees and migrants, teaching practical skills like online job searching and accessing public services. In Ireland and Northern Ireland, digital media is also used to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion, and respectful online interaction. These initiatives focus on reducing online negativity, misinformation, and hate speech while ensuring marginalized groups can participate fully in digital society.

In Turkey, digital platforms enable collective action and advocacy. Case studies show that youth, women, and other disadvantaged groups use social media and online forums to create supportive communities. These digital spaces allow individuals to share experiences, advocate for rights, and collaborate on initiatives that improve their social conditions.

The selected initiatives show unique and innovative approaches to community-building focusing on big data and peacebuilding; content

creation for representation of under-represented voices; digital literacy addressed to refugee and migrants; mobilization of grassroots communities to foster inclusion. All of them show the positive impact of digital platform and the online field in terms of meaningful social change and strengthen social inclusion in local communities. But as has been repeatedly pointed out in this report, the trend of the internet and digital platforms is to reproduce the inequalities and discrimination that occur in offline life.



06

Lessons learnt, Challenges and Opportunities

Digital inclusion initiatives highlight the importance of accessibility, digital literacy, community engagement, collaboration of different stakeholders or equitable participation. Each national report has presented valuable lessons and faces unique challenges in fostering inclusive digital spaces.

Lessons Learnt

Denmark emphasizes the need for a structured digital strategy that ensures accessibility and literacy. The implementation of Digital Post revealed the necessity of digital skills training, especially for older adults, demonstrating that inclusion efforts must be continuous and adaptive.

Finland shows how combining digital and face-to-face interactions, along with leveraging social media for advocacy, can effectively mediate inclusion, participation, and peacebuilding. However, ensuring responsible digital media use and enhancing digital capacities across all societal groups remain critical.

Germany underscores the importance of media literacy and digital education at all levels. Nationwide campaigns and digital learning programs demonstrate that inclusiveness goes beyond mere access to technology, requiring adequate skills and infrastructure to support education and workforce development.

Lessons learnt, Challenges and Opportunities

Ukraine highlights the risks associated with misinformation, privacy violations, and exclusion. Digital literacy, strong regulatory frameworks, and grassroots movements play a key role in mitigating these challenges while maximizing the potential of digital media for inclusion and participation.

Spain stresses the significance of digital literacy, equitable access to technological resources, and the accessibility of digital platforms. The inclusion of marginalized communities in decision-making processes and content creation fosters empowerment and counters dominant narratives.

Ireland highlights the foundational role of digital literacy for marginalized communities, emphasizing the necessity of tailored programs and sustained collaboration among governmental and non-governmental entities.

Turkey demonstrates how digital platforms can serve as powerful tools for community-building and advocacy, enabling marginalised groups to share experiences and advocate for their rights.

Challenges

Despite efforts in digital inclusion, there are persistent barriers being some of them: hate speech, misinformation, online harassment, xenophobia, lack of representation in the virtual space and the digital divide.

Denmark struggles with bridging the digital literacy gap among older adults and immigrants, while online harassment remains a pressing issue. Finland and Ukraine face challenges in ensuring equitable digital access and mitigating misinformation. Germany still needs improved digital infrastructure for education and training, with teachers expressing dissatisfaction over resources and training. Spain encounters obstacles in achieving equitable technological access and addressing digital discrimination. infrastructure improvements to enhance digital inclusion.

Ireland continues to battle digital infrastructure disparities, particularly in rural areas, while ensuring fair access to resources. Turkey must strengthen public-private partnerships and

Opportunities

Countries can leverage emerging technologies, such as AI and open-source solutions, to enhance digital inclusivity. Denmark's focus on AI-driven accessibility tools provides a model for other nations. Finland's commitment to inclusive digital transformation highlights the potential of digital media to create participatory societies. Germany's "Digital Pact for Schools" presents an opportunity to strengthen digital education through infrastructure investments. Spain's emphasis on intersectoral policies can lead to a more inclusive digital society. Ireland's approach to fostering digital empowerment through innovation and collaboration can serve as a model for global digital inclusion efforts. Turkey can benefit from sustained improvements in infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives to maximize the impact of digital tools.

Key Areas for Action

1. Education, education, education. Expanding Digital Literacy Programs - Ensuring all people, in particular those who are part of groups in vulnerable situations or where different inequalities overlap, receive meaningful and practical training to navigate digital environments effectively and to develop critical thinking. Introducing UDL (Universal Design Learning) and digital competence in the core of the curriculum (in formal and non-formal education), encouraging lifelong learning, incorporating the intersectional approach and the internet appropriation are also important.

2. Community Engagement: Successful initiatives often involve active community engagement, where groups in situation of vulnerability are involved in the design,

Lessons learnt, Challenges and Opportunities

3. Improving Infrastructure and Accessibility - Bridging gaps in technological infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and ensuring digital tools are accessible to all individuals.

4. Strengthening Digital Rights and Protections - Developing policies to mitigate online harassment, misinformation, and privacy violations while fostering a safe digital space.

5. Fostering Inclusive Content Creation - Supporting groups in risk of exclusion or marginalized in producing and controlling digital narratives that represent their experiences and perspectives is key. The existence of diverse voices highly trained on intercultural and digital competences -aware of intersectional discrimination- that create digital content and create and share counter-narratives that fight stereotypes and prejudices allow to have a more diverse representation in the virtual space, and making this virtual space richer in terms of mediation, democracy and diverse contributions.

6. Encouraging Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration. The vast majority of the shared initiatives have in common the involvement and commitment of government, non-profit organisations and Civil Society Organizations (in some cases, grassroot community groups), in some cases, private organizations have been also part of projects and activities. A comprehensive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and can create ideal circumstances for sustainable and effective digital inclusion strategies.

7. Monitoring and Evaluating Digital Initiatives - Establishing frameworks to assess the effectiveness of digital inclusion programs and adapting strategies based on evidence-based outcomes.

8. Strategic policies that address Structural Barriers: Identifying and addressing structural barriers with an intersectional perspective,

introducing elements such as cultural patterns, socio-economic inequalities and accessibility issues, is critical for ensuring that all individuals can benefit from digital media and that all people can navigate safely. Policies aimed at reducing these barriers have been effective in promoting inclusion.

While each country presents unique challenges and solutions, common themes emerge: the need of strategic policies to overcome digital divide, the need for continuous digital literacy training, investment in infrastructure, protection against hate speech, racism or discrimination, identification of strategies to avoid the perpetuation of offline social inequalities, and the promotion of the active participation of marginalized groups. By focusing on the above mentioned areas, societies can create a more inclusive digital future where everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, has equal access to digital opportunities.

These lessons learnt highlight the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and a focus on local contexts in developing effective strategies for social inclusion through digital media across different countries.

07

Conclusions on Digital Inclusion for Vulnerable Communities, Migrants, and Refugees

The European context report shows significant progress in digital inclusion, but challenges remain in ensuring full mediation for participation, peacebuilding, and diversity. The European Union (EU) has implemented policies, legal frameworks, and projects aimed at fostering social inclusion and bridging the digital divide. Initiatives such as #ATodoColor and ALL DIGITAL Weeks highlight the EU's commitment to digital literacy. However, these initiatives prioritize inclusion and digital skills rather than a mediation-driven approach. The development of mediation strategies as a tool for inclusion and peacebuilding remains an area requiring further exploration.

Denmark's approach to inclusive digital media is progressive, with strong public-private sector collaborations addressing the digital divide, hate speech, and online harassment. However, further efforts are necessary to support older adults and immigrants, ensuring equitable access to digital resources and literacy programs.

Finland emphasizes the transformative potential of digital media while acknowledging its risks, including misinformation, privacy concerns, and exclusion of people with disabilities. The country focuses on education, protective legislation, affordability, and grassroots digital activism to mitigate these risks. However, digital

transformation may be overly optimistic without adequately assessing digital reach and competence levels among target groups. Issues such as ownership of digital platforms, commercial interests, and varying democratic interpretations also impact the effectiveness of digital media in fostering inclusion.

Germany has made steady progress in integrating digital media across sectors, with a strong emphasis on media literacy, digital infrastructure, and inclusive education. While challenges persist in terms of infrastructure and teacher training, the country's commitment to digital inclusion presents substantial opportunities for building a more equitable digital society.

Ukraine emphasizes digital literacy, protective laws, and grassroots movements to foster inclusion and participation. Ensuring responsible use of digital media is critical to promoting an informed and connected society.

Spain highlights both the potential and risks of digital media in social inclusion. While digital platforms offer opportunities for visibility and participation, they also perpetuate inequality if not managed effectively. The country prioritizes digital and algorithmic literacy, content regulation, and responsible digital engagement

Conclusions on Digital Inclusion for Vulnerable Communities, Migrants, and Refugees

Recommendations include integrating digital literacy into formal and non-formal education, creating accessible digital participation spaces, and encouraging digital platforms to take greater responsibility in moderating harmful content. Spain also underscores the role of Open Educational Resources (OER) in fostering digital inclusion and supporting marginalized communities through peer mentoring and community-based digital access programs.

Ireland presents a unique approach to digital inclusion, particularly in addressing the needs of migrants and refugees. The country has implemented initiatives such as the Digital Skills for Citizens program, which aims to provide essential digital skills training to those at risk of exclusion. Ireland also emphasizes community-based digital literacy programs, leveraging local organizations and libraries to reach vulnerable populations. However, challenges remain in ensuring consistent access to affordable digital tools and high-speed internet, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, Ireland is working on strengthening legal protections against online misinformation and hate speech, recognizing the need for a balanced approach that safeguards freedom of expression while preventing digital harm.

In general, the strategic decisions on making Internet a diverse, safe and inclusive space should take into account the persistence of the digital divide, in particular in rural areas and

affecting negatively to vulnerable groups (that can be impacted by intersectional discrimination); a lack of comprehensive digital literacy programs and the lack of an intersectional approach; the limited representation of diverse voices in the virtual space and the fact that current development of platforms contribute to reproducing and perpetuating stereotypes, prejudices and social inequalities.

Changes will arrive with community engagement, collaborative multi-stakeholders long-term, sustainable initiatives and education. The role of inclusive and critical formal, non-formal and informal education in addressing digital inequalities and training in key digital competences and skills, creating accessible, engaging and diverse learning environments is key for the future of inclusive digital media. By addressing these elements, societies can work toward a more inclusive, participatory, and equitable digital future for vulnerable communities, migrants, and refugees.

08

Final suggestions related to the work on competences and skills

Based on the main findings of the report the following section wants to identify main elements that could be work on the area of digital competence and skills level using the Digital Competence framework ([DigiComp](#)) of the European Union.

The following digital skills and competencies are essential for fostering digital inclusion among vulnerable communities, particularly migrants and refugees.

1. Information and Data Literacy

- Ability to search, evaluate, and critically analyse digital content.
- Critical thinking. Identifying misinformation, fake news, and privacy concerns.

2. Communication and Collaboration

- Proper use of digital tools.
- Knowledge and use of communication tools and communication strategies, for instance, storytelling.
- Intercultural competence or awareness of cultural differences in digital communication.

3. Digital Content Creation

- Skills to produce, modify and share digital content in a culturally inclusive manner.
- Ethical use of digital platforms respecting copyright and intellectual property.

4. Safety and Cybersecurity

- Protection of personal data and privacy rights.
- Awareness of online risks, scams, and cyberbullying.

5. Problem-Solving in Digital Environments

- Adapting to new digital tools and overcoming technical barriers.
- Utilizing digital resources for education, employment, and civic participation.

Final suggestions related to the work on competences and skills

Competencies and Skills for Content Creators to Foster Digital Inclusion

1. Intercultural Communication and Awareness
 - Understanding cultural sensitivities and diverse perspectives.
 - Adapting content to be inclusive and accessible for different communities.
2. Inclusive Storytelling and Representation
 - Ethical and responsible portrayal of vulnerable communities.
 - Engaging groups in situation of vulnerability such as migrants and refugees in content creation to amplify their voices.
3. Digital Accessibility and Universal Design
 - Ensuring content is fully accessible.
 - Using clear language, alt-text for images, and voice-over options.
4. Media Literacy and Critical Thinking
 - Identification of misinformation and fake news.
 - Promoting positive digital engagement and online safety.
5. Community Engagement and Co-Creation
 - Involving marginalised groups in the content development process.
 - Encouraging respectful digital participation through interactive media.

Digital content creators play a crucial role in promoting digital inclusion. According to the DigiComp framework, the following skills should

be emphasized or addressed:

1. Information and data literacy
 - Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content
 - Evaluating data, information and digital content
 - Managing data, information and digital content
2. Communication and collaboration
 - Interacting through digital technologies
 - Sharing through digital technologies
 - Engaging citizenship through digital technologies
 - Collaborating through digital technologies
 - Netiquette
3. Managing digital identity
 - Digital content creation
 - Developing digital content
 - Integrating and re-elaborating digital content
 - Copyright and licenses
4. Safety
 - Protecting personal data and privacy
 - Protecting health and well-being
 - Problem solving
 - Identifying digital competence gaps

By integrating these competencies and skills, both vulnerable communities and digital content creators can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable digital landscape.

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