DIGI-INCLUSION

Alexandroupolis, Greece
71 151 inhabitants

Challenge

The Municipality of Alexandroupolis initially faced digital exclusion especially on vulnerable people who often face several barriers. These citizens can be grouped as disabled, seniors, unemployed and low or non-educated.

Local heroes

The action was built on strong collaboration between the municipality and local actors, including senior citizens participating in municipal creative activity groups, people with disabilities, the Women's Union, the Thrace Technology Association, DYPA supporting unemployed people, and the local Chamber of Commerce, ensuring inclusive outreach, effective implementation, and meaningful engagement across diverse social groups.



Lessons learnt

- Participants value accessible and easy-to-use digital tools that meet everyday needs.
- Clear communication and guidance are key to building confidence and awareness.
- Participatory approach increases motivation and supports lasting digital inclusion.
- Learning through practice and peer support, the initiative strengthened social connections and participation.

Solution

Small Clicks for Big Confidence

On December 13, 2024, we ran the first pilot of the Digi-Inclusion project aimed to empower senior women to use the digital tools available. Participants developed essential skills such as creating secure passwords, identifying fake news and online threats, and using digital tools for everyday needs, fostering autonomy and confidence online. Special attention was given to inclusion, with elderly people engaging actively in a supportive setting.

The goal is to enhance participation, reduce social inequalities, and expand access to digital services, learning opportunities, and community engagement.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥΠΟΛΗΣ

DIGI-INCLUSION

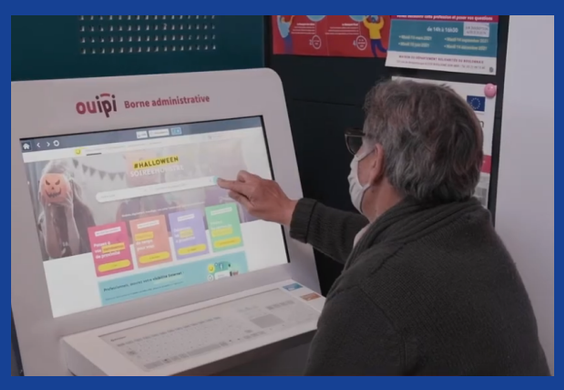
Boulogne-sur-Mer, Développement Côte d'Opale, France - 41 039 inhabitants

Challenge

Many people struggle with online administrative tasks, such as dealing with health services, income tax or car-sale declarations. There are many digital support centres that offer onsite support with their administrative procedures. Bellidée wanted to create a sustainable model where people would gain the skills to become more autonomous completing their digital procedures.

Local heroes

The action relied on the pool of Bellidée staff. Dedicated facilitators are in charge of helping citizens but also any staff at reception can help as well. Occasionally facilitators also delivered the service at home for disabled people for instance.



Solution

Digital kisoks and Digital facilitators

The objective of this action is to support, guide and help develop autonomy through everyday life most used websites.
Bellidée (St Martin community centre) has created a 'Borne OuiPi' (digital kiosk)– with a big screen and a user-friendly interface linking to commonly used websites. When people come in for help with an online task, the digital facilitator walks them through each step using the big screen, shows them how to complete the task on their own, and gives them a clearly printed leaflet which includes links to what they have seen on the OuiPi screen. When they get home they can go online, find the simple interface they used at Bellidée to reach relevant services, then follow the clear steps in the leaflet to complete tasks themselves.



Lessons learnt

- Lean service approach allows to tackle real every-day problems of the kisosks users.
- The digital facilitator must have a helping and pro-active attitude.
- Facilitating access to digital procedures helps seniors feel more competent.

URBACT CITY FESTIVAL
URBACT
Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg
BOULOGNE-SUR-MER Développement Côte d'Opale

DIGI-INCLUSION

Gdańsk, Poland
489 160 inhabitants

Challenge

In Gdańsk, seniors are the largest digitally excluded group. Limited skills, fear of mistakes and fraud, and digital tools that ignore their needs and abilities significantly restrict older people's use of technology and participation in the digital world.

Local heroes

The initiative was based on cooperation between the municipality, NGOs, IT companies, skilled volunteers from the business sector and senior citizens.

The interdisciplinary exchange of experiences and perspectivea more inclusive digital environment.s opens up new opportunities for building a more inclusive digital environment not only for seniors.

Lessons learnt

- Elderly citizens are an excellent group for testing digital services aimed at a wide range of users.
- Supporting their digital skills requires building trust, ensuring a sense of security, and offering practical classes showing everyday Internet use.
- Adapt learning methods and pace to seniors' capabilities and needs.

Solution

"Elderly digital experience - more than usability"

On the 26th of June 2025, 17 senior citizens and 7 IT volunteers, supported by NGOs and public administration, tested the Gdańsk Contact Centre application and website.
The meeting focused on intergenerational integration and seniors' sense of security.
Working in pairs with IT experts, seniors identified usability barriers and concerns.
The meeting provided an opportunity to explore how diverse groups can work together to bring out real improvements in the digital accessibility of municipal services.
As a result, a mini guide for NGOs planning digital initiatives with seniors was published.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL
URBACT
Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg
GDAŃSK
Gdańska Fundacja Przedsiębiorczości

DIGI-INCLUSION

Iasi, Romania
315 650 inhabitants

Challenge

In Romania, a significant number of young people have migrated abroad in search of economic opportunities. This migration has led to an increase in the number of elderly people living alone who often experience isolation and loneliness.

Local heroes

This action was deployed by the development association from Iasi Metropolitan area (ADI-ZMI) and coordinated by the Iasi Municipality and its Local Support Group. The participants come from St. Pantelimon Elderly Center.



Lessons learnt

- Digital skills reduces **social isolation** by facilitating communication.
- **On going** digital trainings with **trustworthy** mentors are key for a successful action.
- **Lack of motivation** is usually the main obstacle when enrolling digital trainings.

Solution

Digital communication trainings to tackle social isolation

Technology provides efficient solutions to reduce social isolation by facilitating communication. Elderly people face difficulties in using modern devices and platforms due to lack of technical knowledge and limited access to the internet.

Our first pilot provided digital trainings to use online communication tools and reached the following targets:

- 25 participants
- Digital tools introduced
- Commitment to continous training



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

PRIMĂRIA MUNICIPIULUI IAŞI

DIGI-INCLUSION

Jelgava Local Municipality, Latvia
34 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Jelgava Local Municipality faced a widening digital divide across its large rural territory (1,604 km²; density 21.24/km²). Many seniors, young people, and individuals with disabilities lacked the digital access and skills needed to navigate daily life, stay socially connected, and benefit from essential services - placing them at increasing risk of isolation & unequal opportunities.

Local heroes

The DigiClass success relies on dedicated trainers and facilitators who guided learners with patience, clarity, and encouragement. Ongoing coordination and future delivery are ensured by the Municipal Education Board, which leads long-term digital skills development. Equally essential is the strong cooperation between local institutions whose joint efforts provided welcoming space. The learners themselves, motivated to overcome digital barriers and improve everyday life, became active partners in the initiative's success.

Lessons learnt

- Training works best when delivered in familiar, accessible community spaces.
- Small, level-aligned groups and flexible teaching ensure individual progress.
- Hands-on practice builds confidence faster than demonstrations.
- Reliable internet access is essential for mobile classroom delivery.
- Repeated, shorter sessions help vulnerable learners retain knowledge.

Solution

"DigiClass: Mobile Digital Classroom"

The pilot and accompanying gap analysis revealed critical barriers in digital access and skills across rural communities. In response, Jelgava Local Municipality designed and implemented the Mobile Digital Classroom, bringing technology and tailored learning directly to residents through flexible, community-based delivery. Using portable equipment, accessible teaching methods, clear language, and hands-on practice, DigiClass provided structured training on essential digital competences, including e-services, e-signature, online safety, communication tools and everyday digital tasks. The pilot reached 62 participants across 3 distant locations, demonstrating strong demand, improved confidence, and high engagement. Building on the results JLM expands DigiClass to additional areas and target groups.







URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

JELGAVA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

DIGI-INCLUSION

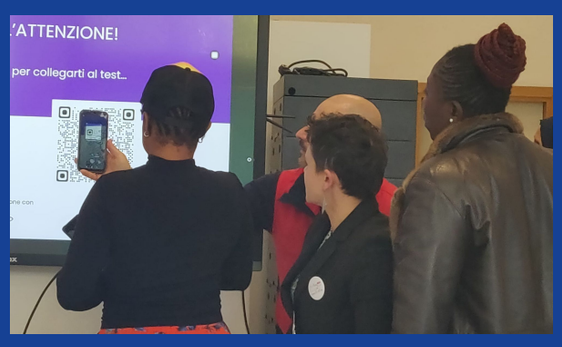
Lepida/Bologna Metropolitan Area, Italy
1.020.865 inhabitants

Challenge

Bologna metropolitan area faces multiple digital exclusion barriers: complexity of digital platforms, lack of digital literacy and accessible information, distrust of technologies, and social isolation fears. Vulnerable groups struggle accessing essential healthcare, education, and

Local heroes

Local heroes include: 38 students already trained as digital facilitators (with 40 more in training) supporting 45 elderly citizens; 16 migrant adult learners; 10 seniors peer facilitators creating territorial anti-misinformation networks; 28 students co-designing a model against misinformation.



Lessons learnt

- Cooperation agreements do not need to be highly formal or complex to be effective
- Rather than setting rigid goals, focus on creating trust, continuity and reciprocity
- Build on existing bilateral agreements to create wider collaboration
- Set broad goals and shared vision everyone can support.

Solution

"Building on existing fertile ground: collaboration is critical to tackle digital exclusion"

A digitally inclusive community where every citizen can access, understand, and benefit from digital services. To achieve a network of digital facilitators and tutors who guide citizens through the digital transition, not only by teaching, but by motivating and empowering, has been built. On November 26, 2025, at the Library of the Regional Legislative Assembly, this commitment became tangible when the Region, Metropolitan City, and Municipality formally signed the Manifesto for Digital Inclusion. Schools, NGOs, and volunteers adhered, creating an open ecosystem. Four strategic objectives translate into three themes and twelve actions (2026-2030).



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

lepida

DIGI-INCLUSION

Mollet del Vallès, Spain
52 759 inhabitants

Challenge

We realized that the lack of information is essential in order to address the digital divide effectively in our city. Quantitative and qualitative data allowed us to group personas in order to target appropriate policies.

Local heroes

The municipality set up a group of employees from social services and civic and elderly centres as well as officers from the electronic administration. All of them worked under the supervision of the Autonoma University of Barcelona.



Lessons learnt

- **Digital divide** also impacts **young people**, not only seniors or vulnerable citizens.
- Analysis of **local data** steers governance to reduce digital exclusion.
- Digital divide often arises connected to **other divides** such as low education and income, age and unemployment.

Solution

Local data to identify digital exclusion

In order to identify the profile of digital excluded citizens we took the following steps:

1. Analysis of in-house data:
    a. E-administration user vs. in-person user profiles
    b. Local census combined with e-administration
    c. Profile of seniors attending digital trainings
2. Local digital exclusion survey: 600 citizens.
3. Focus groups based on survey results:
    a. Elderly social isolation
    b. Migrants
    c. Users of active aging centres



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Ajuntament de Mollet del Vallès

DIGI-INCLUSION

Digi-inclusion The Playbook

Challenge

The Digi-inclusion network developed a lot of new insights and understanding about digital exclusion at local level. The challenge was to capture this and in a practical form so others can benefit from it.

Local heroes

The Playbook was created by URBACT Lead Expert Ian Graham and ad-hoc expert Ed Thorpe, with support and collaboration from the project partners:

- Municipality of Mollet del Vallès
- Municipality of Torres Vedras
- Jelgava Local Municipality
- Iași Municipality
- Gdańsk Entrepreneurship Foundation
- Lepida scpa. in Bolonia metropolitan area
- Côte d'Opale Agence in Boulogne-Sur-Mer
- Department of development and international projects of Zenica-Doboj Canton

Lessons learnt

- Digital exclusion is complex, nuanced, relative and evolving. It can be hard to measure well.
- Tomorrow's digital exclusions will be different from today's - digital tools and skills aren't static.
- Exclusions come from two types of cause: individuals lacking digital capital; and a digital world that excludes people by its design.
- An integrated, partnership approach to digital inclusion increases chances of local success.

Solution

The Digi-Inclusion Playbook: A practical guide for fighting digital exclusion

he Digi-inclusion Playbook is a highly practical and easy to use tool for cities and urban practitioners. A key output of the URBACT 'Digi-inclusion' network, its purpose is to help cities tackle digital exclusion at local level, helping residents take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital world.

The Playbook includes the innovative Digi-inclusion Framework, aligned with 17 practical 'Plays' - actions that cities can take and combine - along with 16 real case examples that illustrate the Plays.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Digi-inclusion The Playbook

DIGI-INCLUSION

Torres Vedras, Portugal
83 072 inhabitants

Challenge

In Torres Vedras we selected people with visual impairment as one of our target group. They face multiple digital inclusion barriers: reduced awareness of digital inclusion, lack of digital skills and accessible websites.

Local heroes

This pilot action was actively participated, based on cooperation between the municipality (Social Development and Communication offices) and 18 members of the Visual Impairment Support Office whose ages range from 25 to 88.



Lessons learnt

- Digital inclusion must start with actively listening to users, identifying real obstacles.
- Working with people ensures trust and more accessible, effective services aligned with social inclusion.
- Promoting training at a digital level is essential for vulnerable learners to improve their skills, using internet equipment in everyday life.

Solution

"Listening to visually impaired people - Digital Empowerment"

To improve digital accessibility, the Municipality adopted a participatory approach with a focus group of 18 people with visual impairment, from the municipal Visual Impairment Support Office, testing computer and mobile phone use, local websites access, and needs for digital support and training. Next, several individual interviews were conducted, resulting in practical recommendations gathered directly from users:

- Ensure all essential information appears as text rather than images alone;
- Remove pop-ups;
- Simplify navigation, reducing steps to reach common useful pages;
- Use clear headings and labels.

These recommendations are being integrated into the development of the new municipal website, ensuring more inclusive digital services.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

câmara municipal TORRES VEDRAS

DIGI-INCLUSION

Zenica-Doboj Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 355.000 inhabitants

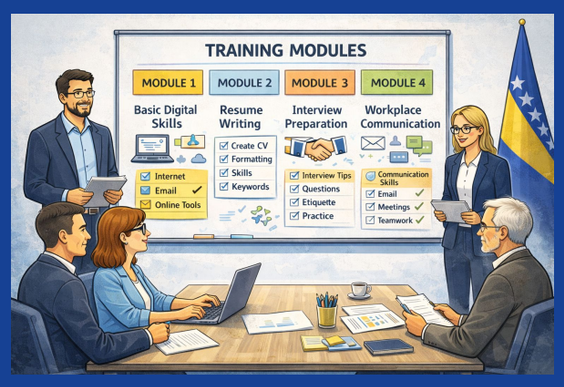
Challenge

Based on the study on Digital Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2024):

- 24.32% did not use the internet in three months prior to the study
- 2.74% of unemployed show skills above the basic level
- 18.75% of students show advanced digital skills.
- Unemployment rate was 38.1% in 2022.

Local heroes

The action will be coordinated by the Employment Service of Zenica-Doboj Canton with support of local administration services. Technical aspect will be secured by key experts: curriculum designers – adult education experts, regional labour market consultants and career counsellors.



Lessons learnt

- Assess the availability and accessibility of digital literacy programs.
- Provide new **tailored digital trainings** to diverse groups.
- **Raise awareness** about education and training programsfocused on digital skills.
- **Guarantee** even **access** to digital education regardless of age, social status or location.

Solution

Digital Job Readiness Training Programs

Pilot action implemented within the URBACT network helped us to identify areas requiring digital education which led to plan new digital training programs. Therefore, these new programs will focus on building digital and employment related skills through 4 modular courses:

- Core digital skills
- CV writing
- Interview preparations
- Workplace communication

Expectations:

- 5 agreements with local business to provide internships and job opportunities.
- 100 users involved in the programs.



URBACT CITY FESTIVAL

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg