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Erasmus+ U2SID Project

University to Society Collaborations for Inclusive Digital
Transformation in the Western Balkans

Assessment of Digital Literacies Workshops Across U2SID Partner Universities





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This report is prepared by the Center Science and Innovation for Development (SCiDEV)

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PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Project Title	University to society collaborations for inclusive digital transformation in the Western Balkans
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Project Coordinator	University of Shkodra Luigj Gurakuqi
Countries involved	Albania; Serbia; Montenegro; Italy
Project partners	<p>University of Shkodra Luigj Gurakuqi</p> <p>University "Fan S. Noli" of Korca</p> <p>Mediterranean University of Albania</p> <p>Center Science and Innovation for Development</p> <p>Center for Comparative and International Studies</p> <p>National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation</p> <p>University of Montenegro</p> <p>University of Belgrade</p> <p>University of Salento</p>
Aim and objective	<p>Project's aim: To foster inclusive digital transformation in the Western Balkans through increased collaboration between universities with other stakeholders such as businesses, policy makers, civil society, and media.</p> <p><i>The specific objectives of U2SID are:</i></p> <p>SO1 – To strengthen digital competences of teachers, students, and professionals through the development of a Digital Literacies Acceleration Programme as a collaborative programme among universities on one side and businesses, civil society, local decision makers and media on the other.</p> <p>SO2 – To improve innovative teaching methods through piloting a Digital Transformation Challenge for students as a project-based and solution-oriented learning based on mentoring, coaching and placement at businesses, civil society, local decision makers and media.</p> <p>SO3 – To raise awareness on the importance of inclusive digitalisation by including vulnerable target groups in the digitalization process.</p>





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ABBREVIATIONS

CCIS	Center for Comparative and International Studies (Qendra për Studime Krahasuese dhe Ndërkombëtare)
EACEA	European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EU	European Union
NASRI	National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (Agjencia Kombëtare e Këkrimit Shkencor dhe Inovacionit)
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SCIDEV	Center Science and Innovation for Development (Qendra Shkencë dhe Inovacion për Zhvillim)
U2SID	University to society collaborations for inclusive digital transformation in the Western Balkans
UCG	University of Montenegro (Univerzitet Crne Gore)
MUA	Mediterranean University of Albania (Universiteti Mesdhetar i Shqipërisë)
UNIBELGRADE	University of Belgrade (Univerzitet u Beogradu)
UNIKO	University „Fan S. Noli” of Korca (Universiteti i Korçës "Fan S. Noli")
UNISALENTO	University of Salento (Università del Salento)
UNISHK	University of Shkodra Luigj Gurakuqi (Universiteti i Shkodrës “Luigj Gurakuqi”)
WP	Work Package





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Executive Summary

The [U2SID](#) project is designed to enhance digital competencies among teachers, students, and professionals in the Western Balkans. It seeks to improve innovative teaching methods and raise awareness about inclusive digitalization, particularly targeting vulnerable groups.

[Digital Literacies Workshops](#) were conducted at four partner universities: University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi," University of Korça "Fan S. Noli," Mediterranean University of Albania, and University of Montenegro. These workshops aimed to address digital literacy gaps identified in a [Needs Assessment Study](#) and align with the objectives of the [Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme](#) (DLAP). The workshops successfully addressed digital literacy gaps, providing targeted training to enhance digital competencies among students, lecturers, and other stakeholders. The workshops aligned well with the DLAP objectives, focusing on the horizontal transfer of digital skills, innovative teaching methods, and inclusion of vulnerable groups. The workshops engaged a diverse group of participants, including students, lecturers, and external stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and ensuring the relevance of digital competencies. High women participation rates in some workshops highlight the project's commitment to inclusivity and gender equality.

To further improve the effectiveness of future workshops, the report recommends implementing a standardized process to capture demographic information to ensure inclusivity and representation. It also suggests organizing follow-up workshops and developing mentoring programs to reinforce skills acquired during the sessions. Enhanced collaboration with businesses and government agencies is recommended to create real-world learning opportunities. Additionally, integrating modules on the ethical use of AI and digital tools into the curriculum is advised. Continuous improvement through participant feedback is essential to adapt content and delivery methods, ensuring workshops remain relevant and effective. Leveraging digital platforms to extend the reach of workshops is also suggested to make training accessible to a wider audience.

The report concludes that while the workshops effectively laid the groundwork for improving digital literacies of lecturers and students, ongoing institutional efforts are needed to fully realize the broader recommendations identified in the Needs Assessment Study.





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I. INTRODUCTION

The [U2SID](#) project aims to drive inclusive digital transformation in higher education in Western Balkans by fostering collaboration between universities, businesses, policymakers, civil society, and media. It emphasizes safe digitalization through enhancing awareness and capacity in privacy, data protection, and digital literacies, thus promoting digital rights. The aim of the project is to foster inclusive digital transformation in the Western Balkans through increased collaboration between universities with other stakeholders such as businesses, policy makers, civil society, and media.

The U2SID project's specific objectives encompass three key areas. Firstly, it focuses on enhancing digital competencies among teachers, students, and professionals via a Digital Literacies Acceleration Programme. This program promotes collaboration between universities and various stakeholders like businesses, civil society, and media. Secondly, it aims to advance innovative teaching methods through the Digital Transformation Challenge, offering project-based, solution-oriented learning with mentorship and professional placements. Lastly, it emphasizes raising awareness about inclusive digitalization, particularly targeting and including vulnerable groups in the digitalization process.

In the first year of implementation, the U2SID project evaluated the state of digital literacies among two primary groups within the academic sphere: lecturers and students in four partner universities—University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi,” University of Korça “Fan S. Noli,” Mediterranean University of Albania, and University of Montenegro. The [need assessment study](#), led by SCiDEV, assessed needs and identified gaps in knowledge, skills, and infrastructure that hindered the effective use of digital tools and resources in teaching and learning environments within these universities in Albania and Montenegro.

The findings from this assessment served as the foundation for developing the [Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme](#), spearheaded by the University of Belgrade and University of Salento. This program provided a roadmap for the workshops that each partner university organized to address some of the identified gaps. A unique aspect of the U2SID approach was the continuous inclusion of stakeholders throughout the process. The needs assessment study incorporated diverse perspectives by [engaging stakeholders](#) directly or indirectly impacted by the digital literacies of lecturers and students. These stakeholders included administrative staff, IT personnel, policymakers, and employers, whose input offered a multi-dimensional understanding of digital literacy needs, expectations, and potential barriers to implementing digital literacy programs. Subsequently, stakeholders were also actively involved in the workshops, contributing to the delivery of collaborative training on digital literacies.

In response to the findings and recommendations outlined in the [Needs Assessment Study Report](#), a comprehensive [Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme](#) was developed as part of the U2SID project. This programme aimed to address the identified gaps in digital competencies among lecturers and students across four partner universities: “Luigj Gurakuqi” University of Shkodra, “Fan S. Noli” University of Korça, Mediterranean University of Albania, and the University of Montenegro.

The [Needs Assessment](#) highlighted critical areas where digital literacy was lacking, including





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website creation, video production, and the use of advanced digital tools. It emphasized the necessity for tailored training programmes to enhance these skills, which are increasingly vital in both academic and professional settings.

Based on these recommendations, each partner university organized [targeted workshops](#) as part of the [Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme](#). These workshops were designed to equip both students and staff with essential digital literacies, directly addressing the gaps identified in the Needs Assessment. The workshops covered a range of topics, including the creation and management of digital content, the use of collaborative tools, and the application of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT).

This report presents an assessment of the workshops conducted, evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing digital competencies and providing recommendations for future steps. The analysis includes a review of participant demographics, workshop content, and the alignment of the training with both the needs identified in the initial assessment and the goals of the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme.





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II. METHODOLOGY

The Needs Assessment methodology was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital literacies within the academic contexts of the U2SID partner universities. Conducted in November and December 2023, the assessment combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to identify gaps and inform the development of the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme. The quantitative component involved online questionnaires completed by 705 students and 199 lecturers, assessing their digital competencies, usage habits, and needs for further development. The qualitative aspect involved focus group discussions, with a total of 146 participants across 12 sessions, exploring deeper attitudes and contextual factors influencing digital literacy. These findings were crucial in shaping the recommendations for the subsequent workshops.

For the assessment of the workshops developed under the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme, a qualitative approach was chosen to capture the depth and complexity of participant experiences and the contextual effectiveness of the training. Each partner university—University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi,” University of Korça “Fan S. Noli,” Mediterranean University of Albania, and the University of Montenegro—organized workshops tailored to the specific digital literacy needs identified in the Needs Assessment.

Post-workshop, each university prepared detailed reports documenting the content, structure, and outcomes of their respective workshops. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, SCiDEV analyzed these reports, focusing on the alignment of the workshops with the Needs Assessment recommendations and the practical application of the skills taught. Additionally, informed interviews were conducted with selected participants, including students, lecturers, and external stakeholders, to gather direct feedback on the workshops’ effectiveness.

This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how the workshops addressed the identified gaps in digital literacy. The qualitative feedback provided insights into the successes and challenges of the workshops, including the relevance of the content, the engagement of participants, and the immediate applicability of the skills acquired. The assessment highlighted areas of strength, such as the effective integration of digital tools into teaching practices and the empowerment of students through hands-on learning. It also identified areas for improvement, including the need for sustained follow-up activities and broader stakeholder engagement to maximize the long-term impact of the training.

By combining detailed report analysis with direct feedback from participants, the assessment provided a robust evaluation of the workshops and informed the recommendations for future digital literacy initiatives within the U2SID project.





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III. ASSESSMENT OF THE U2SID DIGITAL LITERACIES WORKSHOPS

The U2SID project ([University to Society Collaborations for Inclusive Digital Transformation in the Western Balkans](#)) organized [a series of workshops](#) across different universities in Albania during 2024. These workshops were designed to address the digital literacy gaps identified in the [Needs Assessment Study Report](#) and to align with the objectives of the [Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme](#) (DLAP). This report provides a detailed analysis of the workshops conducted at the Mediterranean University of Albania (MUA), 'Fan S. Noli' University of Korça (UNIKO), the University of Shkoder "Luigj Gurakuqi" and University of Montenegro, examining the structure, outcomes, achievements, and areas for improvement. It also evaluates the extent to which these workshops responded to the DLAP and the findings of the Needs Assessment.

3.1 Workshop at Mediterranean University of Albania (MUA)

Overview

The [U2SID Workshop at MUA](#), held on March 27-28, 2024, aimed at advancing digital literacy and IT competencies within this institution. This workshop was part of the broader U2SID initiative, funded by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project, and was specifically designed to integrate digital literacy strategies into higher education curricula. The primary objective was to align these strategies with the needs of the labor market and the broader goals of societal development, thereby preparing Albania's academic community for the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age.

Participants and Demographics

The workshop attracted 123 participants over the two days. On the first day, 47 participants, primarily middle-generation teachers and associates aged between 30 and 50 years, attended. These participants were chosen for their potential to adapt to change and their influential roles within the Mediterranean University of Albania. The second day was dedicated to students, with 76 participants representing a younger demographic eager to enhance their digital skills and deepen their understanding of emerging technologies, including hardware, software functionality, networking, and cybersecurity. However, the gender distribution of the participants was not explicitly detailed, which is an important aspect to consider in future workshops to ensure inclusivity.

Workshop Structure and Activities

The workshop was meticulously planned to cater to the needs of its diverse audience. On the first day, the sessions were tailored for teachers and associates, focusing on the findings of the U2SID Accelerator Program. Guest professors from the University of Salento presented essential topics such as the Digital Literacy Framework for Balkan Countries, Exponential Technologies, and the Digital Transformation Canvas. These sessions were designed not only to impart knowledge but also to foster





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collaboration between university staff and industry professionals, leveraging the expertise of all participants to drive digital transformation in Albanian higher education.

The second day shifted focus to students, who were engaged in a hands-on learning environment. The day's activities were centered around practical topics such as hardware potential, software functionality, networking, and security. IT department staff at MUA guided the students through discussions, exercises, and mentoring sessions. This approach ensured that students gained not only theoretical concepts but also practical skills that are essential in today's digital landscape. The emphasis on interactive learning and mentorship created a dynamic educational environment, enhancing the overall quality of the students' learning experience.

Participants Feedback

The evaluation survey conducted by [CCIS](#) and shared with participants revealed that a significant majority of participants (88.9%) reported a clear understanding of the digital literacy framework's relevance for addressing challenges in the Balkan countries, underscoring the workshop's effectiveness in highlighting the importance of digital literacy in the region's educational and economic contexts. A smaller portion of respondents (5.6%) had a somewhat clear understanding, while another 5.6% did not find the framework relevant. The presentations on the Digital Transformation Canvas and Exponential Technologies were particularly well-received, with 70.6% finding the former "somewhat effectively" clarified and 29.4% finding it "very effectively" clarified. The Exponential Technologies session was deemed "very effectively" communicated by 88.9% of participants, with the remaining 11.1% finding it "somewhat effectively" communicated. Regarding the workshop's alignment with the U2SID Accelerator Program, 77.8% of respondents felt some of their needs were addressed, while 22.2% felt their needs were comprehensively met. Overall, the feedback highlights the workshop's success in enhancing digital competencies and addressing participant needs, while also identifying areas for potential improvement and future support.

Alignment with DLAP and Needs Assessment

The workshop at MUA closely aligned with the objectives of the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme (DLAP). The DLAP emphasizes the horizontal transfer of digital literacy skills across partner universities through workshops, mentoring, and online modules. The sessions at MUA, particularly those focused on digital literacy frameworks and practical IT skills, directly responded to the digital literacy gaps identified in the Needs Assessment. The first day's focus on educators aligned with the DLAP's goal of empowering lecturers with advanced digital tools and pedagogical strategies, addressing the identified need for comprehensive digital literacy training among university staff.

The workshop also addressed the Needs Assessment's findings regarding students' low proficiency in essential digital skills such as website creation and digital content production. By providing hands-on training in these areas, the workshop ensured that students developed practical competencies that align with the DLAP's focus on real-world applications. However, while the workshop effectively introduced these skills, the lack of follow-up initiatives or detailed demographic tracking raises concerns about the sustainability of the workshop's impact.





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Outcomes and Achievements

The U2SID Workshop at MUA achieved significant outcomes that aligned well with its objectives. One of the key achievements was the successful transfer of knowledge, particularly regarding digital literacy frameworks, exponential technologies, and digital transformation processes. These topics are vital for the modernization of higher education curricula in Albania, ensuring that educational institutions can keep pace with rapid technological advancements.

Furthermore, the workshop provided valuable networking opportunities, bringing together participants from academia, industry, and civil society. These connections are essential for fostering future collaborations that can further Albania's digital transformation efforts. Additionally, the workshop played a crucial role in skill development, particularly for the students who participated on the second day. By engaging in practical exercises and receiving guidance from experienced IT professionals, the students were able to deepen their understanding of key digital competencies, thereby preparing them for future academic and professional challenges.

Recommendations

To enhance the impact of future workshops, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Detailed Participant Tracking: Implement demographic tracking, including gender and other relevant data, to ensure that these events are inclusive and diverse.
2. Follow-Up Activities: Consider additional training sessions, mentoring programs, or surveys to assess the long-term impact of the workshop on participants' digital competencies.
3. Sustained Collaboration: Emphasize the importance of continued collaboration between universities, industry professionals, and policymakers to maintain the momentum generated by the U2SID project.

3.2 Workshop at “Fan S. Noli” University of Korça (UNIKO)

Overview

The [U2SID Workshop at UNIKO](#), titled "Innovating the Market Mindset," was held on April 4-5, 2024. This workshop was a significant event under the U2SID initiative and was designed to foster digital transformation by enhancing digital literacy and IT competencies among students, lecturers, and other stakeholders. The primary goal was to integrate digital literacy strategies into the university's academic framework, thereby modernizing study programs and strengthening ties between the university and key sectors such as the economy, politics, business, and civil society.

Participants and Demographics

The workshop was well-attended, with a total of 65 participants over the two days. This group consisted of 50 students and 15 staff members, including lecturers and other university personnel. The high turnout among students indicates a strong interest in developing digital skills, which are increasingly seen as essential for academic success and career readiness. Meanwhile, the participation





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of staff members, particularly lecturers, underscores the university's commitment to professional development and the continuous improvement of teaching methods.

Workshop Structure and Activities

The workshop was structured to maximize its impact, with each day targeting different audiences and focusing on specific thematic content. On the first day, sessions catered primarily to lecturers and students, providing foundational knowledge in essential digital skills. For instance, Realb Kushe from the Department of ICT led a session on "Core Technologies and Concepts of Web Development," introducing participants to fundamental web development tools such as HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and PHP. This session was particularly valuable as it provided participants with practical skills in building dynamic and interactive websites, which are crucial in various professional fields.

In another session, Dr. Blerina Çeliku introduced participants to a range of digital tools and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. This session highlighted the transformative potential of AI in education, industry, and business. Dr. Çeliku emphasized how AI can be integrated into various aspects of life and work, encouraging participants to explore these technologies and consider their applications in academic and professional contexts.

The second day of the workshop focused on Master students, alumni, and external stakeholders, reflecting a broader scope of influence. The day began with a session led by Prof. as. dr. Mamica Nene, who discussed "The University as a Catalyst for Digital Marketing Development." This session explored the critical role that universities play in advancing digital marketing practices and technologies and their broader social impacts. Following this, Dr. Landi Gushi presented on "The Importance of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)," highlighting how SEO is crucial for enhancing a website's visibility and driving organic traffic. The final session, led by Marijon Pano, introduced participants to "The Internet of Things (IoT)," focusing on how IoT technologies are transforming industries and enabling the development of smart, sustainable cities.

Participants Feedback

As per the evaluation survey of CCIS, the majority of participants (85.7%) felt that the workshop met their expectations in terms of content relevance and usefulness. This positive feedback suggests that the workshop successfully addressed the needs of its audience, aligning well with the goals of enhancing digital skills. The 14.3% who found the workshop only somewhat relevant may indicate a need for more tailored content or additional focus on specific areas of interest. The sessions on Digital Tools and Artificial Intelligence were rated the highest in terms of value, reflecting a strong interest in practical, cutting-edge technologies. The Core Technologies and Concepts of Web Development also received significant recognition, indicating that foundational technical skills are highly valued. The lower interest in IoT and SEO sessions suggests that while these topics are relevant, they may not have been as immediately applicable or engaging to the majority of participants. The majority of participants (95.2%) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the workshop, demonstrating a high level of overall contentment. The small percentage of neutral responses suggests that while most participants found the workshop effective, there may be room for refinement to achieve even higher





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satisfaction levels. The lack of dissatisfaction further emphasizes the success of the event in meeting participant expectations.

The survey results indicate that the U2SID workshop at 'Fan S. Noli' University was highly successful in meeting its objectives. The content was well-received, especially the sessions on digital tools and AI, with facilitators performing admirably. However, there are opportunities for enhancement, particularly in addressing the needs of a broader audience, including stakeholders, and potentially refining the focus of certain sessions. Overall, the positive feedback reflects the workshop's effectiveness in advancing digital skills and fostering collaboration within the university community.

Alignment with DLAP and Needs Assessment

The workshop at UNIKO was closely aligned with both the DLAP and the findings of the Needs Assessment. The DLAP's emphasis on collaborative learning and knowledge transfer was reflected in the workshop's structure, which included interactive sessions involving students, lecturers, and external stakeholders. These sessions addressed key areas of digital literacy identified as deficient in the Needs Assessment, such as web development, digital content creation, and the use of digital tools like AI and IoT.

Moreover, the workshop responded directly to the Needs Assessment's recommendation for the modernization of university curricula to include robust digital literacy components. By focusing on practical, real-world applications of digital skills, such as SEO and IoT, the workshop helped align academic training with the demands of the labor market. However, while the workshop successfully introduced these concepts, there was limited evidence of a strategic plan to ensure their integration into the ongoing curriculum or follow-up to assess the impact of the training on participants' long-term competencies.

Outcomes and Achievements

The UNIKO workshop successfully enhanced the digital competencies of both students and staff. Participants gained substantial knowledge and skills in key digital areas, including web development, AI, and IoT. These skills are crucial for career development in the increasingly digitalized job market. The workshop's focus on practical, hands-on learning ensured that participants could immediately apply what they learned, reinforcing their understanding and confidence in using these technologies.

Moreover, the workshop effectively integrated digital literacy into the university's core objectives, contributing to the modernization of study programs at UNIKO. This alignment ensures that the university's educational offerings remain relevant and competitive in a global context. The workshop also facilitated increased collaboration within the university community, enhancing the educational experience and strengthening the sense of community within the university.

Recommendations

To further improve the effectiveness of future workshops:





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1. Participant Demographics: Implement detailed tracking of participant demographics to better assess the workshop's reach and impact, and to ensure inclusivity.
2. Follow-Up Sessions: Organize follow-up workshops or sessions to reinforce the skills learned and assess the long-term impact on participants' digital competencies.
3. Stakeholder Engagement: Enhance collaboration with external stakeholders to create more opportunities for students and staff to apply their digital skills in real-world settings.

3.3 Workshop at “Luigj Gurakuqi” University of Shkoder

Overview

The [U2SID Workshop at the University of Shkoder](#), titled "Boosting Digital Skills in Higher Education in Albania," was held on April 4-5, 2024. This workshop was a key event within the U2SID initiative, aiming to address digital literacy gaps identified in the university community. By aligning with the U2SID Project's Digital Accelerator Programme, the workshop sought to equip both students and academics with essential digital literacies to ensure they are well-prepared for an increasingly digitalized world.

Participants and Demographics

The workshop was well-attended, with a total of 101 participants across the two days. On the first day, which focused on academics and professionals, there were 29 participants, including 18 academics, 4 students, and 7 other professionals, with a notable majority of 26 women. The second day, dedicated to students, saw a greater turnout with 72 participants, including 53 students and 12 academics, again with a high women participation rate of 66 out of 72. The large number of women participants highlights the university's commitment to inclusivity and gender equality in its educational initiatives.

Workshop Structure and Activities

The workshop was structured to provide targeted training tailored to the specific needs of its audience. The first day focused on academics and professionals, starting with a session on using various applications and tools to create interactive presentations in the classroom. This session was particularly important for lecturers, as it introduced them to advanced digital tools that can make their presentations more engaging and effective.

Following this, participants were introduced to Canva, a popular graphic design platform, with a focus on creating basic designs such as posters and business cards. The hands-on nature of this session ensured that participants not only learned about the capabilities of Canva but also gained practical experience in using the platform to produce high-quality visual materials. This was followed by demonstrations on creating effective PowerPoint presentations and using Prezi for dynamic, non-linear presentations. The day concluded with an interactive segment where participants used Kahoot and Mentimeter, tools that facilitate real-time feedback and interactive learning.

The second day of the workshop was tailored for students. It began with a session on the digital services available in the University Library, emphasizing how these resources can support students in their academic work. The workshop then moved on to practical sessions on website creation using





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Google Sites and social media marketing, particularly the use of Instagram tools to create engaging content. The day concluded with a hands-on session on advanced Excel functions, equipping students with data analysis skills that are highly valued in many industries.

Participants Feedback

The evaluation survey of CCIS shows that 92.9% of participants felt the workshop met their expectations in terms of content relevance and usefulness, indicating a strong alignment with their educational and professional needs. 7.1% felt that the workshop somewhat met their expectations, suggesting that while the workshop was largely effective, there were some areas where improvements could be made. The highest-rated sessions were those focusing on interactive presentations and design tools, which highlights participants' interest in practical, hands-on skills that can be directly applied in their professional and academic environments. Sessions on social media and advanced Excel processing were less emphasized, indicating potential areas for future development or deeper exploration. 92.9% of respondents rated the facilitators as excellent in delivering the content, reflecting high praise for their expertise and presentation skills. 7.1% rated the facilitators as good, suggesting overall satisfaction with the facilitators' performance but also room for minor improvements. While the majority of participants expressed high satisfaction, a few areas for improvement were noted: Future workshops could include more detailed explanations and examples, especially for complex topics like advanced Excel processing; Tailoring sessions to different skill levels could enhance the learning experience, ensuring that both beginners and advanced learners benefit equally.

Alignment with DLAP and Needs Assessment

The workshop at the University of Shkoder closely reflected the principles of the DLAP and responded effectively to the findings of the Needs Assessment. The DLAP's goals of skill development, knowledge transfer, and curriculum integration were evident in the workshop's design. Sessions on website creation, social media marketing, and Excel were directly aligned with the DLAP's focus on practical digital skills that are immediately applicable in both academic and professional contexts.

Furthermore, the workshop addressed the Needs Assessment's findings regarding the need for improved digital literacy among students and lecturers. By offering hands-on training in digital content creation, productivity software, and interactive learning tools, the workshop provided participants with the skills necessary to enhance their academic performance and career readiness. However, similar to the other workshops, the lack of structured follow-up and assessment mechanisms limits the ability to evaluate the long-term impact of these interventions.

Outcomes and Achievements

The workshop at the University of Shkoder successfully addressed the digital skills gaps identified in the needs assessment. Participants gained practical skills in digital content creation, website development, and the use of advanced digital tools. These competencies are essential for both academic performance and career prospects in a digitalized job market.

The workshop also reinforced the importance of integrating digital literacy into the university's





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curriculum, helping to modernize the educational offerings and ensuring that the university remains at the forefront of digital education. The high participation of women students and academics in the workshop is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates the university's success in fostering an inclusive environment where women are empowered to develop their digital skills. The practical nature of the sessions ensured that participants could apply their new skills in real-world scenarios, effectively bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Recommendations

To build on the success of this workshop:

1. Ongoing Digital Literacy Training: Implement ongoing digital literacy training to ensure that both students and academics stay updated with the latest digital tools and trends.
2. Demographic Tracking: Include more detailed demographic tracking in future workshops to better understand the needs of different participant groups and tailor sessions accordingly.
3. Strengthening Collaboration with Industry: Enhance collaboration with industry professionals to provide participants with more opportunities to apply their skills in professional settings, potentially through guest lectures, internships, or collaborative projects with businesses.

3.4 Workshop at the University of Montenegro

Overview

The [U2SID Workshop at the University of Montenegro](#) was held on April 25-26, 2024, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić. This event was part of the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme (DLAP) and aimed to raise the level of digital competencies among students, academic staff, and stakeholders. The workshop was divided into two full-day sessions, each tailored to different audiences—students on the first day and lecturers, along with professionals from civil society, business, and politics, on the second day.

Participants and Demographics

The workshops engaged a diverse group of participants, including university students, academic staff, and external stakeholders. On the first day, 28 participants attended, primarily composed of academic staff such as lecturers and researchers, with a few administrative staff members. This group included 23 women and 5 men, reflecting a strong engagement from women attendees. The second day saw the participation of 25 individuals, predominantly students, with a continued presence of a few academic staff members. This group consisted of 21 women and 4 men, maintaining the trend of higher women participation. The focus on the second day was on providing practical training tailored to students, enhancing their digital competencies. This approach ensured that both the teaching staff and students received specialized training in digital literacy, contributing to the overall goal of broad community engagement and skill development.

Workshop Structure and Activities





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The workshop was divided into three key segments over two days: Best Practices for Text and Image Generation: Both students and lecturers were introduced to the history and development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with a focus on language models and generative AI. Participants learned best practices for generating text and images using AI tools, with practical exercises to reinforce these skills. The sessions for lecturers also explored the application of AI in academic work and the challenges it poses in assessment and research.

AI Tools in Education: This segment provided a comprehensive overview of how AI can be integrated into the education system. The lectures covered the advantages of AI in personalizing learning experiences, automating administrative tasks, and developing adaptive learning technologies. The sessions emphasized the importance of AI in evaluating and monitoring student progress, with practical demonstrations of tools like Gradescope for automated grading.

Basic Concepts of WordPress: The final segment was a hands-on workshop on managing and developing WordPress websites. Participants learned the basics of WordPress, including installing and customizing themes, managing plugins, and implementing basic SEO strategies. This session was designed to equip participants with practical skills in website development, an essential competency in today's digital economy.

Participants Feedback

The evaluation survey of CCIS show that the workshop was received positively by participants, with a combined 100% rating of "Excellent" or "Good." This high level of satisfaction reflects the overall success of the event in meeting participants' expectations and providing valuable content. All sessions received favorable feedback, with the session on "AI Tools for Education" being particularly noteworthy for its high number of "Excellent" ratings. This suggests that the content was highly engaging and valuable to participants. Participants praised the workshops for being well-organized, engaging, and informative. Suggestions for improvement included incorporating more practical examples and expanding the workshop offerings to cover additional topics for both students and staff. The positive feedback indicates strong participant satisfaction with the workshop's content and delivery. The suggestions for more examples and broader topics highlight areas for enhancing future workshops to better meet participants' needs and expectations. Overall, the survey results suggest that the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme was effective in achieving its goals and providing valuable learning experiences. The high ratings for overall quality, session effectiveness, and organization underscore the success of the workshops, while the feedback provides useful insights for future improvements.

Alignment with DLAP and Needs Assessment

The workshop at the University of Montenegro strongly aligned with the objectives of the DLAP and effectively addressed the digital literacy gaps identified in the Needs Assessment. The DLAP's focus on providing practical, hands-on training in digital tools was evident in the workshop's structure. The sessions on AI tools and WordPress directly responded to the Needs Assessment's call for enhanced digital competencies among both students and lecturers. Moreover, by including stakeholders from civil society and business, the workshop also aligned with the DLAP's goal of fostering collaboration





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between academia and the broader community.

The workshop's approach to addressing the ethical challenges and risks associated with AI tools, such as privacy protection and algorithmic bias, reflects a critical understanding of the complexities involved in digital transformation. This critical perspective is essential for ensuring that the integration of digital tools in education is both effective and responsible.

Outcomes and Achievements

The workshop at the University of Montenegro successfully enhanced the digital literacy of a diverse group of participants. Students and lecturers gained practical skills in using AI tools for text and image generation, integrating AI into educational practices, and developing WordPress websites. These skills are crucial for both academic success and professional development in a digitalized world.

Moreover, the workshop fostered a collaborative learning environment that extended beyond the university, engaging stakeholders from civil society and business. This collaboration is vital for ensuring that the digital competencies developed through the workshop are relevant and applicable in real-world contexts.

Recommendations

To maximize the impact of future workshops:

1. **Expand Participant Engagement:** Continue to engage a broad range of participants, including high school students and external stakeholders, to ensure that digital literacy training has a wide-reaching impact.
2. **Structured Follow-Up:** Implement structured follow-up activities, such as advanced training sessions or mentorship programs, to reinforce the skills acquired during the workshop.
3. **Focus on Ethical AI:** Continue to address the ethical challenges associated with AI tools, ensuring that participants are equipped not only with technical skills but also with a critical understanding of the implications of digital technologies.

IV. U2SID WORKSHOPS' RESPONSE TO NEEDS ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The U2SID workshops, conducted across partner universities, were structured and executed with the primary aim of addressing the digital literacy gaps identified in the [Needs Assessment Study](#). Below is





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an analysis of how these workshops responded to the specific recommendations outlined in the study:

1. Formalization of Communication

Recommendation: The Needs Assessment emphasized the importance of formalizing communication within universities, particularly through the use of official email / digital systems instead of informal tools like WhatsApp.

Response in Workshops: The workshops partially addressed this recommendation by promoting the use of digital tools that enhance communication within the academic environment. Although the workshops focused more on skill-building related to content creation, web development, and digital tools, they did lay the groundwork for improved communication practices by training participants in the use of formal digital platforms. However, a more direct focus on the formalization of communication through email systems was not a primary feature of the workshops.

2. Enhancement of University Infrastructure

Recommendation: Universities were advised to improve technology infrastructure, including increasing the number of computers, projectors, and Wi-Fi availability.

Response in Workshops: The workshops indirectly supported this recommendation by highlighting the necessity of digital tools and infrastructure for effective learning. While the workshops themselves did not directly involve infrastructure improvements, the training on digital tools underscored the need for adequate technological resources. The workshops, by increasing demand for these resources, likely put pressure on universities to consider infrastructure enhancements, but direct actions toward this recommendation would require follow-up by the institutions themselves.

3. Optimization of Online Library Access

Recommendation: It was recommended that universities enhance online library access and conduct awareness campaigns to ensure students can effectively use these resources.

Response in Workshops: The workshops at some universities, particularly at the University of Shkoder, included sessions on utilizing digital resources available in university libraries. However, the focus on optimizing online library access was not a central theme across all workshops. While some aspects of library resource utilization were covered, more extensive efforts in awareness and technical support for online library access were not comprehensively addressed.

4. Adoption of Modern Teaching Methods

Recommendation: Lecturers were encouraged to adopt modern teaching methods, including collaborative and interactive learning techniques.

Response in Workshops: The workshops aligned well with this recommendation, particularly through sessions that introduced modern digital tools such as Canva, Kahoot, and Prezi, which facilitate interactive and visually engaging teaching methods. The focus on practical, hands-on learning for both





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lecturers and students directly supported the shift towards modern teaching methodologies, making the workshops a strong response to this recommendation.

5. Strengthening of Digital Literacies Training

Recommendation: Comprehensive Digital Literacies Training was recommended for all students, covering essential digital skills.

Response in Workshops: The workshops were specifically designed to address this recommendation. Each workshop provided targeted digital literacy training, covering areas such as website development, AI tools, and advanced software applications like Excel. This training was crucial in filling the gaps identified in the Needs Assessment, making this aspect of the workshops highly responsive to the recommendation.

6. Curricular Adaptation for the Digital Future

Recommendation: The Needs Assessment called for integrating digital tools into university curricula and adapting programs to meet the demands of the digital economy.

Response in Workshops: The workshops began the process of curricular adaptation by introducing new digital tools and techniques to both lecturers and students. However, the integration of these tools into the formal curriculum will require ongoing efforts beyond the workshops themselves. The workshops set the stage for curricular updates but did not complete the process, indicating the need for continued development in this area.

Lecturers' Recommendations:

The lecturers' recommendations in the Needs Assessment focused on improving technology infrastructure, enhancing access to online libraries, developing digital literacy curricula, and ensuring the availability of standardized tools.

Response in Workshops:

- **Improved Technology Infrastructure:** The workshops highlighted the need for infrastructure but did not directly address this recommendation. The actual improvement of infrastructure remains a task for the universities.
- **Access to Online Libraries:** As noted, some workshops addressed the use of digital resources, but more comprehensive strategies for enhancing online library access were not a major focus.
- **Curricula and Trainings on Digital Literacy:** The workshops provided substantial training on digital literacy, responding well to this recommendation. However, revising curricula to fully integrate these skills is an ongoing process.
- **Standardized Tools and Platforms:** The workshops introduced several digital tools, but standardizing these across the university environment would require further institutional support and policy development.

Stakeholders' Recommendations:





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These included curriculum and training enhancement, mentorship, professional experience, and improving access to resources.

Response in Workshops:

- **Curriculum and Training Enhancement:** The workshops provided targeted training, addressing the immediate need for enhanced digital literacy skills. However, curriculum enhancement at a broader level is still in progress.
- **Mentorship and Professional Experience:** While mentorship was not a primary focus, the workshops did include aspects of professional development and skill application, aligning with this recommendation to some extent.
- **Access to Resources and Collaboration:** The workshops facilitated collaboration and introduced participants to various digital resources, although access to industry-specific resources was not comprehensively covered.

The U2SID workshops made significant progress in addressing the key digital literacy gaps identified in the Needs Assessment Study. The primary focus of these workshops was to deliver targeted digital literacy training and promote modern teaching methods, both of which were executed effectively. However, the Needs Assessment Study also highlighted additional areas, such as infrastructure improvements, formalizing communication practices, and optimizing online library access. While these areas were recognized as important for the overall digital transformation of universities, they were not the primary focus of the workshops. As a result, these aspects will require ongoing institutional effort and follow-up to be fully realized.





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V. CONCLUSIONS

The report on the Erasmus+ U2SID Project provides a comprehensive assessment of digital literacy workshops conducted across partner universities in the Western Balkans. The project aims to foster inclusive digital transformation through collaboration between universities and other stakeholders, such as businesses, policymakers, civil society, and media.

Effectiveness of Workshops

- The workshops were successful in addressing the digital literacy gaps identified in the Needs Assessment Study. They provided targeted training to enhance digital competencies among students, lecturers, and other stakeholders.
- Each workshop was tailored to the specific needs of its audience, ensuring that participants gained practical skills applicable in both academic and professional contexts.

Alignment with Project Goals

- The workshops aligned well with the objectives of the Digital Literacies Accelerator Programme (DLAP), focusing on the horizontal transfer of digital literacy skills, innovative teaching methods, and the inclusion of vulnerable groups.
- They responded effectively to the recommendations from the Needs Assessment by offering training in areas such as website creation, digital content production, and the use of advanced digital tools.

Participant Engagement and Inclusivity

- The workshops successfully engaged a diverse group of participants, including students, lecturers, and external stakeholders from civil society and business. This broad engagement is crucial for fostering collaboration and ensuring the relevance of digital competencies.
- High women participation rates in some workshops highlight the project's commitment to inclusivity and gender equality.

The workshops effectively laid the groundwork for improving digital literacy, but the broader recommendations identified in the study point to future actions that universities need to take to ensure a comprehensive digital transformation. This approach ensures that the workshops provided immediate value while setting the stage for continued progress in other critical areas.





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VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Detailed Participant Tracking and Inclusivity

To ensure that workshops are inclusive and cater to the diverse needs of participants, it is essential to collect detailed demographic data. This includes tracking gender, age, academic background, and professional roles.

- Implement a standardized participant registration process that captures detailed demographic information.
- Analyze demographic data to identify trends and gaps in participation, ensuring that workshops are inclusive and representative of the broader community.
- Use demographic insights to tailor workshop content and outreach strategies to underrepresented groups.

Sustained Follow-Up Activities

To maximize the long-term impact of workshops, it is crucial to provide ongoing support and reinforcement of the skills acquired during the sessions.

- Organize follow-up workshops or refresher courses to reinforce initial training and address emerging digital literacy needs.
- Develop mentoring programs that pair participants with experienced professionals who can provide guidance and support.
- Conduct periodic surveys and assessments to evaluate the long-term impact of the workshops on participants' digital competencies and career progression.

Enhanced Collaboration with Stakeholders

Collaboration with industry professionals, civil society, and policymakers can provide participants with real-world applications of their skills and enhance the relevance of the training.

- Establish partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and government agencies to create internship and project-based learning opportunities for participants.
- Invite industry experts to deliver guest lectures, conduct workshops, and participate in panel discussions.
- Facilitate collaborative projects that involve students, academics, and external stakeholders, fostering a practical application of digital skills.

Focus on Ethical AI and Digital Literacy

As digital technologies, particularly AI, become more prevalent, it is essential to address the ethical implications and ensure that participants are equipped with both technical skills and a critical





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understanding of these technologies.

- Integrate modules on the ethical use of AI and digital tools into the workshop curriculum, covering topics such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and digital rights.
- Provide case studies and practical exercises that highlight ethical challenges and best practices in digital literacy.
- Foster discussions and debates on the societal impacts of digital technologies, encouraging participants to think critically about their use and implications.

Continuous Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure that workshops remain relevant and effective, it is important to continuously gather feedback from participants and adapt the content and delivery methods accordingly.

- Implement feedback mechanisms such as post-workshop surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews to gather participant insights and suggestions for improvement.
- Regularly review and update workshop content based on participant feedback and emerging trends in digital literacy.
- Establish a feedback loop where participants can provide ongoing input on their training needs and experiences, ensuring that future workshops are responsive to their evolving requirements.

Leveraging Technology for Broader Reach

Utilizing digital platforms can extend the reach of workshops and make training accessible to a wider audience, including those who may not be able to attend in person.

- Develop online modules and webinars that complement in-person workshops, providing flexible learning options for participants.
- Create a digital repository of workshop materials, recordings, and resources that participants can access at their convenience.
- Use social media and other digital communication channels to promote workshops, share success stories, and engage with a broader community of learners.

By implementing these expanded recommendations, future workshops can become more inclusive, impactful, and sustainable, ensuring that participants are well-equipped to navigate and thrive in the digital age.





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