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DISK: “Digital skills for an Aging Europe”
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DISK Policy recommendations

- summary of key findings -





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Project DISK is an Erasmus+ project funded by the European Commission. The project is implemented in 6 countries France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Macedonia, by eight project partners.

The main goal of the project is addressing these problems through the promotion of active aging, encouraging seniors to adopt a range of good practices to preserve their mental health through digital technologies.

Policy recommendations document is part of our Intellectual Output 4 “Guide and Advocacy” - which presents the final version of the project - and includes a policy recommendation and the Guidelines on the future use of the paths created for the seniors.

The purpose of the policy recommendation also is to assess the current supply and demand of digital skills in the countries of the DISK consortium and to contribute to the development of a digital skills strategy that will meet adult citizen needs and contribute to further growth of the digital economy and digital society. Its objective is to offer a set of explicit and implementable recommendations, so that we can provide public authorities a better understanding of the problems and needs of older people with regards to active aging. DISK project assists senior citizens by encouraging them to use new technologies to adopt a variety of good practices in order to preserve their health and have a flourishing old age.

DISK training courses are the most important outcome from the DISK project. The outcomes and content are carefully selected based on the key needs for the project target groups.

Following the capacity gap analysis, and following the models, tools, and defined means all partners developed in detail the contents of 10 training courses and game instructions in the four main areas of cognitive abilities: Memory, Executive functions, Perception, Attention. Games accompanying each DISK training course are very important for the assimilation of knowledge. They are an excellent method and need to be encouraged for its value in terms of education, as it is an enjoyable way to learn new skills.

DISK Training resources are accessible through a DISK Training platform, accessible from PCs and laptops, tablets, smart phones. This platform includes all the materials developed by the different partners within DISK project, organized in sections and subsections, which are structured by modules and units, from which you access to content, downloadable material, links to electronic resources, questionnaires, multimedia content and other relevant material for the purpose of the DISK project. Access to DISK Training Site:

<https://diskproject.eu/>

Digital skills nowadays are seen as a key factor in the digital transition of countries, necessary for its success. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital development through digital transformation has become ever more important. Enhancing the availability of products and services and empowering citizens, workers, and students in their daily affairs and needs during the lockdown has become a clear priority for all countries, and the ability to take advantage of the progress made in the digital sphere has become an important factor in determining sustainability.

For what concerns the policy dimension specifically, we wish to highlight three pieces of reference that cross-intersect the three policy axes of the project: digital education, adult learning and active aging. These three documents contributed to set the past, current and future landscape of adult learning in all its shapes and manifestations, both from a policy and practice perspective.

The accelerated digitalization during the COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized these inequalities, as many older persons struggled to access essential goods and services - from online vaccination appointment registrations, to pensions, food and medication during lockdowns - if they could not access them online.

There is a need to increase interventions and actions aimed at bridging the digital divide among the elderly population, and to increase the importance of the role of active ageing through digital technologies as a tool

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to improve the independence and quality of life of older people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the integration of technology into the lives and physical environments of people globally, while it has highlighted the disparities and digital inequities within our society.

Digital skills allow people to generate and share digital content, connect and cooperate, and address challenges for effective and creative realization in private and professional life.

Strengthening digital skills has therefore become an integral part of national digital transformation strategies. The future requires a certain set of digital skills, indispensable for economic development and prosperity of society in any country. Hence, any gaps and deficits in these skills can be seen as a challenge to further progress.

According to UNESCO, digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications and networks to access and manage information.

Seniors, elderly people are particularly exposed to certain risks or situations that may present a particular difficulty, which could affect their use of digital technology. More than a third say they are worried about having to carry out their administrative procedures online, and some are obliged to use specific services, in town halls for example, to have access to assistance services dedicated to e-administration.

Therefore, support should be coordinated on these topics, whether it is the example of e-government, online safety, disinformation and the fight against fake news, or data security and protection. Specific training courses exist, but they are not yet sufficient to enable seniors to use digital tools with ease and without fear. A specific set of digital skills will be necessary for society's success and economic progress in the future, regardless of the nation. Therefore, any gaps or deficiencies in these abilities can be considered as a barrier to further development.

Therefore, the actions to be planned urgently are:

- enhancing and disseminating all initiatives actively involving seniors as peer tutors in the digital and functional literacy of their peers;
- develop training contents for the over 60s who want to become digital facilitators for the elderly and senior citizens also using remote collaboration platforms;
- explore the needs of the less self-sufficient elderly to offer personalized and engaging technological responses;
- map and share experiences using technologies, including advanced ones (immersive reality, artificial intelligence, robotics, etc.), for the well-being and care of the elderly.
- Developing a corpus of training courses to enable seniors and adults to train independently, or to facilitate the work of digital learning support groups.
- Offering more digital training in specific areas identified as obstacles or barriers to digital learning.
- Ensuring access to IT tools for all. Develop digital awareness and encourage adults to learn about digital issues.
- Continue to act proactively, by helping employees to acquire more digital skills, and help companies to make their digital transition. Helping seniors maintain their independence for as long as possible. There is a strong demand from senior citizens to stay at home as long as possible. This could be made possible by learning and using technological tools to help seniors stay independent, for example through remote communication tools,





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connected devices for home help, which would be able to alert quickly in case of problems, and solutions for active aging. With the dematerialisation of some parts of the public services, being able to complete administrative paperwork online could make life easier for seniors, especially those living in rural areas or having difficulty getting around.

Specific recommendations:

- I. It is important to approve a national framework law on the promotion of active aging that deals with defining various parameters, including a minimum level that all regions should guarantee, and ensuring the full integration and participation of older people in society.
- II. Approval and implementation of regional laws on the organic promotion of active aging among its various fields, or similar regulations.
- III. Incorporating the concept of active aging into regional laws and policies aimed at the elderly, in social services policies it is still an unripe and underdeveloped concept.
- IV. Creating synergy between the education sector and the social services sector in the field of older people.
- V. Do not focus only on the care component, but on the concept of active aging.
- VI. Promote e-skills interventions by increasing the resources made available
- VII. It is necessary that all long-term instruments for analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring in the field of active aging, to be envisaged both at national and regional/local level (observatories, tables, groups or councils) as well as representatives of policy-making government bodies, include all relevant stakeholders (**from the third sector** and civil society, the academic-scientific world, networks/partnerships already implemented by central government, etc.) at all stages, for the purpose of co-planning and co-decision-making, to ensure bottom-up (bottom-up) participation mechanisms.) at all stages, for the purposes of co-planning and co-decision-making, to guarantee bottom-up participatory mechanisms.
- VIII. Strengthening the role of Third Sector organizations in ensuring the integration and participation of older people in society and in promoting initiatives to facilitate the digital inclusion of senior citizens to enable them with skills and tools compatible with the needs of everyday life.
- IX. Regarding the issue of digital education for the elderly, it is considered desirable to design and implement a major plan for the digital literacy of the senior population with the involvement of young people through a renewed intergenerational agreement.

More about project DISK
www.disk.eu