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„Education for Media Literacy in Digital Environment“ project

STRATEGIC GUIDELINE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION IN MEDIA LITERACY (RECOMMENDATION POLICY PAPER)

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VALUE OF EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE

Value of European Knowledge
North Macedonia

Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities
Bulgaria

Utenos Adolfo Šapokos gymnasia
Lithuania

Content **p.**

Executive resume 5
Methodology 7
Literacy in the digital environment 9
1. **Comparative analysis about the inclusion of media education in national curricula across EU** 11
2. **Media literacy education in the curriculum: examples across Europe** 13
3. **An analysis of the level of media education of teachers, skills and competencies** 14
4. **An identification of suitable instruments to measure media education skills and levels in schools** 16
5. **European-wide platforms for effective cooperation in lifelong media education learning** 18
6. **An insight into informal learning and media used resources, based of our experience** 20
   - A. **Training report C1 – Lithuania** 20
     1. Media literacy on european level and development of democracy values through significant involving and participation of youth in process of decision making 20
     2. Increasing of media literacy in formal education with support of educational authorities 23
     3. Detrimental impact of media manipulations on democracy and european values 25
     4. Role of students in modern educational process 27
     5. Social networks 29
   - B. **Training report C2 – Bulgaria** 31
     1. Media literacy in curricula for free formal education activities 31
     2. Student involvement in the content creation process 32
     3. The role of the student community in the development of a multicultural society and the promotion of european values 33
     4. Students are involved in democracy and pluralism 34
     5. Media literacy as a tool for self-expression and participation in the labor

market 36
C. Training report C3 - North Macedonia 37
1. Educational support of student – refugees and students from minority ethical groups and their inclusivity in social environment 37
2. Erasmus+ funding of student's work and media literacy – experiences ... 39
3. The role of media literacy in relation to societal challenges 41
7 Policy recommendations to sustain educational policies at national and european level 43
Bibliography 46

EXECUTIVE RESUME

This Strategic guideline is in accordance with the objective of the Medi@Aigi project promoting of media literacy in the formal education, as tool for development of personal competences of teachers and students to recognize diverse opinions, trough creating of measurable indicators for media literacy levels and stimulating a culture of critical thinking and democratic values.

In this direction we want to make achievement to in following areas:

1) To foster a culture of critical thinking via education of the teachers and students on the detrimental impact of media manipulations on democracy and European values;

2) To increase capacities of partner institutions by improving the media literacy levels via joint engagement with state institutions;

3) To foster educational authorities to create curricula for media literacy that will be offered and incorporated in the classes for free activities.

We believe that this document contain very important experience, data related to media problems in education and recommendation for all involved cross sectoral policy maker bodies.

Medi@Digi project partners are sure that our view will help to find better solution for incorporation of media literacy in current curriculum in partner countries North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

Our contribution with this document is initial step to better identification the media literacy state of play for youth, but strong impact for us as partner organizations in the field of development of general society and active citizenship

This Strategic guideline aims at policymakers, practitioners and researchers in the fields of school education, media and digital policies. It reviews relevant European and international research to better understand how teaching and learning practices can support students' media literacy in

primary and secondary education. It also aims to understand how media literacy education in schools can help address the challenges related to the spread of disinformation and 'fake news'.

More specifically, the strategic guideline aims to answer the following questions:

- What teaching and learning practices at education can support students' media literacy, facilitate their critical engagement with media and support their active citizenship in the public sphere?
- What specific challenges does the spread of disinformation pose for teaching and learning media literacy education in schools?
- What media education literacy practices are most effective and suitable at primary and secondary levels?
- What competences can help to build media literacy among students at school level?
- What classroom assessment practices can be effective tools to assess students' media literacy?
- How can media literacy education help address the challenges posed by the spread of disinformation and 'fake news'?

METHODOLOGY

The main source of information for this Guideline strategic is based of relevant data; it draws on research evidence from a literature linked with media literacy in EU, international policy reports, comparative studies, and research projects.

To ensure quality data we conducted systematic searches for peer-reviewed articles published from educational authority in member countries in EU and partner countries in the MediaDigi project.

Also, in our methodology we included our approach, incorporating our experience in education of media literacy.

In this analysis is presented how the students involved in series debates take part in the building of own attitudes, critical thinking and how they develop approach in the environment and society.

Significant part of this analysis is recommendation of educational, but and other authority to take initiative for development of education of youth for media literacy, using of digital tools and platforms, but and other models from media sphere.

The following key search words were used: ‘media education’, ‘media literacy’, ‘digital literacy’, ‘media studies’. Complementary terms included: ‘primary education’, ‘secondary education’, ‘teaching practices’, ‘disinformation’, ‘misinformation”, and ‘fake news’. Results were screened by using the report’s research questions as selection criteria.

After screening of publications from Europe and publications from non-European countries were selected and analysed according to the study’s conceptual framework and research questions.

We have also carried out structured searches of recent empirical evidence, pedagogic resources and European funded project outcomes in the public

domain, and used a 'snowball' approach to gather additional research materials.

This Strategic Guideline comprises of Comparative analysis about the inclusion of media education in national curricula across EU, with accent of Medi@Digi project partners' countries concerning:

- Media literacy on European level and development of democracy values through significant involving and participation of youth in process of decision making
- Increasing of media literacy in formal education with support of educational authorities
- Detrimental impact of media manipulations on democracy and European values
- Role of students in modern educational process, and
- Social networks.

Specific educational perspectives of this Strategic Guideline involve: level of media education of teachers, skills and competencies instruments to measure media education skills and levels in schools European-wide platforms for effective cooperation in lifelong media education learning informal learning and media used resources. This Strategic Guideline provides Policy recommendations to sustain educational policies at national and European level

LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Rapid advances in digital technologies and a simultaneous increase in internet use have fueled a debate on the importance of preparing students to access, use, understand and critically assess all forms of media. Students, armed with nothing more than a single device, have access to a vast array of virtually unfiltered information. The expansion of time spent online by students has increased the risks of problematic internet use among children[1]. In most OECD countries, extreme internet use[2] has negative consequences on students' life satisfaction, aroused feelings of loneliness at school, increased the risk of disengagement from school, and been harmful to academic performance (OECD, 2017).

Certainly, wider access to the internet and digital media has delivered to students and teachers increasing amounts of information, and facilitates self-expression, active forms of citizenship, and creative communication with a broader audience. The benefits of wider access to increasing volumes of information are clear, yet in many if not all European countries this is also presenting challenges to their citizens, democratic processes, security, and 'social fabric'. Students are increasingly at risk of being exposed to various forms of disinformation, propaganda, radical and violent messages, indoctrination, cyberbullying and hate speech [3]. The media both develops and constrains public knowledge, and this ability makes it a strong influence not only on the political process but also on the processes of learning and socialization, influencing children's life and development.

[1] In 2015, across OECD countries, 54 % reported that they feel bad if no internet connection is available (with shares of more than 77 % in EU countries such as France, Greece, Portugal, Sweden) (OECD, 2017).

[2] More than six hours per day online outside of school (OECD, 2017).

[3] 37 % of respondents said that they encountered "fake news" every day or almost every day; 71 % felt confident in identifying them (European Commission, 2018b).

The spread of disinformation and 'fake news' [4] pose acute challenges for Member States' education systems. Students (and indeed all citizens) need to develop pertinent knowledge and develop the skills to navigate these fast-changing environments. Research shows that education in media literacy [5] can have positive outcomes on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes in analyzing and critically understanding the media and disinformation. These outcomes include critical engagement with the media in its consumption and its use, with the general aim of orienting this engagement towards civic participation. Crucially, competences alone are no guarantee of civility: creators of disinformation, political campaign teams using social media data, extremists, and 'troll farm' agents, all possess very high levels of competences in media literacy. In this report, then, media literacy education is seen not only as a set of competences for students to develop, but also as a dimension of agency; competences alone cannot provide all the tools required for students to view the media critically, nor are they enough to cultivate active forms of citizenship based on democratic values and attitudes.

[4] In line with the High-level group on fake news and online disinformation set up by the European Commission in January 2018, we understand the concept of disinformation as a phenomenon that goes beyond the term 'fake news', and which includes "all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit" (European Commission, 2018a, p. 10).

[5] Media literacy is the "ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contexts and to create communications in a variety of contexts" (European Commission, 2007). Media literacy education is "the educational field dedicated to teaching the skills associated with media literacy". See: https://namle.net/publications/media-literacy-definitions/. Accessed 20.09.2018. A definition of media literacy, media education, and other key concepts used in this report, is provided in the Glossary.

1. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN NATIONAL CURRICULA ACROSS EU

Definitions and competence frameworks for media literacy - Defining media literacy

For the purposes of this strategic guideline, we use operational definition of media literacy as the "ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contexts and to create communications in a variety of contexts" [6]. This definition builds on three key elements:

1) Access to media and media content;
2) A critical ability to decipher media messages and an awareness of how the media works; and
3) Creativity, communication and production skills.

Media literacy refers to media messages as the informational and creative content of text, sound and images carried by all forms of media including television, cinema, video, websites, radio, video games and social media. As media literacy refers to all media, the concept encompasses and includes all other forms of literacy, including digital literacy).

Several competence frameworks support the understanding of media literacy and help to disentangle the knowledge, skills and attitudes that it covers. The next section provides a brief review of some of the main frameworks of competences that have been recently developed at EU and international level. They provide a useful conceptual background on which we develop our analysis of media literacy education practices in school education.

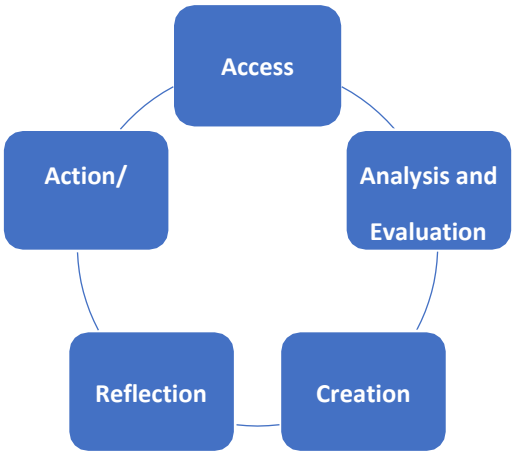
Our approach to media literacy competences in school education

Media literacy competences that are relevant at primary and secondary education level, are predominantly applicable in broader dimensions including in informal and non-formal education, training, employment, or ICT policies. As a guiding analytical framework for the purpose of this report, we

[6] European Commission, 2007

use Hobbs' (2010) framework of five 'essential competences' for media literacy (covering access, analysis and evaluation, creation, reflection, and action), as it was developed primarily within and for media education theory and practice. In order to strengthen the relevance of Hobbs' five essential competences to the European context, this framework is additionally supported throughout our analysis with the relevant competences and concepts defined in the frameworks described above, and in particular in DigComp.

Hobbs identifies five essential competences — access, action/agency, reflection, creation, and analysis and evaluation (see Figure 1) — that support "people's active participation in lifelong learning through the processes of both consuming and creating messages". Throughout the report, we rely on this framework and, to ensure its relevance, keep in mind the competences set out in other relevant frameworks that are intended for the European context. We also emphasise — something competence-based approaches tend not to — the agentive aspects of media literacy education; that is, we focus not only on what is to be learned but also on the learner.



***Source*: Hobbs (2010).**

In this part, we apply Hobbs' over-arching conceptual framework to the more recent DigComp 2.1. framework.[7] DigComp, recall, consists of digital competences developed specifically for the EU context. The competences of the two frameworks — Hobbs' and DigComp — are distinct yet inter-related: DigComp's 'information and data literacy' is roughly equivalent to Hobbs' 'access'; 'communication and collaboration' is equivalent to 'action/agency'; 'safety and problem solving' to 'analysis and evaluation and reflection'; and 'digital content creation' to 'creation' [8]. These rather straightforward overlaps between the two frameworks allow us to not only bring to DigComp 2.1 the valuable contributions of Hobbs' approach, but has the added benefit of bringing Hobbs' competences firmly within the context of the EU. Hobbs' framework will also serve as an interpretive device through which to describe the most recent literature on media literacy approaches and competences in education across Europe.

2. MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM: EXAMPLES ACROSS EUROPE

Several Western countries (such as the UK, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands) have included media education programmes from elementary school through higher education since the middle of the 20th century, with the express aim of providing students with skills to better comprehend and integrate the influence of a rapidly shifting media landscape[9]. Media education is now a fairly well-established specialist subject in secondary schools in several countries in the English-speaking world, and has gained ground in formal education across Europe in the last decades, both at primary and secondary level.[10]

[7] Stephanie Carretero, Riina Vuorikari and Yves Punie - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017
[8] Same.
[9] Akar-Vural - How Rural Schoolchildren and Teachers Read TV Dramas: A Case Study on Critical Media Literacy in Turkey, 2010.
[10] Frau-Meigs, Media Education. A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals 2006.

In 2014, the EMEDUS project found that there was "some sort of media education in 70 % of the EU Member States at primary level, in 75 % at lower-secondary level, and in 80 % at upper-secondary level"[11]. Across EU countries, media literacy was primarily attached to four other subject areas at primary level: mother tongue education (in 54 % of EU countries), visual arts (50 %), civic or citizenship studies and ICT (both in 38 % of EU countries). At lower-secondary level, media literacy was primarily connected to mother tongue education (in 75 % of EU countries), ICT (63 %), civic and citizenship education (63 %), visual arts (58 %) and history (42 %). Similarly, at upper-secondary level, media literacy was connected to mother tongue education (in 75 % of EU countries), civic and citizenship education (54 %), ICT and visual arts (5 0%), history (46 %) and social studies (42 %) .

Media education is not taught as a separate and independent mandatory school subject in any European country. As of 2014, most EU Member States had not yet adopted a media education curriculum, and schools remained autonomous to implement media literacy education practices[12]. The topic below presents some examples of how media literacy is included in school curricula at primary and/or secondary level. Despite limitations due to the overall absence of media education-related curricular guidelines in most EU countries, examples of national policies and practices show that there is potential to better include pedagogical practices focused on media literacy in the EU.

3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF MEDIA EDUCATION OF TEACHERS, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Access - Benefits and challenges

The competence of accessing media refers to the ability to find and use media and ICT tools skilfully, including the ability to share suitable and valuable information with others (Hobbs, 2010). In DigComp, this covers

[11] L. Harta - Comparative Research on Formal Media Education in Europe 2014.
[12] Same.

browsing, searching and filtering, evaluating and managing data, information and digital content[13].

PISA 2015 results[14] show that on average, 95 % of students in OECD countries reported that they had a link to the internet at home; and 91 % had access to a smartphone (OECD, 2017). In eight EU countries20, internet access grew by more than 30 to 50 percentage points between 2006 and 2015. However, research shows that digital technology access and use varies considerably among students and are strongly associated with socio- economic and cultural factors[15]. Moreover, when students access internet resources, they tend to demonstrate low attention to the validity of content and a lack of critical thought and judgement[16].

Wider access to digital media has provided students and teachers with greater opportunities to access information, for self-expression, for active forms of citizenship and for creative communication. Access to digital media has broadened students' opportunities to maintain their existing friendships while reducing their inhibitions about sharing and disclosing intimate information[17]. In turn, the democratisation of access to these new uses of media demands more and different skills and competences from users, including analytical and evaluative competences, and creative and reflective competences.

Media access competences in education

Although more than 80 % of young people in Europe use the internet for social activities, the use of technology for educational purposes still lags behind[18]. Many schools in the EU do not have access to a broadband internet

[13] Stephanie Carretero, Riina Vuorikari and Yves Punie - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens p. 11, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017
[14] https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf
[15] Antonio Calvani, Antonio Cartelli, Antonio Fini, Maria Ranieri - Models and Instruments for assessing Digital Competence at School, Journal of E-Learning and Knowledge Society 2008.
[16] Same.
[17] Wilfried Admiraal, Miranda Suzanna Angelique De Hei, Jan-Willem Strijbos, Ellen Sjoer - Collaborative learning in higher education: lecturers' practices and beliefs Research, Papers in Education (Res Paper Educ) 2015.
[18] European Commission, 2018c

connection, and many educators report that they lack the competences and confidence to use digital tools to support their teaching.

Accessing digital technology in the classroom can help to teach students to compose and organise ideas on screen, supporting learners' knowledge with various semiotic resources of different modes and media[19]. It can also support students in negotiating, designing, producing and presenting meaning, along with "writing strategies" such as planning, drafting, editing and proofreading of texts. For example, working with multimodal media texts such as advertisements in the classroom can enable children to improve their ability to critically construct meaning in a dynamic, engaging and collaborative process[20].

4. AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUITABLE INSTRUMENTS TO MEASURE MEDIA EDUCATION SKILLS AND LEVELS IN SCHOOLS

Analysis and evaluation

The competence for analysing and evaluating media can be defined as the capacity to "[comprehend] messages and [use] critical thinking to Strategic Guideline message quality, veracity, credibility, and point of view, while considering potential effects or consequences of messages". Analysis and evaluation competences imply the capacity to question and think in a critical manner about media content. They are therefore closely related to critical understanding skills[21].

Media literacy can enable students to make connections between their reading or use of a specific media form and the wider socio-economic and cultural context in which the media in question was made and consumed. It helps them to place a media message in the context of an elaborated knowledge structure about a particular issue. The conceptual framework and

[19] M Spante, SS Hashemi, M Lundin, A Algers - Cogent Education Digital competence and digital literacy in higher education research: Systematic review of concept use, 2018.
[20] Emma Parry and Eddy S.W. Ng - Multigenerational Research in Human Resource Management 2016.
[21] Perez Tornero & Varis - Handbook of Research on Media Literacy in the Digital Age, 2010.

pedagogical practices associated with media education "facilitate meaning-making and enrich the repertoire of strategies children and young people can draw in their reading".

Media analysis and evaluation competences in education

Education plays a primary role in promoting critical thinking about, and understanding of, the media. Media education can be seen as a challenge to the "dominant epistemology of the curriculum" by questioning the ways in which the world is represented in the media and the processes that construct knowledge. Through the development of critical thinking skills, media literacy also supports democratic values and attitudes, as well as active citizenship competences, by bringing up citizens who are able to raise questions, criticise, and who aim to read "behind the visible". This can be achieved notably through critical media pedagogy activities in a student-oriented teaching and learning environment, and through both the explicit and the "hidden" curriculum[22].

Being aware that audiences may interpret the same message differently helps to increase one's critical attitude towards the media, and hence, media literacy. The capacity to interpret and create meaning from media content differs depending on an individual's socio-economic background: people with a different background may interpret the same media content differently. PISA 2015 results show that socio- economically advantaged students are more likely than their disadvantaged peers to agree that "the internet is a great resource for obtaining information"[23]. This reminds us that students should not be seen and treated as a homogeneous group. It is not only their socio-economic background, but also their unique identity and complex life circumstances that influence the ways in which they interpret and create media content.

[22] Akar-Vural - How Rural Schoolchildren and Teachers Read TV Dramas: A Case Study on Critical Media Literacy in Turkey, 2010.
[23] OECD, 2017, p. 225

5. EUROPEAN-WIDE PLATFORMS FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATION IN LIFELONG MEDIA EDUCATION LEARNING

Digital Citizenship is "the ability to engage positively, critically and competently in the digital environment"[24]. Promoted by the Council of Europe, this concept also refers to "competent and positive engagement with digital technologies (creating, working, sharing, socializing, investigating, playing, communicating and learning); participating actively and responsibly (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge) in communities (local, national, global) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural); being involved in a double process of lifelong learning (in formal, informal and non-formal settings); and continuously defending human dignity"[25].

Digital literacy is "the ability to use to *find, understand, evaluate, create* and *communicate digital* information"[26]. The concept of digital literacy extends beyond merely using information in a functional, instrumental way, and beyond its simple retrieval. Instead, it more broadly comprises one's ability to ask questions about the source and meaning of information, to inquire about the interests of its producers, and to understand how information is related to "broader social, political and economic forces" [27]. Digital literacy is, fundamentally, a type of socio-ethical knowledge, with corresponding skills and attitudes that complement the technical and practical skills needed to use digital technologies. In the constantly-evolving uses of digital technologies, digital literacy is embedded in new social and new media practices and active forms of citizenship[28]. The DigComp 2.1. framework defines the digital literacy competences specifically for the current European context[29].

[24] https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/digital-citizenship-and-digital-citizenship-education Accessed 20.09.2018.
[25] Frau-Meigs et al., 2017, p. 15
[26] Report of the Office for Information Technology Policy's Digital Literacy Task Force, in Grizzle et al., 2013, p. 182
[27] Buckingham, 2015a, p. 25
[28] Calvani et al., 2012; Casey & Bruce, 2011
[29] see Carretero et al., 2017; Vuorikari et al., 2016

Dynamic literacies is an emerging term that brings together semiotics and multimodality, media education, the new literacy studies, and 'transmedia literacies', all of which stand in contrast to the traditional view of literacy as a static, narrow and autonomous set of skills. Dynamic literacies include two key features: digital storytelling, and digital curation. Digital storytelling provides opportunities for new modes of self-representation and collaborative meaning-making between students, their families/carers, their communities, and their schools. Digital curation refers to the processes of writing, editing, and authorship when producing, collecting or assembling digital content. In the context of education, literacy, media and technology converge in "the material-discursive-semiotic assemblings that are and could be generated in schools".

Media literacy is a term with a considerable number of competing definitions and the subject of debates about its scope. For the purposes of this report, we define media literacy as the "ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contexts and to create communications in a variety of contexts". This definition builds on three key elements: 1) access to media and media content; 2) critical ability to decipher media messages and awareness of how the media works; and 3) creativity, communication and production skills. Media literacy defines media messages as informational and creative content included in texts, sounds and images, carried by all forms of media including television, cinema, video, websites, radio, video games and social media. As media literacy refers to all media, the concept encompasses and includes all other forms of literacy, including digital literacy.

Media education refers to the educational process of teaching and learning about the media to develop competences (including knowledge, skills and attitudes) related to media literacy. Media literacy education is "the educational field dedicated to teaching the skills associated with media literacy". In certain contexts, media literacy and media education can be used interchangeably. Borg and Lauri note that without a satisfactory translation of the word 'literacy' in French, the language uses the word 'education' in place of 'literacy'. In German, 'media literacy' is translated into a general term for competence ('*Medienkompetenz*'), while in Dutch, the

concept is referred to as 'media wisdom' ('*mediawijsheid*').

Media and information literacy (MIL) is a composite concept proposed by UNESCO in 2011 to include the competences and practices of all related existing literacies (including news literacy, television literacy, film literacy, digital literacy, etc.). UNESCO defines MIL as "a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices required to access, strategic guideline, evaluate, use, produce, and communicate information and knowledge in creative, legal and ethical ways that respect human rights"[30].

6. AN INSIGHT INTO INFORMAL LEARNING AND MEDIA USED RESOURCES, BASED OF OUR EXPERIENCE

A. TRAINING REPORT C1 - LITHUANIA

1. MEDIA LITERACY ON EUROPEAN LEVEL AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY VALUES THROUGH SIGNIFICANT INVOLVING AND PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING

Three groups consisting of students from three different countries were asked questions about youth in decision making, volunteering, problems about refugees, climate change, alcohol and drug abuse.

What are the ways for the youth to take part in decision making?

Students' views on this matter were similar. All groups agreed that participating or joining a local youth organization is one of the most influential ways to take part in decision making, as one group stated*: "Gathering more people and inviting to join relevant discussions on various topics will motivate others to take part in social life more and that way do impact on others."* Students said that following media, writing petitions, joining peaceful rallies and demonstrations, raising awareness of problems

[30] UNESCO, IFAP, IFLA, 2012

on social media and creating various pages & channels to communicate with the youth will have a great impact, even so, youth should not be afraid to say their opinion out loud, youth should increase the efficiency in said organizations.

What is your view on volunteering?

All of the groups opinions were more or less the same. According to the answers, volunteering is a great way to gain valuable experience that will help further in life. Moreover, volunteering is a perfect thing for meeting new people, creating great friendships, hence, that provides a sense of unity. Volunteering teaches youth not to get a materialistic reward for doing a task, but be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment, unity, improvement in their social skills and more – all by helping the ones in need.

Do you believe that involving youth in decision making leads to stronger communities?

Concerning this question, some groups had different points of view. For example, one group's students stated that involving youth in decision making will not lead to stronger community, because youth are not as wise, educated and experienced as adults are, therefore youth's decisions might be spontaneous and not well thought through. However, other students had similar opinions as those of the other groups' students, putting in perspective, that youth is a big part of the community and they should have their opinions heard. One student said: *„If more people voice their opinion about an important matter, the decision, that has to be made will be more accurate and equal for all community members."* In addition, youth know more about certain topics, solely because they have grown up with concepts that are relatively new to the adults. Groups admitted youth should be involved in decision making, because in the end, it is their future and they have the right to shape it however they please.

How would you solve the problem of refugees?

During the questioning, many different answers were given on this controversial topic. One group stated that governments should accept refugees, control the influx of refugees and migrants accordingly by building

more refugee centres in hotspots and arrival points with a shelter, food and medicine, until the situation in their home countries has resolved. Two groups agreed help should be given to the refugees in exchange of work for the country, to an extent, that the pay and provided help is fair and not humiliating. All groups have come to an agreement that citizens of the countries' which accept refugees should be educated on the situation that surrounds the life of a refugee and share the stories of their lives, whom would have a great impact, henceforth teaching citizens empathy and tolerance: *"So just talking about it, sharing stories about people who lost their ordinary lives can increase levels of tolerance, the earlier it is done, the better it is."* In addition, the countries that do accept refugees should be supported.

How can the youth take part in solving climate change problem?

Students have given many great ideas surrounding this worldwide topic. Groups proposed that they should support the production of eco-friendly engines, support filtering regulations in factories, express support on renewable energy. One of the most important things proposed by the groups was raising awareness about the catastrophic damage made by climate change. Nevertheless, there are many solutions that groups have come up with for this obstacle, for instance, having more discussions on this grave matter, creating organisations that would talk about climate change more freely. Moreover, the new generation is more artistic, so it is possible to introduce new ways of educating people about climate change, which would raise more and more thoughts about the issue.

How could the youth participate in alcohol and drug abuse prevention?

Alcohol and drug abuse is a problem that is spread throughout the world. Groups concluded that alcohol and drug abuse starts from the mind-set of the person. The earlier the person is educated about the negative effects, the better it is, because throughout the childhood, these things remain a mystery for them and time comes when they want to try it for themselves. Some people abuse alcohol or drugs because they do not feel like they belong „on the face of the Earth", so these substances make them feel better, letting them feel „disappeared". Students have introduced their ideas in preventing

this abuse. One group suggested that youth should support government's decision in regulating alcohol and drugs, therefore making them less accessible to the public. Furthermore, youth should participate in anti-drug and anti-alcohol campaigns, talk to *ex*-drug or *ex*-alcohol abusers and share their experiences and stories, spread the word of the destructive capabilities drugs and alcohol have, support the former, aforementioned abusers in their path of recovery and rehabilitation.

2. *INCREASING OF MEDIA LITERACY IN FORMAL EDUCATION WITH SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES*

Since there are huge mountains of information everywhere, it becomes crucial to learn to become media literate. The students discussed how the teachers could help pupils gain analytic and critical thinking skills. The participants also debated, whether media literacy should be a separate course or integrated in different subjects. However, focusing only on education is not enough to increase literacy, so students discussed about laws related to social networking and responsibility that news agencies should carry.

How could teachers educate students in Media literacy?

The participants gave a lot of insights on this question. Most of them agreed that one of the best ways for teachers to teach media literacy would be teaching students to evaluate media and discussing bias or sources. Small part of participants even suggested showing trustworthy sources to pupils, however, their views were opposed with the fact that sites will not be reliable forever. Instead, teachers should encourage students to ask questions, show videos that are related to the topic. Even having students creating media themselves is efficient, because it supplements theoretical notion of how the media edits and alters content.

Should private news portals take responsibility for publishing fake news? Why?

Everyone agreed that various news portals should take responsibility for spreading misinformation. Fake news can disturb views in a negative way. Laws or restrictions would improve the quality of the media, since there would be a legal responsibility. Moreover, not everyone knows how to indicate fake news or the potential dangers the media might incite. A small part of students even stated that this is the only effective way fighting misleading media.

If a government passed a law requiring social networking sites to introduce guides to Media literacy, would users become more educated?

The answers regarding this questions were two -sided. Most of the answers stated that users would get more educated solely because users use the Internet all the time and they are supposed to know the guidelines, some even suggested an automated guide for users to meet beforehand. However, some students said, that users will not get educated, because majority of users usually skip guides or they do not care. To add up, it is up to users whether they want to be more educated in media literacy.

Is it better to teach Media literacy in a separate course or have them integrated in different subjects? Why?

A lot of students agree on the integration of media literacy in other subjects. Integration will let the students learn about media literacy without requiring to dedicate their free time that separate lessons would require. Furthermore, integrity would lower the potential of students skipping classes and overloading themselves with access amounts of information but still keeping students interested in the course. The other half of the students stick to the separate class idea. Media literacy class is a completely new subject for the youth. In order to fully understand the issues that will be discussed in those lessons, students believe that a few classes will not be a bad idea. Separate classes will be taken much more seriously than just implying bits of information to the serious topic.

If you were the principal of your school, what would you change in the curriculum? Why?

Less than half students would like to get platform and support for their extra-curricular activities and make it available to choose the subject they want to learn. In addition, students want to obtain more information on daily basis topics and things that they will face in the future such as paying bills, Internet dangers, job applications. The ones who stated that they would rather have an integrated subject said that making a separate subject would cost more resources; this way students will be more interested and will not feel like they are wasting their time. Freedom and freedom of choice is specified as the most important thing for all of the students. The balance of educational classes, preferences and freedom is the most important for all of them.

3. *DETRIMENTAL IMPACT OF MEDIA MANIPULATIONS ON DEMOCRACY AND EUROPEAN VALUES*

The participants were aware that they could be manipulated by the media. They discussed what media manipulation really is and ways it tricks people to believe false things. Based on their own experience and research they tried to find origins of fake news. After sharing their own ways of detecting false news, students had a more serious topic about correlation between democracy and media quality and considered influence of social networks on European values afterwards.

What is Media Manipulation? How are we manipulated?

The media manipulation was understood as a technique in which the image of an event is created to favour someone's particular interests. Nowadays, most of the manipulation happens through the Internet and television. Using invented stories or images is one of the way to mislead people and use them to achieve some kind of mischievous goal. Sometimes readers are lured by appealing topics and headlines. Furthermore, journalists can target our emotions to make the stories believable, which distorts the reality.

Where Does Fake News Come from?

Everyone knows that the fake news reaches individuals not only through television, but every platform possible. A lot of mistruth comes from propaganda and wide range of advertisements, nevertheless it is important to realize that the origin of it is the journalists' workplace. The journalists are usually the ones who invent stories, but they are not the only ones behind it. They can be paid by corrupt people who want benefit from it.

What are the ways to spot fake news?

When students were asked about the ways to spot fake news, students were well informed. They stated that you should look for grammar mistakes, do research, see if the website has any credible sources and, most importantly, if the journalist himself is not anonymous. Furthermore, a really good way to check if the information is true is to browse other news sites.

Does media quality actually affect the quality of democracy?

Answers surrounding this very controversial topic were all one sided. All students agreed that it does affect the quality of democracy, because media and the Internet is easily accessible in these days, hence it is really easy to manipulate people and affect their political thinking, opinions and mentality. Media can easily affect democratic elections by misinforming and misleading the people.

What is the impact of Social media on European values?

All the participants agreed that the impact is very huge. Although the Internet lets people write anything they want, hate speech, racism and homophobia can negatively affect European values and set them in danger. It may outcome in bullying and sexism so it affects values such as equality, freedom and human rights. In addition, a message on social media may mislead people, which can adversely affect communication and integration inside society. Part of the students believe that social media contributes to propaganda in some countries so it causes a threat to democracy. Nonetheless, the fact that social media lets people to share their messages and opinions, this way people are bound to feel more freedom. Lastly, it causes the elections to be more active, reminds more people to engage and

communicate. Through social media people can see if the governments and companies are transparent and are true to their word.

4. ROLE OF STUDENTS IN MODERN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Although all of the participants were high school students, their views on the role of students were very divergent. Participants were asked questions about education system, role in volunteering, role of student council, the importance of education and their perfect school which was the hottest topic.

What is the role of students in improving the conditions of the education system?

The majority of groups agree that the main role of students when discussing how to improve the educational system is to voice their views and opinions. The students are a vital part of the educational process and therefore, they should not be excluded when it comes to making adjustments that impacts them directly. One of the students stated: "… if it weren't for us, the education system would not exist at all." Student participation in the conversation makes the process more genuine and results in less conflict between teacher and pupil. Sharing and expressing their thoughts help students eliminate potential disagreement that leads to a poor educational atmosphere and system.

What is the role of student unions or other student voluntary organisations?

According to students, student organisations are representatives of the youth in general, especially when speaking about issues that affect students. In addition, student unions are middlemen between students and governing figures, so the voice of the students would be heard and most importantly bring students together as one community. Voluntary organisations teach students how to work in groups, provide unity and valuable experience, make students more honest and open to each other, by doing things which make the world a better place.

What is the role of student council at school?

All groups agree, that student council at school is an important figure. School's council is the voice of students, they are the middlemen between school's administration and students. The role of student council is to listen to students' suggestions and realise them. Their purpose is to give students opportunity to develop leadership by organizing and caring out school activities and planning events. Everyone agrees that council should represent and advocate for students' ideas, opinions, desires, face the important problems in school together as a school community and provide solutions to the school's administration.

How would you like to be educated? What is your ideal school?

During the questioning, diverse answers were given. Majority students agreed that they would like to have a choice to make their curriculum plan and decide which things they would like to learn. Nonetheless, not all the answers were the same. Some suggested that ideal school should be very structured and not overloaded with extra work. It should provide an experience related to a future job and have more practical lessons than theoretical ones, which would encourage creativity and motivate students. A Few students suggested that they are satisfied with current educational process and their school, however, they agreed that there are some flaws, which could be resolved by having more communication with teachers and decreasing the number of students in a class. One student pointed out, that there are some problems not only in system itself, but also in the behaviour of people who have authority. Being more respected and understood would help a student to feel better in a school.

What is the importance of being educated for students?

Nearly all of the students stated that education is necessary for getting a decent job. It was agreed that an educated worker is bound to make less harmful mistakes for himself as well as for a society. Nevertheless, the importance is not only in a field of career, it touches more areas that lead to wellbeing. Education provides an option to choose a future and do not surrender to the fate. Moreover, it is also crucial to realise that education

does not consist only of reading and writing. Education is a medium to utilise the knowledge for the personal growth. Additionally, it helps to fight an ignorance, which sometimes leads to bloody disasters, as history has shown. Education is the first step towards becoming a true citizen.

5. SOCIAL NETWORKS

Students from Lithuania, Bulgaria and Macedonia discussed questions related to social media. They were asked how they understood social media, what sites they used, how it affected their life and most importantly, students exchanged views on threats that lure on the Internet.

What is Social Media?

The answers, more or less, were the same. All groups came to the conclusion that social media is a place where you can find lots of information, communicate and connect with people around the world, share your thoughts, express opinions and ideas. With the access of social media networks, we can easily look for what we need. However, due to the easy access to the media, people can be easily manipulated and misinformed.

What social media do you use? How often do you use it?

According to the answers, all of the students use social media every single day. The applications and ways that students use social media vary. For instance, most of the students use Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, but some of them also use Reddit, Discord, Viber, Twitter, even Steam platform. The periods also vary, some use social media from 2 to 3 hours a day, others even 5 hours a day; one student stated that she uses social media “too much”. In conclusion, students use social media every day, in various forms, spending countless hours.

Is social media an important part of your life? Why?

During the questioning, most students agreed that social media takes an important role in their live. Overwhelming majority of them uses it for making contact with people all over the world, which helps individuals feel

less isolated. Despite the fact that nearly everyone confessed that they occasionally use it for entertainment, students did not deny that they appreciate the access to information and diverse sources. However, some part of individuals stated they try to avoid it as much as possible, either because they prefer having face-to-face conversation or in order to avoid misleading information.

How often do you respond to the information on Social Sites? How do you respond?

The groups interpreted the question diversely. The answers ranged from responding to personal messages to participating in Internet debates. When it comes to behaviour in the debates everyone tends to remain respectful or tries to avoid conflict in general. The attitude towards responding to any form of information is seen as pointless because they believe their opinions are meaningless from a broader perspective. One of the students said: "... nobody cares what you think on the Internet and you cannot change person's mind." On the other hand, personal messaging is perceived more casually and everyone agrees that the social etiquette there is more relaxed and polite.

Describe the risks children and teenagers can face in Social Media

All of the participants were aware of this problem and shared some interesting thoughts. Students know that a child is an easy target to be manipulated. If the content is full of bad behaviour, children might think of it as a norm, which may lead them to doing things they can regret later in the life. Furthermore, children might face trolls, get bullied or scammed. With all that being said, social media can even destroy their self-image or even worse, make a child very intolerant because someone he has met on the Internet offended or traumatised him.

B. TRAINING REPORT C2 - BULGARIA

1. MEDIA LITERACY IN CURRICULA FOR FREE FORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

During the first day of training, students were divided into groups and discussed issues related to media literacy at school.

Media literacy in school is extremely important because in the world that we live in, nowadays, where thecnologies rules, we should be able to distinguish the real news and the fake one. Very often, especially in our education system, we have to obtain that knowledge on our own because there is a huge lack of activities connected to it. We have classes dedicated to technologies but they are aimed to teach us the basics of PowerPoint or Word but not how not to believe everything we read online.

Media literacy in the curriculum?

They agree that media literacy should be involved in the student's curriculum, as nowadays the media is part and parcel of the reality surrounding us. Therefore, it is of an extreme importance for students to be aware not only of its useful sides, but also of the dangerous aspects. It is vital that young people are competent in these sphere from a young age.

Students offer the topic of media literacy should be implemented into the curriculum, at least as hours of optional courses for students who are interested. For all other students, a minimum of 2 hours must be spent.

What activities related to media literacy would be interesting to students?

Students would also be interested in themes that are directly for them, like "How not to believe everything we see in social media" because that is a huge part of our lives and it can be very beneficial but it can also make us insecure and confused, particularly now, when we're still developing.

Every week the class has to choose a different person, who has to find a piece of information or news from the media and present it in front of the class. Then there has to be a discussion or a debate about how truthful the information is (and why do they think so), the source it has come from, the way it is interpreted etc.

How to provoke students' interest?

Through explaining how actually vitally important media literacy is nowadays and through interesting and entertaining programmes and clubs concerning it. Engaging social media that students use every day : Facebook, Inatsrgram etc.

If there are different types of activities, such as workshop, for example, that teach us through playing games of recreating different scenarios, that's how we would be able to be more aware.

2. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONTENT CREATION PROCESS

According to many participants, students should discuss, make decisions, take responsible actions related to these decisions - what their room should look like, what materials to work with, how to spend their classes, what kind of topics to study in relevant subjects, how to teach them, where to go out of school, and more.

The inclusion of students in the school community is crucial for shaping the school culture. Practice shows that the partnership between students and teachers to improve learning, teaching and leadership is a positive and effective for everyone. This means, at best, that students initiate and share decisions with teachers. But the goal is to reach all children.

How students can participate?

Many students in Bulgaria create their own school parliament at each school. The Student Parliament is a structure of student self-government. The school parliament consists of pupils selected on a quota and voluntary basis and distributed in different directions according to their interests and

opportunities. One of the main goals of the student parliament are working to raise the cultural level of the students and to contribute to the realization of civic education.

The Student Parliament is a place where students make proposals, exchange views and ideas on a daily basis about school life and the future of the school. It is a place for dialogue and cooperation between students and school leaders. They give publicity to current issues and school initiatives. They are trained in leadership skills, how to be real citizens.

Planning of real activities that can be realized by students in school

Students can be included in taking part in different activities connected to media literacy if they participate in organising them. Students can search for false information on the web / other sources of information, and show how they found the relevant information to be incorrect / correct.

They can have open days where they discuss their fears in regards to their Internet safety and usage, where they ask questions and such. It doesn't have to be strictly planned with the help of the teachers because very often that actually can be stress even more. It would be great if they are able to keep the atmosphere as informal as possible.

3. *THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT COMMUNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND THE PROMOTION OF EUROPEAN VALUES*

Young people understand European values as part of life and structure in all EU countries, as well as values that every person must respect and follow.

Many students know well what European values are, but the rest needs to be explained, and they are more specific:

- human dignity is inviolable (basic human value);
- freedom (free movement and living throughout the Union);
- democracy (this is how all developing countries in the Union function);

- equality (it is basically equality between men and women before the Law. The Union is progressing in this direction);
- the rule of law (Law and justice are paramount. They must be respected by everyone);
- human rights (Everyone has equal rights, no discrimination. Everyone is free to decide what to do with their lives).

In the discussion of European values, it is necessary that we talk about human values in the first place and what that means in our society nowadays. The obvious ones, such as dignity, freedom or equality are very often the ones we tend to take for granted the most. We are fortunate enough to be living in a safe, for the most part, country that also happens to be part of the European Union. That's why as teenagers we don't really think about what that brings to us. I know that my peers and even myself included don't really stop to appreciate our rights until someone tries to argue them. That's understandable but it is also very important for us now to be more critical with ourselves and others when it comes to our values. We should be true to what we believe in but in order to do that we should know what others stand for. I think this could be done by introducing activities that provoque our interest for other cultures and also by learning more about the politics of other cultures that are not necessarily in the EU. That can also be extremely helpful when it comes to being more open minded and accepting others points of view. After all, our society is built on the very idea of democracy and each person including the others, which is also one the essential elements of agreement. When it comes to pluralism, those two go hand in hand.

If the students are being educated about them from an early age, they are bound to grow up as responsible and tolerant people.

4. STUDENTS ARE INVOLVED IN DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM

Students have the privilege to live in a European environment of democracy and pluralism, which means that they have freedom of choice and can vote.

Pluralism means accepting and hearing multiple ideas, points of view and gathering information about the situation from a different perspective, which will help each student to develop professionally and not only.

The younger generation must be educated in democratic values from school.

Civic behaviors and democratic values are something that must be present in the daily lives of children, be part of practice at school, in society and in the family. Civic education cannot be just a discipline. It is necessary for the school itself to live as a democratic community, to have a clash of values, priorities, children to see active models of civic behavior. Most adults have not lived this way, and democratic thinking and action are not their deep inner attitude. And civic behavior requires being active, critical, sensitive to different points of view, taking responsibility for the choices you make, being prepared to rethink your position in the debate.

Change in children should start from the change in adults. The involvement of all groups in the school community in decision-making is crucial to any democratic process. In this sense, children are very important group in this community.

Students should be taught that they can at school to speak calmly, openly and without fear in all matters that concern them.

Students can be involved in evaluating the pros and cons of the solutions that are offered in our society for significant issues. But there is no need to do this in too philosophical and abductive ways, but by linking the topic to the specific life of the child. One topic of discussion may be that of violence and its impact on the entire community. Another important issue, for example, is for children to learn how to communicate best with adults, how to put them before them, and to discuss issues that concern them together. Many specific topics and occasions can be found to bring up adolescent democratic values. But first, adults must be a model for democratic thinking and behavior.

5. *MEDIA LITERACY AS A TOOL FOR SELF-EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR MARKET*

The digital world is based on technology, but is primarily social and media environment. To enable children to benefit from its opportunities in a safe and useful for their development way, they need to develop skills such as critical thinking, search, assessment and content creation skills, teamwork, emotional intelligence and more.

Media literacy is beneficial for the development and improvement of the young man. Everyone should understand at least the least how the media works and how easily one can benefit from it.

Critical thinking is an accepted educational goal and we must ensure that it is not just formal. Critical thinking affects all sectors of the education system, children, young people and adults.

It is important for the education system how media literacy can be achieved through critical thinking on a stable and sustainable basis in the learning process. Media literacy is more about education than it is about the media. Media teaching is not media literacy, but media training. Creating media content is not media literacy; Although media literacy must involve the creation of media content, media literacy means neither prejudice nor criticism of the media. Media literacy means critical thinking.

C. TRAINING REPORT C3 - NORTH MACEDONIA

1. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT OF STUDENT – REFUGEES AND STUDENTS FROM MINORITY ETHICAL GROUPS AND THEIR INCLUSIVITY IN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Three groups of students from three different countries were asked questions about importance of educational support of student – refugees and minorities and the ways to include them in the society.

How can we help student – refugees get educational support?

All of the students had same ideas about the educational support. They suggested that student – refugees could get educational support trough extra academic help with providing access to tutors and they should also have special books and be included into programs designed especially for them. The students also said that it is very important to include them and make them feel comfortable – showing that diversity in classes is welcomed. They all agreed that student – refugees should not be discriminated and that is crucial to grow awareness among students to make a safe and supportive environment where all feel valued and respected.

Should they get education on their native language or on the language of the hosting countries?

Concerning this question, the students had different opinions. Half of them agreed that it would be good if student – refugees should have the opportunity to study in their language or at least have some of their classes in their native language. The other half had different opinion. They thought that it is very important to study in the language of the hosting countries because that would help them to learn and improve that language quickly and it will be helpful for interacting with peers and for the process of adapting. All of the students agreed that student – refuges should get extra classes for learning the language and the number of the classes would

depend of their age. For example, they thought that small children should have less classes than the teenagers because they adapt quicker and easier.

Besides language barriers, are there other obstacles?

During the questioning, many different answers were given on this topic. The students divided the obstacles into cultural, social, school - related etc. First of all, they said that the student – refugees have stress adapting to a new place and meeting new people. They often are victims of harmful behaviour like harassment, discrimination or bullying by others. The student – refuges often does not understand how schools function, do not know where to go for help, little familiarity with the curriculum and the difficulty of making friends. Then, they have different culture, so being in new place makes it stressful to adapt to a new culture. Lastly, same of the students thought about tuition fees like an obstacle. They said that the government should help with this concern and give scholarships to student - refugees. As one student said: *"It's better to give money for scholarships, than to something that is useless".* But the other students said that the opportunity of scholarships should be only given to those who deserve. They said that student – refugees should pass some certain tests and prove that they want to study and get enrolment into universities.

Why is education important?

All of the students agreed that education is key for the future of refugee – students, minority ethical groups and for all of us. It helps them learn skills, build confidence and think critically. Educated refugee – students and minority ethical groups have a better chance at life. They can attend university and get higher education. This will help them get jobs. The students also said that if they are not educated they may feel that they are not appreciated and that is why education is important because it leads to finding your path, easier employment and integration into the society.

What are the ways to include student – refugees and students from minority ethical groups in the society?

All of the groups' opinions were the same. According to the answers, by improving the terms on which student - refugees and minority ethical groups

take part in society, they will feel valued, their differences will be respected, and their basic needs will be met so they can live in dignity and in that way easily become part of the society. They should be given the opportunity to study and work; the society should be supporting a multicultural environment, all of them should be encouraged to express their opinions; and last, the natives should make them feel safe and welcomed by anti – discrimination and giving them equal opportunities.

*Are student – refugees and students from minority ethical groups in the same position**?***

Students' views on this matter were similar. All of them agreed that they are not in the same position. They should all be treated equal, but they cannot be treated as one group. They difference between these two groups, is that the minority ethical group can be already living for a long time in that country. However, the racism and discrimination that the refugees and minorities face is often similar. The students agreed that just as refuges and minorities must adapt to the new society which they live in, so must the society adapt itself to be as inclusive as possible.

2. ERASMUS+ FUNDING OF STUDENT'S WORK AND MEDIA LITERACY – EXPERIENCES

Getting out of your comfort zone is not always easy, but would definitely boost your personal and professional skills. The Erasmus program is a great opportunity to live new experiences. The students talked about the benefits of Erasmus which are unlimited. By the end of the Erasmus, they said that they will have plenty of stories to tell and many memories that they will keep close to their heart. Although they will be sad when it comes to an end, the students realize how lucky they were to be able to have this opportunity.

Why is it important to be involved in students' programs?

The students said that is very important to be involved in students' programs because they achieve fluency in a new language, they improve their English, learn new things that they do not learn in school, make lifelong friends and

gain appreciation of host country and culture. They also said that besides great friendships this is leading them to new networking opportunities, they get experience and all of them agreed that it helps them to build their self-confidence. This also opens new horizons for them and help them develop new skills. According to the students, being involved in students' programs boost your CV because you get a certificate which is highly valued.

What are the benefits from ERASMUS+ exchange programs?

As the students said, there are many benefits that come from the ERASMUS+ exchange programs such as: a chance to travel abroad and visit new places, cultural exchanges, meeting new people, experience new things, become fluent in other language, open new horizons, develop new skills (analytical and problem-solving), self-confidence and self-development, experience different learning and teaching practises and a lot more.

What have you learned from the "Media Literacy" exchange?

All of the students had positive answers about this question. They said that this exchange made them realize that being media literate is very important in this digital era. They also realized that they spend a lot of their free time on social media and that this has a huge impact of their attitudes and beliefs. Because of the media literacy classes, now they feel safe while using the internet and know how to spot fake news, not to believe everything they see or hear and to protect themselves of the negative dimensions of media.

What have you learned on your ERASMUS+ experience about yourself and how that changed your path?

The students where excited to share their experiences and the way that changed their path. They said that they have learned a lot about themselves. This helped them be more confident, they found out that they love working with people and working in groups – this has helped them make new friends, saw that people are not judgemental but open – minded and even some of them found out that they are good in sports. All of them agreed that this has definitely changed their path in many ways. They say that now they have new opportunities; have grown as a person and even this experience helped some of them choose their future career.

3. *THE ROLE OF MEDIA LITERACY IN RELATION TO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES*

Music, TV, video games, newspaper, social media and other media all have a strong influence on how we see the world, an that influence often begins since we are little children. To be critical media consumers, children need to develop skills of media literacy. These skills include being able to *access* media, to *analyze* it in a critical way, to *evaluate* it based on that analysis and, finally, to *produce* media. The students from Macedonia, Bulgaria and Lithuania discussed on the importance of media literacy.

Do you think that you are media literate?

The students' answers were different about this question. Some of them thought that they are media literate and some of them that are not. A half of them said that they are more experienced than their parents, the other half believe that their parents are more experienced, because they double-check the information and do not share the information if they are not sure that it is true. Some of them said that they only read the title of the news and sometimes get misinformation because the content is not always connected with the title.

Why is it important to be media literate?

All the participants agreed that it is very important to be media literate because media literacy is an essential skill in the digital age. The students' opinions were the same and they all agreed that it is important because in that way you became able to recognize fake news, protect your privacy, the media's influence on shaping perception, attitudes and beliefs and how to properly use the social networks in the exchange of information. They also think that educating them about media literacy helps them learn critically, become a smart consumer of products and information, recognize author's point of view, create media responsibly, identify the role of media in the culture, understand the author's goal etc.

At what age do we need to start educating about media literacy?

The answers regarding this question were two -sided. One half of the students agreed that the media education should start from early age of 6 years old. They said that helping children understand that they may process information based on their personal opinion is a key component of critical thinking and media literacy skills. One student said: *"I think that there should be different programs for different ages, because not the same things are interesting for every age."*. The other half said that there is no need the education to start from that early age. These students said that media education should start at 12 years old, when the media is more involved in children's life. All of the students agreed that besides formal education, children should also be educated for media literacy by their parents.

How can we separate fake from real news?

When students were asked about the ways to spot fake news, some of them were informed and some not. One student said that recently in her school a rumour was spread that the school will not be working for a week, and she said that everybody believed that. So, she thought that this is very interesting and important topic to be discussed and said: *"We all get fooled sometimes"*. Less than half of the students shared the same opinion. Other student thought that spotting fake news is common sense. The other students said that they are well informed concerning this problem and that they always check the source, see if it is from a verified site, compare the information with other sources and see what is missing and always check the information because the tittles can often be misleading.

Do media take a lot of our time and how that impacts us?

According to the answers, all of the students use media every day and especially they spend most of their time on social media. The all agreed that the impact is huge because they get 90% from the information from social media. Oftentimes social media create their opinions and beliefs. They said that media impacts every aspect of our lives, specifically affecting how we relate to, learn about, and interact with people around us. Whether it's trough social media, blogs, advertising, or the news, all aspects of media

affect our perception of the world and what is happening in it. With such an incredible impact on our daily life, the ability to navigate, verify, and trust information is essential for everyone.

What are the societal challenges and how can we overcome them?

All of the participants were aware of this problem. They were familiar of the negative dimensions of media, including media manipulation, misinformation, hate speech, loss of privacy, cyberbullying, phishing and Internet predators. The students shared the opinion that this is a huge concern for the society and often leads people to depression and worst – suicide. They shared the opinion that is important to grow awareness about these issues by building knowledge in using media and media literacy may provide a type of protection for the children and for all – by helping them make good choices when using media.

7 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUSTAIN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL

This analysis consolidates evidence on the ways in which media literacy can be taught at classroom level in primary and secondary education. The following pointers aimed at relevant education policymakers at EU, national and/or regional level draw on the key conclusions of the report:

- ***Develop dynamic media literacy curricula that cover the five main media literacy competences***

Policy pointers

- Policymakers should develop dynamic media literacy curricula at primary and secondary level that enable full coverage of the five main competences for media literacy shared by international models: access, analysis and evaluation, creation, reflection, and action/agency.
- Media literacy curricula should prioritise students' active learning and agentive use of and creation of all forms of media.

Provide media educators with support and resources for addressing students' media literacy more holistically

Policy pointers

- Policymakers should provide media educators with adequate support and sufficient resources for addressing students' media literacy more holistically by bringing together school-based and out-of-school media literacy practices.
- Media literacy initiatives should aim to cross the home-school and online-offline divides, thereby creating a 'third space' for more agentive (active, critical and engaged) media literacy education.

Invest in further research into good practices in teaching media literacy to build resilience to misinformation

Policy pointers

- Policymakers should invest in further research into good 'sense-making' practices in teaching media literacy to build resilience to misinformation and conspiracy theories (such as inoculation approaches).
- Research findings should be used to resolve the debate around media literacy and students' belief systems, and facilitate far-reaching dissemination of these best practices for consistent adoption by media educators.

Facilitate and invest in large-scale collaboration initiatives in media literacy education

Policy pointers

- Policymakers should facilitate and invest in large-scale collaboration initiatives between media literacy educators, data analysts, social media platforms, journalists and NGOs.
- Support to these initiatives should have the explicit objective of bringing the best practices of short-term, small-scale media literacy partnership projects, into the formal school curricula and classroom practice for all students.

Define and adopt a clear connection between media and digital literacy policy, media education curricula, and teacher education

Policy pointers

- Policymakers should define and adopt a clear connection between media and digital literacy policy, media education curricula in primary and secondary education, and teacher education, from initial teacher education (ITE) to comprehensive professional development (CPD).
- Such a clear and comprehensive policy approach to media and digital literacy should increase the chances of success of implementing media literacy education and digital competences in school education.

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