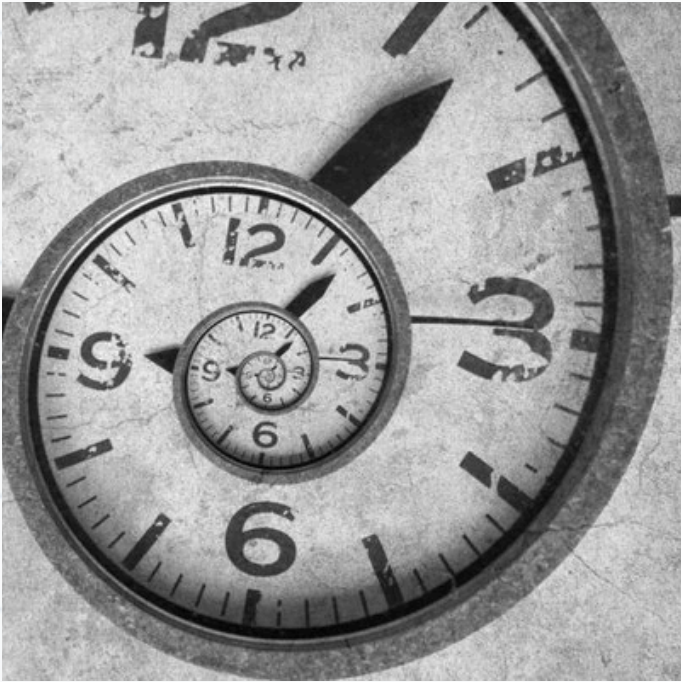# HANDBOOK

SECTION A
THEORY FOR THE TRAINERS

EDCyber

CYBERANIMATION

The Handbook is available in Italian, Spanish, Danish, French, Greek and Romanian languages (pdf download available) at:
https://edcyber.eu/index.php/project-results/

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CYBERANIMATION
BACKGROUND

Sociocultural animation, as a socio-educational practice, has taken form of solidarity-social representations and creating community ties and structures.

Since the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, the sociocultural animation has been consolidated as a practice for critical awareness, dialogue, creation of solidary identities, democratization and social change.

The sociocultural animation is developed from the humanist postulates that emphasize the evolution of the human being, its capacity for self-improvement and self-organization and solidarity as a formula for sociability and social transformation. In this way, in the 21st century, the sociocultural animation is consolidated as an instrument at the service of social and popular networks for awareness, development and sustainability.

Despite the fact that the history includes examples and moments in which animation has been used as an instrument of domination, framing and social control, the reality is that it is essentially presented to us as a dialogical and liberating practice used by communities to consolidate identity ties, for the construction of democratic networks and for the transformation of the collective ideology and the generation of attitudes of solidarity.

Although the sociocultural animation had been installed as a social practice in a systemic context constituted by an associative world, with the generalization of digital technologies, a new social paradigm was developed causing a change in the coordinates of sociocultural animation, creating multiple interactions in new space-time contexts for interactivity and collaborative social action.

The impact of digital culture generates a collective representation of the social reality, a conception of individual and collective spaces, as well as newforms of relationship, organization, production and consumption of goods and services. In this scenario, the cyberanimation is not a different reality from that of the sociocultural animation, is about the practices and dynamics of the sociocultural animation that are immersed in the context and paradigms of culture and the digital revolution.

When we discuss the cyberanimation, we talk not only about a different, abstract, decontextualized reality, but also of a social practice that, altough mantaining its purposed and functions, it's immersed and adapted to the social reality, the forms of representation and interpretation and the dynamics generated by culture and the organizational forms of the digital society.

CYBERANIMATION
CONCEPT

It is a term developed by the Spanish author Mario Viché González, in his book "LA CIBERANIMACIÓN" published in 2019, which is the result of his doctoral thesis.

For the author, Cyberanimation is a sociocultural praxis of a pedagogical nature that aims to improve the quality of life of citizens through the creation of social networks and communities of solidarity in order to ensure the sustainability of human communities.

As a socio-pedagogical practice, the cyberanimation, generates its action from the problematization of social reality. The problems and concerns of daily life are shared on the Internet and objectified through interactive participation and the connection of networks. This generates new actions that, optimizing the potential of cyberspace, are projected into the daily lives of individuals and their collectivities.

03.

CYBERANIMATION
OVERVIEW

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OBJECTIVE

Cyberanimation is the updating and adaptation of educational practices of socio-cultural animation to the new paradigms generated by the Society of Technologies and Knowledge. This new praxis of cybercultural intervention is structured from a model of sustainable development. Sustainability becomes an objective of human coexistence, considered both as a need for survival and as a principle of solidarity intervention that justifies the need for a social organization and cooperative work.

PRINCIPLES

- **A network community model.** A virtual community that is structured from multiple cultural identities, common affinities, cooperative exchange networks that make possible a coordinated and short-term social praxis, a new model of community social development.

04.

- **A model of individual and collective identity.** Based on the appearance of new identities, that overcome spatio-temporal conditions to become new identity models that are much more personalized while being shared online and structured based on affinities, concerns and common interests.

- **A model of of cultural and individual rights development.** Individual rights ensure freedom of action and knowledge creation, likewise ensure the free expression of individualities and local identities. Individual rights are fundamentally cultural rights: the right to a language, the right to free expression, the right to free interaction and association, the right to their own individual ways of living and interpreting reality. Thus, the defense of individual rights is a way of promoting tolerant, autonomous and cooperative communities.

- **A democratic model of participation in the Network.** A model that seeks the involvement of individuals in processes and the interactivities that Network promotes. An interactive involvement that is the starting point for participation, the generating principle of a new participatory model which implies contact, dialogic involvement, identification and individual and supportive decision-making.

CYBERANIMATION

ELEMENTS

- Horizontal communication and participation as an alternative to hierarchical (vertical) intervention.

- Collaborative projects (bottom-up) as alternative to top-down planned intervention projects.

- Participation as a consequence of connectivity, the confluence of identities and common concerns.

- Mediation as an alternative to professional intervention by and for citizens.

- The priority of ideas and proposals (content) over activities, resources, supports and even software.

- Media convergence as a formula for access to information, communication and analysis of social reality.

- Networking as a formula for social organization and participation in debate and decision-making.

- The absence of universal principles and, consequently, communication based on individual and collective ideas, concerns, interests and identities.

- A culture of individuality and community as a confluence of interests and desires of individuals, in a supportive and collaborative way.

CYBERANIMATION
CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

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a) Horizontal and interactive communication.

INDICATORS
- Diversity in terms of sources of information.
- Presence of different points of view in the information presented.
- Possibility of online editing by users.

b) Collaborative action.

INDICATORS
- Planning projects to collaborate.
- Public use of collaborative tools.

C) Participation and debate.

INDICATORS
- Real possibilities of participation in projects and debates.
- Existence of forums for debate and decision-making.

d) Media convergence and networking.

INDICATORS
- Use of multimedia languages.
- Accessibility from different terminals and screens.
- Hypertext access to related networks.

e) Promotion of change and social inclusion.

INDICATORS
- Presence of a community discourse of a supportive nature.
- Presence of critical analysis in the contextualizing discourse.
- Presence of proposals and alternatives for inclusion and social change.

CYBERANIMATION
PROCESS

From the community perspective of sociocultural education, that bases the dynamics of cyberanimation, we can talk about a holistic process of generating solidarity identities as a concretion of knowledge whose application generates attitudes and practices of organization, management and consolidation of human communities. This process goes through the following phases:

a) Access to data. Access to global and local information affecting community life.

b) Processing of information. Through the contrast between different sources and locating contradictions and stereotypes.

c) Critical awareness. Which is done through a group of analysis, dialogue, confrontation of visions, representations and demystification of stereotypes, visualization of discourses and search for convergent and "objectivable" representations of social reality.

d) Taking a critical stance. It involves generating attitudes and positions individual and collective in line with critical reading and common representations, generated by the collectivity.

e) Creation of solid individual and collective attitudes. Consistent with the critical vision of reality generated and based on solidarity identities fruit and result of an authentic collective process of critical reading of reality and generation of practical community knowledge.

09.

CYBERANIMATION
CONTEXTS

The contexts of cyberanimation are our neighborhoods, our communities, associations, urban tribes, local communities, institutions, groups of affinity, social movements. These are spaces of communication and interaction that are structured both through territorialized physical territories and virtual spaces deterritorialized.

From the perspective of cyberanimation, the structures of cyberspace are organized from the confluence of shared identities: concerns, interests, and converging representations of social reality, as well as the presence of social situations, experienced from problematization. Shared identities and problematized life situations are what generate the processes of participation, solidification of entities, collaborative action and change of attitudes that give rise to and support the sociocultural dynamics of cyberanimation.

If sociocultural animation has traditionally used facilities and programs as meeting places for people, identities and concerns, as specific spaces for group experience, for dialogue, debate, dialogical analysis and the development of creative projects, community and social change, in the digital society appear new virtual spaces that fulfill these functions of meeting, connectivity, channeling of interests, desires and identities, social debate and community organization both from the creation of cybercommunities and through the management of face-to-face actions of collective projection and collaborative action.

In this way, both social networks and virtual forums and web spaces, using the convergence of media and screens have become dynamic tools, multipliers and optimizers of dialogical sociocultural dynamics while public squares, alternative cultural centers, the streets of our towns and cities or the same associative movement become spaces for the physical projection of the action combined with these virtual spaces of cyberspace.

THE CYBERCOMMUNITY

Cybercommunities are defined as groups of Internet users who meet on the web to cooperatively establish ties of interactivity and achieve common goals. Although the theory seems clear and evident, the reality shows that the only fact of creating a virtual platform, the multiplication of environments, social websites or the appearance of new interactive software do not directly imply the generation of participatory communication processes, creation of social networks or sociocultural development.

It is evident that, although the development of platforms and interactive software is important, there are a series of factors of an individual and community nature that are presented as fundamental primary conditions to be able to generate processes of participation and cyber-community development.

These primary factors are, firstly, the identification with a shared virtual project, a turning point for contact and generator of interaction and cooperative work, secondly, the interactive communication as a meeting of individualities that enables mutual growth, and, thirdly, the participation as a basis for cooperation and the achievement of shared objectives.

THE CYBERANIMATOR

In this media field that configures the Knowledge Society, the sociocultural animators perform specific functions related to individual and collective communication, with the generation of networks, the decoding of reality, taking a critical stance and the community development.

Cyberanimators will be facilitating the action of communities to participate in social dialogue, generating transformation and sustainable development actions, only if they are capable of becoming mediators in the processes of citizen awareness and active participation in the social debate that new technologies make possible, making compatible and articulating interpersonal and community interventions with the capacity for self-organization in the Network, as well as generating cooperation and solidarity processes in the Network, which become critical elements for the expression of concerns, creativity and shared knowledge.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CYBERANIMATOR

- **Communication mediator.** Its action is aimed at facilitating contact between users of the virtual environment, the creation of content on the Net, shared authorship and the meeting on the Net of personal concerns, interests and affinities.

- **Facilitator of access to networks.** Its objective is to facilitate the access to technologies, through multimedia literacy, but above all fighting to overcome the digital divide, facilitating access to terminal digital and especially being able to propose technological resources and processes simple that, while being useful and effective, are technologically accessible to the citizenship.

- **Promoter of community dynamics.** Promoting interactivity, understood as a virtual meeting of subjects who communicate their ideas, concerns and experiences, also promoting collective authorship, cooperative projects and the implementation of collective actions that contribute to the development of different communities.

- **Facilitator of decoding and critical vision of virtual reality.** Facilitating the problematizing dialogue of reality, dialogicity, exchange, interactive critical analysis and supportive decision-making among Internet users who, from timeless and decontextualized positions, assume the commitments of a virtual community in cyberspace.

14.

- **Meeting point of the communicative dynamics and the world of technologies.** The rapprochement between the citizen dynamics that go to the Internet without being clear about its uses and benefits and some technologies, that are being born every day to facilitate meeting and interactive work.

- **Promoter of community development, e-participation, e-identity and e-communication.** Fundamentally, the cyberanimator is an agent promoting individual and community development. In virtual communities, the development model seems to be diluted in the network, however, it is the collective interests, individual concerns and shared identities that virtual communities generate that will be the object of the action of community development agents. From this point of view, the cyberanimators become promoters and facilitators, through their commitment to the community and their mediating action, of a new participatory democracy on the Internet, of collective identities in cyberspace and of authentic interactive communication.

CYBERANIMATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The praxis of an active digital citizenship is one of the objectives of cyberanimation. A citizenship based on awareness and community identity and that materializes in participation, information flows, shared analysis of reality, social debate and decision making. An active citizenship that is generated from the creation of micro-powers present in the Network for the management of narratives of distributive justice, inclusion and solidarity capable of generating attitudes and practices of otherness and authentic democratic play. The digital citizenship practices are those aimed at creating networks collaborations, the generation of narratives of coexistence and democratization as well as those aimed at the management of micro-powers and participation in the social debate.

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THE CYBERANIMATION
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE
SECTION B

EDCyber

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THE PRAXIS OF CYBERANIMATION

Cyberanimation, understood as a digitalized praxis, exerts a significant influence in the real sphere, particularly in the spheres of social relations, community organization, sociocultural development, inclusion and sustainability, as well as distributive justice and subjective well-being. This practice involves a digital communicative interaction which has the potential to generate a tangible impact on the dynamics of social debate, encouraging the creation of collaborative narratives and the strengthening of coexistence networks.

In order to effectively implement the cyberanimation, it is crucial to carry out the analysis, the evaluation and the delimitation of the contexts in their real dimension. This implies understanding the specific needs of each context to develop an appropriate training process that culminates in the creation of effective and committed cyber communities.

In this sense, the EDCyber project undertook exhaustive work aimed at:

- Identifying the specific needs and challenges of communities in various national contexts.
- Developing intervention strategies that are culturally sensitive and technologically appropriate.
- Evaluating the impact of cyberanimation practices on social cohesion and community empowerment.
- Creating tools and resources that facilitate active participation and collaboration online.
- Promoting equity and inclusion in access to digital technologies.

The process followed by EDCyber to achieve these objectives included:

Diagnostic Phase
Deep understanding of the contexts and needs through surveys, interviews and data analysis.

Design Phase
Creation of a methodology based on the findings and the diagnosis, aimed at strengthening digital and active citizenship capabilities in young people.

Implementation Phase
Execution of the methodology learned with the creation of cybercommunities in each participating country under a participative and collaborative approach.

DIAGNOSTIC PHASE

RESEARCH

The research carried out was of a qualitative type and used semi-structured guided interviews, divided into two blocks of 10 open questions, applied to 3 different focus groups as a method of collecting information. Each participating country organized the following focus groups:

- Focus group 1: 10 students from 18 to 25 years old, belonging to the same territorial region and similar social context.
- Focus group 2: 10 youth workers from 25 to 35 years old, involved in professional activities related to the topics of the project. This group participated in the entire development of the project and were the beneficiaries of the training program.
- Focus group 3: 10 stakeholders involved in the process of democratic participation (NGOs, authorities, political activities, etc.)

Data collection and regarding parameters

The consortium's partners conducted the interviews through the organization of the focus group following the indications included in the corresponding guidelines.

Before conducting the interviews, a format was compiled with the general data of the participants (name, age, gender, etc.). The participants were informed that the session would be recorded for data collection purposes, respecting the rights of confidentiality and data protection, so the records were only for the internal use of each organization and under no circumstances these can be shared or published.

The sessions were guided by the responsible staff of each organization, who acted as meeting facilitators but in no case influenced, guided or conditioned the responses of the participants.

Data interpretation

The partners carried out a qualitative analysis and interpretation of the responses obtained during the interviews for each focus group, extracting from the records the most relevant information for the purposes of the investigation. After carrying out this task, the partners prepared the corresponding national reports based on a pre-established template, including a summary of the findings obtained, supported by textual citations from the participants, photographic evidence of the session and a series of conclusions, observations and recommendations on the topics addressed.

Results of the Research

The results of the investigation were the following:

I. Identification of needs, areas of opportunity and common challenges in each country related to the participation and involvement of young people in active citizenship and decision-making process and missing skills subject to being developed during the project's training program.

II. Identification of missing skills and competencies in youth to critically, analytically, and responsibly manage new technologies and use them as a means of empowerment, autonomy and individual or collective development, subject to being developed during the project's training program.

Main findings of the research

Focus group 1 - Students from 18 to 25 years old

Focus group 1 was made up of 60 young high school, university, and master's students between 17 and 25 years of age from all partner countries. Each partner led the focus group in their own context and language. The students were interviewed by the organizations' staff members in face-to-face and online sessions and were selected according to their own internal process. The main channels of contact and communication with young people were high schools, universities and local youth organizations in each country.

The revised report on the main findings of the research in relation to the processes of active citizenship in youth was structured as follows:

- Introduction: the research addressed the participation of young people in community activities, highlighting their involvement in different areas of social action. Participants from various countries were interviewed, who shared their experiences and perceptions about their role in society.

- Community engagement: a significant proportion of the youth interviewed were actively involved in their community through nonprofit organizations or as part of their academic commitments. Priority areas of interest included the protection of the environment and animals, the fight against violence, the defense of human rights and urban regeneration.

- Perception of community: it is relevant to note that many young people associated the concept of community with their academic environment and student structures. The latter were formed with the aim of representing students in decision-making processes within educational institutions.

- **Self-Initiative and participation:** a notable finding was that the majority of young people did not become involved with organizations, clubs or groups to address community problems on their own initiative. Those who actively participated in activities with community purposes generally did not do so in response to academic requirements or within the framework of initiatives implemented by their educational institutions in collaboration with local actors.

- **Knowledge and trust:** the interviewes indicated that, if it were not for the information received in their academic contexts, they would lack knowledge about the work of other entities. This was due to the lack of dissemination of initiatives and adequate guidance. In particular, the participants expressed distrust towards NGOs, perceiving a lack of transparency and effectiveness in their operations.

This report reflects the diversity of ways in which young people engage in active citizenship and highlights the importance of effective and transparent communication by organizations to encourage greater community participation

Related to the use of digital spaces by young people, the main findings of the research were the following:

- Introduction: after a detailed analysis of the responses of participants in different countries, it was found that youth had a notable familiarity with the digital space. The young people were enthusiastic and convinced of the possibilities that the online environment offered to solve problems, search for various information, forge interpersonal relationships and improve professional skills.

- Digital and social participation: a low level of involvement in digital social issues was observed, attributable to the absence of adequate virtual spaces or lack of knowledge about how to actively participate in them. Despite their competence in managing the virtual space, the involvement of young people in social issues through this medium was limited. The need to promote more active participation in social problems from the digital sphere became evident, in order to generate a positive impact on the tangible reality of young people.

- Activities in virtual spaces: the predominant activities among young people in the virtual sphere focused on the use of social networks such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. These media were used to consume and publish content, stay informed, and socialize. In addition, streaming and distribution platforms for audiovisual content such as YouTube, Spotify, Netflix and Amazon Prime were widely used. Instant messaging applications, such as WhatsApp, were an integral part of young people's daily communication.

- Online challenges: during the sessions, the risks that young people faced in the digital space were highlighted, such as the proliferation of fake news, the spread of hate messages and cyberbullying, these being some of the problems most cited by participants.

Focus group 2 - Youth workers from 25 to 35 years old, involved in professional activities related to the topics of the project

Focus group 2 consisted of 60 youth workers from all partner countries. Each partner conducted the focus group in their own context and language. The youth workers were selected based on their involvement with youth groups in their main occupation. Teachers, social workers, youth officers, and other professionals were approached to participate in the sessions.

The revised report on the research findings, focused on citizenship processes and the participation of youth workers, was presented as follows:

- Introduction: the research revealed crucial aspects about the democratic participation and civic engagement of youth workers, as well as their interaction with virtual spaces. Greater commitment and dedication was observed when they acted within the framework of the non-profit organizations where they usually collaborated.

- Civic engagement of youth workers: youth workers showed a high sensitivity towards the problems of their communities, striving to organize events, initiatives and actions to address these problems. They expressed concern about the relationship with political leaders and a general distrust towards the political sphere.

- Building community cohesion: it was perceived among youth workers that their professional work contributed to strengthening community cohesion. This aspect deserved to be highlighted and reflected on. There was also a tendency to engage in non-professional activities, such as signing petitions, joining protests, or engaging in activism, especially in areas where they perceived a need to combat injustice.

The revised report on the main findings of the research, related to the use of digital spaces by the youth workers , was presented as follows:

- Use of the virtual spaces: the Youth Workers identify as active and aware users of social networks and other virtual spaces. They used these media constantly, without distinguishing between professional and personal moments. Social networks represented an essential channel for their participation in both professional and personal "communities".

- Online social interaction: social networks are used to share information, personal experiences and promote local activities and social events. Most of the social activities are linked to initiatives and developed within the non-profit organizations in which they worked.

- Challenges in Virtual Spaces: A high incidence of online harassment and violence was reported, which represented a significant challenge for youth workers in facilitating discussions and comments on social media. An issue of particular concern was violence in virtual spaces and its psychological impact, particularly on young people.

This report reflected the importance of youth workers' work in fostering active citizenship and addressed the challenges they faced in virtual spaces, underscoring the need for effective strategies to combat online violence and promote social cohesion

Focus group 3 - Stakeholders involved in the process of democratic participation (NGOs, authorities, political activities, etc.)

Focus group 3 was made up of 60 stakeholders from all partner countries. Each partner led the focus group in their own context and language. The stakeholders were interviewed by the organizations' staff members in face-to-face and online sessions and were selected according to their own internal process. The main channels of contact and communication with stakeholder were institutions, youth organizations, policymakers, etc.

- Introduction: stakeholder participation in the focus group was intense and rich in contributions. It was highlighted that both democratic participation and civic engagement, as well as interaction in virtual spaces, were focused on the well-being of young people, who are the main objective of the organizations involved.

- Youth participation in active citizenship: it was found that only a small percentage of young people showed interest in active citizenship, due to a variety of personal and community reasons. One of the most significant challenges was the scarcity of media and public spaces available for young people to engage in decision-making processes. The importance of adopting a holistic approach involving all community actors was highlighted, given that policy makers showed little sensitivity towards this issue.

- Obstacles to the youth participation: youth faced significant obstacles to participating in active citizenship, including lack of information, confidence, time, resources, and representation, as well as language barriers and disinterest. In order to overcome these barriers, the need was identified to provide young people with greater information, tools, resources, and broader representation and inclusion in existing authorities and decision-making processes.

- Cooperation between local actors: the absence of cooperation between different local actors, such as NGOs, institutions, administrations and others, was identified to establish a network that promotes and facilitates active citizenship processes. This lack of collaboration prevented the creation of an effective network to promote and facilitate these processes.

The report on the research findings, which addresses the role of stakeholders and their point of view on the virtual spaces, was presented as follows:

- Introduction: in the analysis of the results of the focus group, the significant role of social networks in the daily life of young people involved in the activities of various organizations was highlighted. Emphasis was put on the considerable skills and potentials of young people in handling digital tools and social media, and how this potential often remained untapped and underutilized.

- Social networks as empowerment tools: the social networks were recognized as the most effective tools available to young people to promote active citizenship in virtual spaces. These platforms offered open spaces that allowed for discussion and the expression of personal opinions, thus facilitating an environment conducive to debate and civic participation.

- Challenges and protection in the virtual environment: a critical aspect identified was the need to facilitate constructive debate among young people, while protecting them from the risks inherent in virtual spaces. This included implementing measures to safeguard their online well-being and promote responsible and safe use of these platforms.

This report reflects the challenges and opportunities in promoting active citizenship among young people and highlights the need for a collaborative approach between all community actors to overcome existing obstacles and promote meaningful and effective participation

DESING PHASE

EDCyber

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Based on the results of the diagnostic phase, in collaboration with all project partners, a comprehensive training program was designed addressed the key aspects identified. The training of the EDCyber Project consists of 2 main phases:

- Training for trainers
- Training for youth workers

Training of Trainers

The training of the trainers took place at the Asterix Youth Center in San Giovanni a Teduccio, Naples, Italy, from 14 to 16 June 2016. This meeting reunited staff and trainers from the 6 members of the Consortium. The main objective was to enable trainers in the methodology of cyberanimation, as well as in the practical application of educational methods and the creation of a cybercommunity.

During the three-days of work, topics related to the training of youth workers and the E-Learning course were addressed. A specific session was dedicated to the methodology for the design and development of training courses, including the planning of the lesson calendar and the specific characteristics of asynchronous and synchronic activities. This focus allowed the trainers to acquire essential skills to select, lead and empower the youth workers who participated in the next phase of the project.

Training of Youth Workers

The training of youth workers was designed based on the results of the research and the "training of the trainers". The training program was designed with the purpose of equipping youth workers with the essential skills to function as cyberanimators. In addition, it was sought that the youth workers would have the necessary skills to transmit the cyberanimation methodology to young people, applying it effectively in local initiatives, to promote their participation as active citizens.

The training was carried out over a period of 3 weeks and was based on 5-day online activities, with the participation of 32 youth workers of the 6 partner countries of the project (Italy, Spain, Greece, Romania, Belgium and Denmark). The training was based on a weekly program in which participants participated in asynchronous and synchronous activities. Each consortium partner was responsible for the development of materials and activities related to a specific topic as follows:

- Module 1: Active citizenship
- Module 2: Community building
- Module 3: Digital media literacy
- Module 4: Soft skills in the digital environment
- Module 5: Communication, mediation and facilitation
- Module 6: Practical approach of the cyberanimation

Module 1: Active citizenship

The main aim of the module about the active citizenship is to provide the youth workers with theoretical and practical skills and competencies about the several ways for the citizens, in particular young people, to create space for the debate and be engaged in live process of community building and involvement in the local decision-making process.

Module 2: Community building

This module's main objective is the development of skills for building youth communities through social networks and online platforms to promote participation, collaboration between young people and encourage the creation of common initiatives. To achieve this, a series of activities are promoted to motivate participation and connection among young people.

Module 3: Digital media literacy

This module aims to provide the youth workers with critical skills in order to evaluate the content that they see in the social media and the internet. It analyses the main concepts that are related with Digital Media Literacy such as Fake News, Biased News, Factual news, Echo Chambers, Filter Bubbles, Stereotypes etc. The module provides specific guidelines that would help the youth workers to make the difference between trustworthy and misleading information.

Module 4: Soft skills in the digital environment

The module aims to train youth workers with soft skills crucial to the success of online community management, harnessing their potential and overcoming their challenges. It seeks to enable YWs to understand and master the most important interpersonal skills to make them applicable in digital contexts. To do this, useful tips, checklists, tools and explanatory examples will be provided.

Module 5: Communication, mediation and facilitation

This module aims to delve into the evolution, impact and strategies of digital communication, addressing the benefits, challenges, principles of effective communication, mediation and storytelling techniques of the digital landscape. Participants learn skills to address conflict, foster inclusion, and engage stakeholders in the digital realm.

Module 6: Practical approach of the cyberanimation

The objective of the module is to provide the Youth Workers with skills and competencies about the cyberanimation and to be recognized as "cyberanimators". The module aims at exploring the several ways of the "praxis" of the cyberanimation approach, to allow the participants to apply practically the knowledge acquired .

Asynchronous Training (e-learning)

The participating youth workers had access to different theoretical and practical materials related to each topic, among which are:

- Overview of the module
- Research document about the topics
- PowerPoint presentation (With the key points of the research, including images)
- Didactic tools (Conceptual maps, infographics, videos, articles, etc.)
- Evaluation tools (Test, activities of evaluation, etc.)
- Interactive activities (Forum, games, online contest, etc.)
- Best practices (already done for the research)
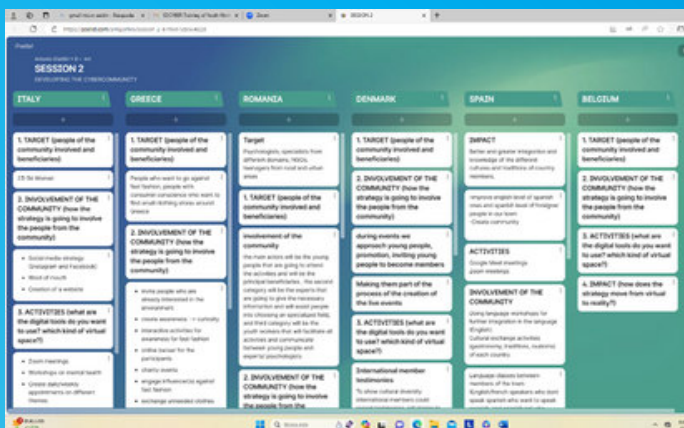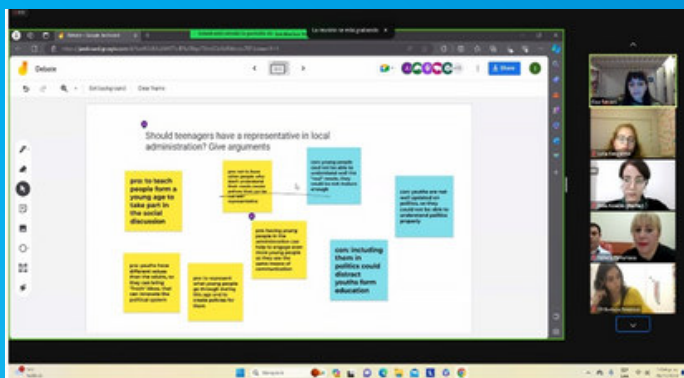
Synchronous training (live webinars)

Each partner has been in charge of the organization of 1 Practical live session (total 6 live webianars) about the contents of the assigned module. The sessions were on Zoom with a duration of 2 hours. The sessions have been recorded and uploaded on the e-learning platform. In each session, at least 5 youth workers of each country have participated. These seminars were structured into conferences, interactive activities, exercises, and addressed both the theoretical and practical parts.

The methodology adopted was designed to provide youth workers with theoretical and practical skills on the 6 core themes of the project and achieve the final objective of guiding the process of creating and managing a cyber community, involving young people, interested parties and other actors. in active citizenship processes at the local level.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Virtual Youth Exchanges

In each Virtual Youth Exchange, 4 young people and 2 youth leaders participated from each partner organization, for a total of 36 participants per each Youth Exchange, and 108 participants in total. The young people were selected by the Youth Workers through an open call, and participated in the training sessions prior to the exchange. Topics discussed during these meetings included:

Youth and Constructive Dialogue
- Promoting effective communication and conflict resolution
- Cyber community design

Youth and Virtual Communities
- Exploring the potential of social media and digital platforms for youth connection and activism
- Development of a cybercommunity

Youth and Digital Citizenship
- Promoting the responsible and creative use of technology and the internet to empower young people as active citizens
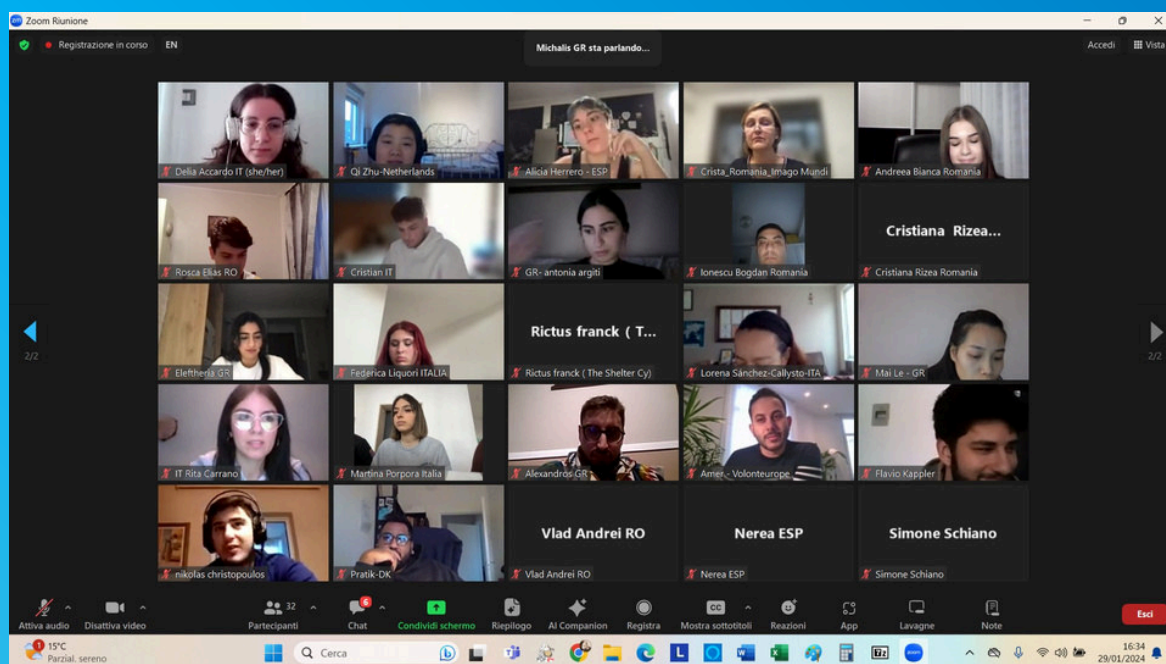- Presentation of the cybercommunities
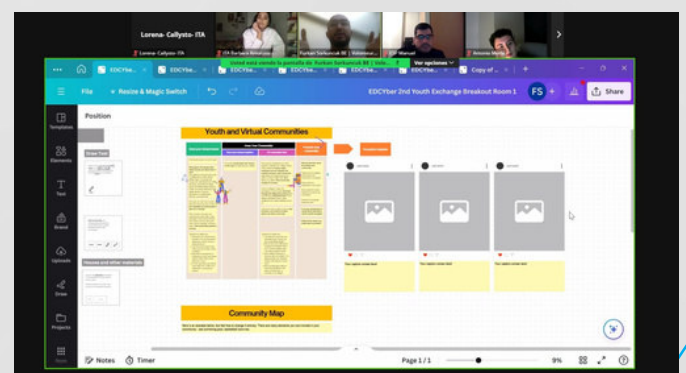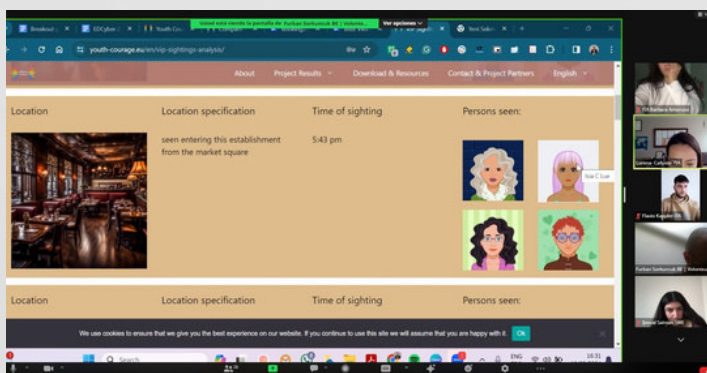
The experience of the Virtual Youth Exchanges

The Virtual Youth Exchanges represented a unique opportunity for the youth workers to practically apply the skills acquired in the training program. Through these exchanges, the application of the principles of cyberanimation was promoted through a process where the youth workers, in collaboration with young people, created and managed virtual communities, connecting participants from various countries involved in the project.

During the three Virtual Youth Exchanges, the youth workers had the opportunity to act as cyberanimators, leading, guiding and managing these communities, which allowed them to put their skills into practice in a real and dynamic environment. These exchanges were established as spaces for brainstorming, debate and development of initiatives.

The participants were able to exchange perspectives, meeting people from different countries and cultures, and expanding their vision of the world. This exchange of ideas promoted solidarity and empathy, allowing young people to challenge conflicts and propose innovative solutions. The young people became active proponents of ideas and projects, which were communicated to their organizations of origin for subsequent design, development and implementation in their local communities.

Socio-Influencer Hubs
(Cybercommunities)

After the experience of the Virtual Youth Exchanges, the Youth Workers who participated as cyber animators assumed the responsibility of coordinating the creation process of the local cybercommunities in each country in a practical and effective way. This task was carried out in collaboration with the young people and based on the ideas developed previously. As a result, high-value social content for social networks was developed in each country.

Young people became "ethical influencers", adopting the values of socio-animation and promoting principles and actions on the social network aimed at youth participation as agents of change and active citizens.

Topics of relevance to youth, such as European solidarity, the creation of ethical values on the Internet, respect for diversity, personality development, fair use of the Internet, the fight against cybercrimes, cyberbullying and racism, as well as such as the promotion of mental health, were addressed in the different awareness campaigns. These initiatives aimed to foster a safer digital environment and empower young people to be leaders in building a more inclusive and respectful society.

Learn about the initiatives developed on our official EDCyber page

https://edcyber.eu/index.php/project-results/

Youth partipation in the creation of the Cybercommunities

The participation was based on representations of reality created and consolidated through a critical analysis of daily life. Participation taken the form of actions such as:

- Contributing individual ideas, opinions, feelings and concerns to the social community. Taking part in the social debate in an active, critical and dialogic way.
- Participating in decision-making in a free, autonomous and creative way as a consequence of debate and critical analysis of reality.
- Responsibly assuming the risks of each of the decisions adopted collaboratively.
- Monitoring collective decisions, fulfilling their consequences, adopted, assuming agreements and identifying with them, even in the case of having defended them in the decision-making

From the point of view of participation, the cybercommunities have been structured on:

- A communication space able to establish the necessary contact to generate participatory processes.
- The ability to freely share data and multimedia files on the network.
- The possibility of becoming visible on the Internet.
- The possibility of participating in debate and decision-making forums.
- The ability to create collaborative projects.

The Local Workshops

After each Virtual Youth Exchange, the young participants, in collaboration with youth workers, organized and managed a three-day workshop. During these Local Workshops, the young people presented the proposals designed at a virtual level to evaluate their impact on reality.

The Local Workshops served as a meeting point between the project actors (organization, youth workers and young people) and other community actors and stakeholders. Local activities, which went from "virtual" to "real", were implemented through an active, flexible and constructive methodology. In these activities, participants were significantly involved in tasks designed to increase their intrinsic and positive motivation, and consolidate various skills thanks to open interaction and collaboration with other participants and trainers.

The workshops had a practical approach, in which participants, coming from various areas of the same context, were organized into groups to work together to develop a common project for the benefit of the community. The workshops were based on active and participatory processes of joint strategy formulation, whose objective was to increase the spirit of active citizenship, initiative and creativity, and to consolidate the ability to translate ideas into actions by actively participating in the policy formulation and decision-making process.

The local workshops included the participation of high-level speakers, community actors, and subject matter experts in policy-making processes, the digital environment, and democratic citizenship.

The activities focused on:

- The direct contact of the participants with the local context (local authorities, community members, young people, organizations, etc.)
- The practical application of the Cyberanimation methodology through EDCyber
- The best practices exchanges
- Creating, improving and implementing dialogue with local and national policy makers
- Exploitation and dissemination of medium-term results of the Project activities.

The Results of the Local Workshops

The workshops have played a pivotal role in fostering active citizenship among the members of local communities in each participating country. Topics such as mental health, environmental awareness, activism, and community networking were addressed with great interest and participation from the attendees. The increase in local awareness and the exploration of engagement methods were particularly notable outcomes of these workshops.

The workshops' blend of interactive and practical learning has proven effective, empowering participants to become agents of change and take an active role in developing concrete actions for community benefit. The successful networking that took place during these workshops not only fostered new connections between young individuals and local representatives but also laid the groundwork for future collaborations. This is crucial in building a cohesive community ecosystem where various stakeholders can work together towards common goals.

Furthermore, the workshops served as an effective platform for promoting the activities of partner organizations. This has led to increased commitment and support for their projects, thereby amplifying their impact within the community. The generation of viable recommendations related to social policy formulation is a testament to the workshops' role in nurturing an active and politically conscious youth demographic.

The feedback from the workshops has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants appreciating the balance between learning and practical application. This demonstrates that when young people are equipped with the right tools and knowledge, they are prepared to step forward in favor of their local contexts. The active participation of these young advocates exemplifies how empowered communities can contribute to the realization of significant social policies.

In conclusion, the workshops have been a resounding success, yielding very good results, particularly in the area of constructive dialogue. They have provided a valuable and educational experience for all participants, promoting understanding, collaboration, and problem-solving in an efficient and respectful manner. The workshops have demonstrated the positive impact that promoting constructive dialogue can have in various contexts. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to continue these workshops, expanding them to reach a larger audience and addressing a broader range of topics to further promote active citizenship and community development.

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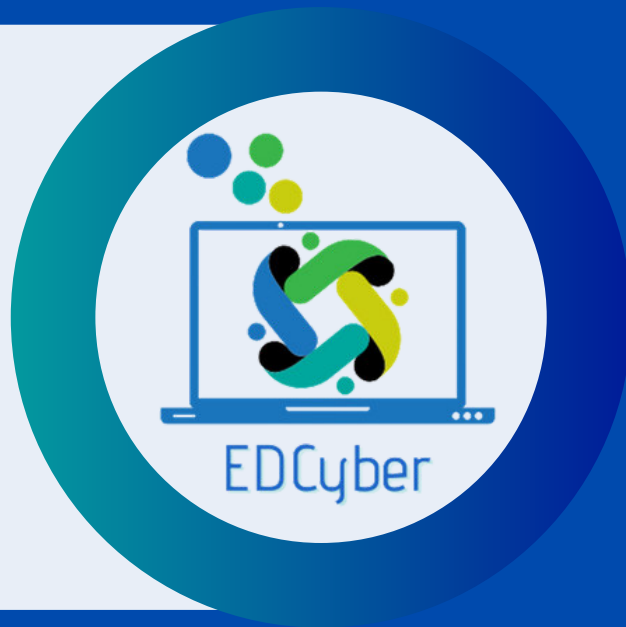
We would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the creation of this handbook. This project was a collaborative effort, and we are profoundly grateful for the dedication and expertise of all those involved.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our partner organizations in the EDCyber project: Callysto (Italy), Action Synergy (Greece), Municipality of Almoradí (Spain), Crossing Borders (Denmark), Imago Mundi (Romania), and Volonteurope (Belgium). Your commitment and collaboration have been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition.

We extend a special thank you to the Youth workers who participated in the training program. Your transformation into youth leaders who guided active citizenship processes among young people has been truly inspiring. Your dedication and leadership have made a significant impact on the lives of the young people you have worked with.

We also wish to express our gratitude to the young participants in the youth exchange and local activities. Your enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment have been at the heart of this project. Your active participation has not only enriched this handbook but also contributed to the vibrancy and success of our community initiatives.

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In conclusion, we are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to this project. Your hard work, dedication, and passion have made this handbook a valuable resource for our community. Thank you for your commitment to fostering active citizenship and empowering young people. Your contributions are making a difference, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.
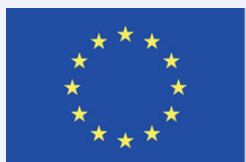
Referencies:

Viché, M(2013). @Ciberanimación.

*Images used in this document were sourced from Pexels, a platform that provides high-quality images for free use without copyright restrictions. Additionally, images from events were used with the explicit consent of the participants.

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