Our Digital Village Project Newsletter
Issue n.2 - December 2024

Dear Reader,

Our Digital Village aims to intervene in rural areas by promoting the acquisition of digital and transversal skills, preparing people to face the challenges of the future. It is doing so by co-creating high-quality educational contents that respond to the needs of the local context, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term transformation towards digitalisation through active awareness raising on all levels of society.

REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF PROGRESS

As we wrap up the second year of Our Digital Village, we are proud to see how teamwork and shared vision have brought us to the incredible milestones reached so far. Through the effort of our nine European partners, we have made significant steps in bringing digital literacy and opportunities, paving the way for a lasting digital impact in rural communities.
At this stage, we are halfway through the project, and we are pleased to share some highlights.

✅The publication of a scientific article showcasing the innovative impact of the Our Digital Village project! This study, involving 278 participants from seven European countries, highlights the transformative role of the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA)in fostering digital competencies within rural communities. Through RMA workshops, participants explored their digital needs, competencies, and aspirations, identifying key challenges like infrastructure gaps and teacher training while emphasizing the importance of

personalized learning. The findings provide invaluable guidance for policymakers, educators, and community leaders, reinforcing the importance of participatory, inclusive strategies for sustainable digital inclusion. Full article is available on our website: https://ourdigitalvillage.erasmus.site/scientific-paper/

✅ The development of the Our Digital Village Activity Kit is well underway, with maieutic coordinators, ICT experts, teachers and trainers collaborating to create a dynamic, interactive resource. This toolkit includes ICT challenges leveraging technologies such as 3D printing, coding, microcontrollers, web development and robotics, alongside pedagogical guidelines to support their classroom implementation. As we progress, the Activity Kit will be further refined based on findings from the upcoming evaluations led by the University of Alicante in the next year of the project, which will ensure the toolkit is tailored to the real needs of educators and learners.

✅ The Online ICT Info Desks have officially kicked off, providing dedicated support for community members across partner countries! Available in nine languages—English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Dutch, Greek, Slovenian, and Hungarian—these desks are designed to offer accessible, personalised assistance for all ICT-related questions. Whether you're a teacher looking to integrate digital tools into your classroom, a student navigating coding challenges, or an adult learner exploring technology for the first time, our Info Desks are here to help. If you've encountered any technology-related problems or concerns, we encourage you to share your questions by filling out this short survey: https://ourdigitalvillage.erasmus.site/oid/

✅ Each implementing partner organised and implemented successfully the Training for ICT and pedagogical skills for teachers and trainers, with the aim of providing basic skills in coding, robotics, microcontrollers, 3D modelling and printing, and web development, in order to be able to use the activities proposed in the Our Digital Village Activity Kit. The second objective was to provide guidelines for adapting the activities to local needs and contexts, as well as pedagogical methods for implementing the activities in a way that enhances the digital skills and other transversal skills of the learners.

Since much of our work in 2024 centred on conducting and organising the Training for ICT and pedagogical skills for teachers and trainers, this second newsletter highlights the outcomes of these efforts.

The teacher training sessions on ICT and pedagogical skills revealed both challenges and successes across partner countries. Initial scepticism and logistical difficulties, such as limited resources and communication with schools, were common obstacles. However, as the courses progressed, teachers became increasingly engaged and interested in integrating digital tools like 3D printing and coding into their classrooms. Many educators expressed enthusiasm about the potential impact of these skills on their teaching practices, highlighting the importance of providing time and support for them to fully embrace the technologies. The trainings ultimately fostered a deeper awareness of the value of digital education and its relevance in their professional development.

We invite you to take a look at our [website](#) to keep being posted about the project and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

Enjoy the read!

TRAINING FOR ICT AND PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS, WHAT ARE THE MAIN RESOULTS?

AUSTRIA

In Austria, die Berater conducted from June to October 2024 the training program on ICT and pedagogical skills aimed at teachers and trainers. The focus of the training was to equip the participants with ICT skills as well as to provide them the necessary tools, so they are able to integrate technology into their trainings. A total of 15 trainers from Tyrol participated in the five organized sessions. Both the theoretical input and the hands-on lessons proved to be very engaging for participants. Practical exercises with the technology allowed them to understand its functionalities and fostered its classroom integration. The received feedback was very positive and they emphasized the need of technology integration in their trainings to enhance the digital skills of their learners, so they could close the gap in their digital education.

CYPRUS

In Cyprus fifteen educators from the Cypriot Digital Village Community participated in June in an engaging 30-hour ICT training program led by trainers Andreas Siakas and Popi Aresti. Spanning six onsite sessions, the program covered Coding, Robotics, Microcontrollers, 3D Modelling and Printing, Web Development, and pedagogical methods. Participants displayed exceptional enthusiasm, actively engaging in hands-on activities, group discussions, and collaborative problem-solving. Highlights included creative microcontroller projects, teachers designing their first websites, and a strong anticipation for utilizing 3D printing in their classrooms. Although some participants couldn't attend all five technology-focused sessions, plans are underway to revisit the school in September to provide additional courses. This initiative fostered a vibrant sense of community among educators and underscored their dedication to integrating ICT into education, ensuring they are well-equipped to inspire the next generation of learners.

GREECE

In Greece, a comprehensive training program on ICT and pedagogical skills for teachers and trainers was implemented from April to October 2024. The initiative aimed to equip educators with the tools and knowledge necessary to integrate technology into their teaching practices. A total of 11 seminars, each lasting 2-3 hours, were conducted across four suburban locations, with a combined participation of 23 on-site attendees and 87 online participants. The sessions provided both theoretical insights and practical, hands-on experience with digital tools, enabling participants to explore innovative methods for modernising classroom practices. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the importance of enhancing digital competence among educators in suburban communities to bridge the technological gap in education.

ITALY

In Italy the training program aimed at teachers and educators was conducted from March to May 2024, focusing on enhancing ICT skills and providing tools for integrating technology into education. The initiative was led by CSC Danilo Dolci and the FabLab of Palermo. A total of 11 teachers and trainers from the Gibellina and Salemi areas, where the Italian Our Digital Village Community was established, participated in the seven organized sessions. The hands-on lessons proved to be the most engaging for participants. Direct interaction with the technology enabled them to understand its functionalities and envision its application in the classroom. The feedback received was very positive, emphasizing the importance of addressing these topics in schools and

encouraging educators eager to modernize their teaching methods through the use of new technologies.

POLAND

In Poland the program consisted of 30 hours of workshops divided into five sessions, each focusing on a specific area: Coding, Robotics, Microcontrollers, 3D Modeling and Printing, and Web Development. Sessions were conducted both in-person at educational institutions in Ropczyce and Rzeszów and online, providing a blend of theoretical and hands-on learning experiences. Fifteen participants engaged actively in the program, showcasing enthusiasm and a strong commitment to mastering new technologies. They collaborated on problem-solving tasks and embraced hands-on projects, such as creating websites, programming microcontrollers, and exploring 3D printing applications. The trainers praised the participants' adaptability and eagerness to apply these technologies in educational settings, tailoring the training content to local needs. The program demonstrated significant impact, with participants' digital skills improving measurably across all topics as assessed using the DigComp framework. Particular advancements were noted in Coding and Web Development, where participants displayed newfound confidence and proficiency. Overall, the training not only equipped participants with critical technical skills but also provided valuable pedagogical insights, fostering innovative approaches to integrating ICT into education effectively.

PORTUGAL

In Portugal a total of 19 participants were involved across 30 hours of instruction. The training program focused on enhancing ICT and pedagogical skills for teachers and trainers was split into 8 sessions (4 online and 4 face-to-face). The curriculum covered diverse topics such as programming logic, web development, digital tools, robotics, design thinking, and gamification, with active, hands-on practice. Notable outcomes included increased engagement, improved confidence in using digital tools, and a collaborative learning environment. Feedback highlighted high levels of participation and interest, though it was noted that the range of topics made it challenging to explore each in-depth. Lessons learned suggest narrowing the focus to allow deeper exploration of key subjects in future iterations.

ROMANIA

In Romania the training was delivered through four online sessions via Zoom and a final face-to-face session in Suceava, the program blended theory with practical application. Participants engaged with a range of cutting-edge tools and technologies, including robotics, coding, 3D modeling, web development, and more. Among these, the use of a 3D printer stood out as the most innovative instrument, praised for its versatility and relevance to every school subject. From science experiments to creative arts projects, the 3D printer was demonstrated as a transformative tool to foster creativity, problem-solving, and hands-on learning in classrooms. During the face-to-face session, educators had the opportunity to experiment with 3D printing, robotics, coding, and other technologies, gaining practical experience and confidence to integrate these tools into their teaching. The hands-on approach combined with in-depth discussions on educational applications ensured that participants left with a clear vision of how to enhance their classrooms with digital tools. This training not only enriched educators' technical skills but also highlighted Suceava's role as a centre for educational innovation, inspiring participants to bring dynamic, inclusive, and technology-driven learning to their communities.

Curious about what's coming next?

Here are the activities we will be undertaking in 2025:

➡️ Preparing to deliver ICT courses to students, adult learners and community members. Each partner will deliver four courses, combining practical activities from the Activity Kit with personalised projects addressing real-world challenges. These sessions will take place in schools, local organisations and community hubs, with topics like coding, robotics and web development tailored to participant needs. The best project will be awarded and all of them will be showcased at future community events, ensuring widespread engagement and inspiration.

➡️ ICT Info Desks will be set up physically to provide personalised support on ICT issues in partner countries and to cater for all community members, including those with limited digital skills, with the aim of promoting inclusivity and empowering rural communities with essential digital resources. The Info Desks will operate differently in each country to meet the specific needs of the community.

➡️ The organisation of two upcoming community events designed to showcase the innovative projects developed during our ICT courses for adults and students. Each event will highlight the results of at least two courses and will also feature interactive workshops facilitated by teachers and students, fostering community engagement.

➡️ Looking ahead, Our Digital Village will host five workshops focused on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project, bringing together community members to discuss supportive stakeholders, explore funding opportunities and plan for the continuity and replicability of the project. These themes will be further explored at the Online International Digital Summit, which will take place at the end of the project and connect policy makers, educators and stakeholders from across Europe

to discuss the future of digital education. The event will explore ways to scale up the project and ensure long-term impact. The outcomes of the discussions will help shape a comprehensive long-term action plan for future progress in digital education.