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CYBER-Change

Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change is a 24-month Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Youth project implemented by a consortium of experienced youth organisations from Programme and Partner Countries. The project is coordinated by **ASOCIATIA COPIII IN SANUL FAMILIEI - FoRC (Romania)**, in partnership with: **Centre for Youth and Social Development - CYSO (Serbia); MIOS (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Forum MNE (Montenegro); *IDCSI (Kosovo**)**

Overall objective of this project is to introduce and enhance an innovative model of learning based on peer education, exchanges between Program (RO and SRB) and Partner Countries (B&H, ME and KOS), learning mobility and cooperation between youth/pro-youth CSOs, formal and non-formal education providers in order to increase their capacities to work on these issues with young people, especially girls.

The project is based on the recognition that, although young people are increasingly exposed to digital environments and demonstrate interest in entrepreneurship and community engagement, significant gaps remain in their ability to apply these competences in practical contexts. At the same time, youth and pro-youth organisations often face limitations in terms of resources, tools and approaches needed to effectively support young people in developing and implementing their ideas.

In this context, a needs assessment was conducted as part of the initial phase of the project, with the aim of ensuring that all further project activities are grounded in the real needs, capacities and challenges of the target groups. The findings of this assessment are intended to inform the development of training programmes, learning materials and capacity-building interventions, ensuring that they are relevant, practical and responsive to the identified needs across the region.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Research

The overall purpose of the needs assessment was to generate evidence that would inform the design and implementation of project activities within the *CYBER Change* project.

More specifically, the research aimed to:

- assess the level of digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people
- identify key gaps and barriers that limit their active participation and engagement
- explore challenges related to the transition from ideas to practical implementation
- examine the capacities and needs of youth and pro-youth organisations in delivering relevant and inclusive learning opportunities

Research Approach and Methodological Framework

The research was based on a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis.

- A harmonised research framework was applied across all partner countries, ensuring consistency and comparability of findings.
- The approach relied on triangulation of data, combining multiple sources and perspectives to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results.
- Quantitative data provided an overview of trends and patterns, while qualitative methods enabled deeper insight into experiences, perceptions and challenges.
- The research design ensured inclusiveness, with particular attention given to young people with fewer opportunities and diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Data Collection Methods

➢ **Quantitative Questionnaires**

- Online questionnaires were developed and distributed for both main target groups: young people and youth/pro-youth organisations.
- Separate questionnaires were designed to capture the specific perspectives of each group.
- The online format enabled wider geographic reach and ensured consistency of data collection across countries.
- The questionnaires covered key themes such as digital skills, entrepreneurial competences, participation, access to opportunities, and perceived barriers.
- **A total of 120 young people participated in the online questionnaire (83 female, 34 male and 3 who preferred not to answer), along with 38 youth and pro-youth organisations.**

➢ **Focus Group Discussions**

- Focus groups were conducted in each participating country with both young people and representatives of organisations.
- Discussions followed a semi-structured format, allowing both guided discussion and open exchange.

- Topics included learning needs, barriers, experiences with digital tools, and entrepreneurial engagement.
- Attention was given to diversity, including gender balance and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.
- **In total, 55 young people (34 female and 21 male) and 22 organisations participated in focus groups.**

➢ **Individual Interviews**

- Individual interviews were conducted to gain deeper insight into specific experiences and perspectives.
- Interviews followed a semi-structured approach, allowing flexibility and depth.
- They were particularly useful for understanding individual challenges and contexts.
- **A total of 10 young people participated (5 female and 5 male).**

Participant Selection

The selection of participants was designed to ensure diversity, inclusiveness and relevance across both target groups.

- A combination of open and targeted distribution methods was used for the online questionnaires, allowing broad participation.
- Focus group and interview participants were selected using a purposive approach, ensuring representation of different backgrounds and experiences.
- Particular attention was given to including young people with fewer opportunities, such as those from rural areas, economically disadvantaged backgrounds and socially excluded groups.
- Youth and pro-youth organisations were selected based on their experience in working with young people and their relevance to the research themes.

Ethical Considerations

All research activities were conducted in line with basic ethical principles and standards.

- Participation in the research was voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study.
- Data was collected and used in a way that ensured confidentiality and anonymity of participants.
- A safe and respectful environment was maintained during focus groups and interviews.
- All findings are presented in aggregated form, without disclosure of personal data.

NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The following section presents the national needs assessment reports from each partner country, reflecting the specific contexts, identified needs and key findings at country level. The reports are presented in alphabetical order to ensure clarity and consistency. Each national report follows a consistent structure, enabling comparability across countries. The final section of the report brings together the main cross-country conclusions and joint recommendations.

NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The national needs assessment report for Bosnia and Herzegovina highlights the main needs, gaps and barriers faced by young people, with a particular focus on those with fewer opportunities, as well as the challenges experienced by organisations in supporting them.

Brief Summary of the Used Methodology

The needs assessment conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina was implemented within the framework of the *CYBER Change – Competent Youth Builders* project, using a structured and harmonised research methodology applied across participating countries. The assessment aimed to identify key needs, gaps, and opportunities related to digital skills, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship among young people and youth/pro-youth organisations.

A **mixed-methods research design** was applied, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive and reliable understanding of the context. This approach enabled the triangulation of data, allowing findings to be validated across different sources and perspectives. The research focused on two main target groups: young people aged 15–29, including those with fewer opportunities, and youth/pro-youth organisations working directly with young people.
Research instruments were developed through a collaborative process, drawing on both desk research at national and EU levels and the practical experience of project partners. Separate tools were designed for each target group, including online questionnaires and focus group discussion guidelines. These instruments addressed key thematic areas such as digital literacy, use of digital tools including artificial intelligence, entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship competences, barriers to participation, access to opportunities, and organisational capacities.

Data collection was carried out using three complementary methods. First, **online questionnaires** were administered to both young people and youth organisations to gather quantitative data on skills, experiences, and perceived challenges. Second, **focus group discussions** were conducted to provide deeper insights into participants' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations, while also exploring barriers to engagement and learning. Third, **in-person structured interviews** were conducted with young people with fewer opportunities to ensure inclusiveness and capture the perspectives of underrepresented groups. These interviews allowed for more detailed exploration of individual experiences and challenges.
A targeted and inclusive sampling strategy was applied to ensure diversity among participants. Particular attention was given to gender balance, representation of both urban and rural areas, socio-economic background, and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Efforts were made to reach marginalized groups through collaboration with local partners and organisations.

The collected data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Survey results were used to identify trends and patterns, while qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were

analysed thematically to capture deeper insights and contextual factors. The findings were then synthesised into a national report, highlighting key skill gaps, barriers, and priority needs, as well as opportunities for improving training approaches and support mechanisms.

The research process followed strict ethical standards, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Data protection principles were fully respected, and special attention was given to safeguarding participants, particularly young people and vulnerable groups.

Brief Summary of Key Findings from Online survey – Youth

The online questionnaire gathered responses from 25 young people across Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing insight into their skills, needs, and perspectives on digitalization, entrepreneurship, and community engagement. The respondent group is primarily composed of young individuals aged 19 to 24, representing a stage of transition between education and employment. A significant majority of respondents are female, and most are either students or at the beginning of their professional careers.
Access to digital tools and infrastructure is widespread among respondents. Nearly all participants report having regular access to the internet, along with personal or independent use of digital devices such as smartphones and computers. This indicates that digital connectivity is not a major barrier for this group. However, while access is high, the findings suggest that the ability to effectively use digital tools varies significantly depending on the complexity of the task.

Digital Skills and Technology Use

Respondents demonstrate relatively strong confidence in basic digital competencies. These include searching for information online, using standard productivity tools such as word processors and spreadsheets, and participating in online learning environments. These foundational skills appear to be well established among the majority of participants.
At the same time, confidence declines noticeably when more advanced digital skills are considered. Many respondents report limited knowledge or experience in areas such as coding, data analysis, automation, and digital project management. Similarly, awareness of online safety practices and responsible digital behaviour is not consistently strong across the sample.
Young people are highly engaged in digital environments, with frequent use of smartphones, social media platforms, and communication tools such as video conferencing and messaging applications. Artificial intelligence tools are also widely used, primarily to support learning, assist with writing tasks, generate ideas, and solve problems. The use of AI reflects a growing openness to new technologies and suggests that young people are already integrating such tools into their daily routines.

Identified Gaps in Digital Skills for Employment

The responses reveal a diverse range of perceptions regarding which digital skills are necessary for employment. Some respondents emphasize the importance of basic digital literacy, including general computer use and familiarity with common software such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. These responses suggest that for a portion of youth, even foundational competencies remain a priority.
Other respondents identify more advanced or specialized skills, including website development, statistical software such as SPSS or Jamovi, the use of online employment platforms, and familiarity with tools like

ChatGPT. This indicates that there is emerging awareness of more complex and market-relevant digital competencies.

At the same time, several responses reflect uncertainty or limited awareness, with participants stating that they do not know which skills are needed or that the requirements depend on the job. Some even report not using digital skills at all. This variation highlights a fragmented level of digital readiness, where young people are positioned at very different starting points, ranging from basic literacy to initial exposure to advanced tools.

Entrepreneurial Skills and Barriers

In terms of entrepreneurship, respondents show moderate confidence in general soft skills such as communication and teamwork. However, their confidence decreases significantly when it comes to more technical and practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

Areas where confidence is particularly low include financial planning, business development, understanding administrative procedures, and accessing support systems such as mentorship or funding opportunities. Knowledge related to starting a business—especially legal registration, taxation, and funding mechanisms—is limited among respondents.

When asked about barriers to starting a project or business, several key challenges are consistently identified. The most prominent barrier is the lack of financial resources, which is seen as a fundamental obstacle. In addition, respondents highlight fear of failure, lack of mentorship or guidance, complex administrative procedures, and insufficient specific skills. These responses suggest that young people face a combination of structural barriers, such as limited access to funding and complex systems, and personal barriers, including uncertainty and lack of confidence.

Motivation, Participation and Learning Preferences

Despite the challenges identified, respondents express a general interest in engaging in community initiatives. Many indicate a willingness to participate in or support activities that contribute to their communities. However, this interest does not consistently translate into concrete plans or actions, as the likelihood of starting a project in the near future remains relatively low.

Young people report low confidence in several key areas related to initiative development. These include transforming ideas into actionable plans, identifying and securing financial support, understanding budgeting and costs, and maintaining long-term motivation.

In terms of learning preferences, respondents clearly favor practical and experiential approaches. They express a strong preference for hands-on learning, real-life examples, and step-by-step guidance. Learning through trial and error is also valued, suggesting that experiential learning environments are particularly effective for this group.

Face-to-face training formats are the most preferred, followed by blended learning approaches that combine in-person and online elements. Fully online, self-directed learning formats are the least preferred, indicating a need for interaction, support, and structure in the learning process.

Digital Solutions and Community Needs

When invited to propose digital solutions for their communities, respondents demonstrate awareness of various social and practical challenges. Suggested ideas include online counselling and support services, particularly those that allow for anonymity in sensitive situations. Other proposals focus on improving communication and inclusion, such as platforms that facilitate interaction and reduce discrimination.

Employment-related solutions are also highlighted, including online work opportunities for students and unemployed individuals. Respondents also suggest tools to improve access to services and information, such as online transport schedules, digital libraries, and websites providing useful resources. Some responses emphasize the need to support specific groups, including elderly individuals, by improving accessibility.

At the same time, a number of respondents express uncertainty or difficulty in proposing solutions, indicating that while awareness of problems exists, the ability to develop structured ideas is not fully developed.

When asked about priority challenges in their communities, respondents identify a broad range of issues. Economic concerns such as poverty, unemployment, and income insecurity are frequently mentioned. Social inclusion, particularly regarding people with disabilities, is also highlighted. Environmental issues, including pollution and access to clean water, are recognized as important challenges.

Additional concerns include communication gaps between citizens and public institutions, youth passivity, and the need for better mental health support, especially for children. These responses demonstrate that young people are aware of complex and interconnected societal challenges affecting their communities.

Brief Summary of Key Findings from Online survey - Youth and pro-youth organizations

The online questionnaire conducted among youth organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides insight into the operational realities, challenges, and priorities of organizations working directly with young people. A total of 6 organizations participated, offering qualitative perspectives on organizational capacities, youth needs, and gaps in current programming. Although the number of respondents is limited, the data reflects consistent patterns across organizations, particularly in relation to resource constraints, capacity gaps, and the increasing demand for more relevant and practical youth-oriented programs. The findings illustrate the broader ecosystem in which youth organizations operate and highlight areas where additional support is needed.

Organizational Capacities and Resource Limitations

Most participating organizations can be characterized as small to medium-sized entities, operating with limited human and financial resources. Their teams typically consist of a combination of employed staff and volunteers, with volunteers playing a critical role in the implementation of activities and the overall functioning of the organizations. Financial sustainability emerges as the most significant challenge. Organizations report that limited and unstable funding directly affects their ability to design and deliver programs, retain staff, expand services, and invest in innovation. The lack of long-term financial security restricts strategic planning and often forces organizations to operate on a short-term, project-based basis.

In addition to financial constraints, organizations face several operational challenges. These include limited access to relevant training opportunities for staff, insufficient technical infrastructure, and a lack of time and human resources to explore new approaches or develop innovative solutions. Together, these factors limit the capacity of organizations to respond effectively to the changing needs of young people.

Perceived Needs of Young People

Youth organizations identify several key areas where young people require additional support, reflecting both current gaps in competencies and emerging societal demands.

Digital Skills

A strong and consistent theme across responses is the need for more advanced digital skills. While basic digital literacy is assumed to be present among most young people, organizations emphasize that this is no longer sufficient. There is a growing need for competencies that are directly applicable to education and the labor market. Key areas of demand include digital content creation, the use of digital tools in professional and educational contexts, and the development of critical thinking skills in digital environments. Additionally, safe and responsible use of technology is highlighted as an important area, particularly given the increasing presence of young people in online spaces. Organizations perceive that strengthening these competencies is essential for improving employability and enabling young people to actively participate in digital society.

Entrepreneurship and Employability

Entrepreneurship emerges as another priority area. Organizations report that young people show interest and motivation but lack the structured knowledge and support needed to develop and implement their ideas. Key gaps are identified in business planning, financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, and innovation processes. Young people often lack the skills required to move from initial ideas to sustainable initiatives, particularly in understanding financial management and navigating administrative procedures. This indicates a need for more comprehensive entrepreneurship education that combines theoretical understanding with practical application and mentorship.

Soft Skills and Personal Development

In addition to technical skills, organizations emphasize the importance of soft skills. Competencies such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-confidence are seen as essential for both employment and active citizenship. These skills are often underdeveloped and require intentional support through structured programs. Organizations recognize that strengthening these competencies can significantly enhance young people's ability to engage in both professional and community contexts.

Gaps in Existing Programs and Materials

A significant finding relates to the mismatch between existing educational resources and the actual needs of youth organizations and young people.
Organizations report that many available materials are overly theoretical and not sufficiently adapted to local contexts. They are often difficult to apply in practice, particularly for organizations with limited resources. Additionally, existing materials may lack engagement and fail to capture the interest of young participants. There is a clear demand for practical, ready-to-use tools that can be easily integrated into programs. Organizations express the need for structured curricula, step-by-step guidance, and materials that can be adapted to different target groups and contexts. Furthermore, there is a strong preference for interactive and experiential learning approaches. Traditional lecture-based formats are perceived as less effective, while methods that involve active participation, real-life application, and learning through experience are considered more impactful.

Inclusion and Accessibility

Inclusion is identified as a cross-cutting priority across all areas of work. Organizations stress the importance of ensuring that programs are accessible to a diverse range of young people, particularly those who face barriers to participation. Target groups highlighted include young people from rural areas, youth

with fewer opportunities, and marginalized or vulnerable populations. Organizations recognize the importance of reaching these groups but face several challenges in doing so.

Key barriers include the lack of tailored materials designed for diverse needs, limited outreach capacity, and insufficient funding to support inclusive programming. These challenges make it difficult to ensure equal access and participation for all young people. As a result, there is a need for methodologies and resources that explicitly address inclusion and support organizations in engaging diverse groups more effectively.

Preferred Types of Support and Capacity Building

Youth organizations express a strong need for additional support to strengthen their capacities and improve the quality of their work. This support is desired in several forms, including training opportunities for staff and volunteers, access to modern educational tools and methodologies, and opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange. Mentorship and practical guidance are also highly valued, particularly in areas such as program development, innovation, and organizational growth. Organizations indicate that they benefit most from support that is directly applicable to their daily work. In terms of format, there is a clear preference for approaches that are hands-on, flexible, and adaptable to specific contexts. Support should be aligned with real needs in the field and designed in a way that allows organizations to immediately apply new knowledge and skills. This reflects a broader shift away from purely theoretical learning towards more practice-oriented and context-sensitive capacity-building approaches.

Brief Summary of Key Findings from Focus Groups – Youth

Two focus group discussions conducted with young people in Tuzla provide detailed insights into their experiences, behaviours, and needs related to digital tools, learning processes, and entrepreneurship. The findings highlight consistent patterns across participants, particularly in relation to intensive use of digital technologies, clear preferences for interactive learning, and the presence of multiple barriers that limit entrepreneurial engagement.

Use of Digital Tools and Learning Practices

Participants report frequent and everyday use of digital tools, with platforms such as Google, YouTube, and artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT playing a central role in their daily routines. These tools are primarily used to support formal education tasks, including preparing presentations, understanding complex topics, and completing assignments. A key benefit of digital tools identified by participants is the speed and accessibility of information. They emphasize that such tools enable them to quickly access simplified explanations and better understand complex concepts. Artificial intelligence tools, in particular, are valued for providing concise answers, clarifying difficult terminology, and supporting academic work. At the same time, participants demonstrate a high level of reliance on these tools. Many report using AI for direct answers, writing assistance, and even everyday decision-making. While this reliance is seen as practical due to time constraints and academic demands, some participants acknowledge potential drawbacks, including reduced independent thinking and over-dependence on technology. Social media platforms are used mainly for communication and entertainment rather than learning. Some participants

express scepticism about their educational value, indicating that they are not widely perceived as effective tools for skill development.

Preferences for Learning Formats

Participants consistently express a strong preference for interactive, engaging, and practical learning methods. Traditional lecture-based approaches are perceived as ineffective and demotivating, while participatory formats are seen as more stimulating and meaningful.
Young people report that they learn most effectively when activities involve group work, collaboration, and open discussion. Visual and digital content, such as presentations and videos, is also considered highly beneficial, as it helps maintain attention and improves understanding.
Practical application of knowledge is a key factor in effective learning. Participants value opportunities to solve real-life problems, work on projects, and apply theoretical concepts in concrete situations. Creative and alternative methods, including storytelling, music, and informal techniques, are also appreciated, particularly when they increase engagement and motivation.
An ideal learning format, according to participants, would include short to medium-length sessions, typically between 60 and 90 minutes, organised as workshops. These sessions should combine individual and group work, incorporate hands-on activities, and allow for interaction between participants and facilitators. Blended learning approaches are considered useful, although there is a clear preference for face-to-face interaction due to better communication and engagement.

Understanding of Entrepreneurship

Participants demonstrate a basic understanding of entrepreneurship, generally describing it as the process of turning ideas into action, creating a business, or developing independent initiatives. Entrepreneurship is also associated with creativity, innovation, independence, and willingness to take risks. Most participants perceive entrepreneurship as a realistic and achievable option for young people. They express confidence in the ability of youth to generate ideas, follow trends, and develop initiatives that respond to current needs. Some participants also highlight the broader value of entrepreneurship, viewing it as a means of personal development, self-expression, and contribution to the community, rather than solely as a source of income.

Barriers to Entrepreneurial Engagement

Despite positive attitudes, participants identify multiple barriers that limit their ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Financial constraints are consistently highlighted as the primary obstacle, with many participants believing that initial capital is necessary to start any project or business.
Fear of failure is another significant barrier, often linked to financial risks and uncertainty about outcomes. Participants also report a lack of support from family, institutions, and society, which reduces their motivation and willingness to take initiative. Low self-confidence and fear of judgment further limit participation. Participants express concerns about how their ideas will be perceived by others, which discourages them from pursuing entrepreneurial activities. In addition, limited knowledge of available opportunities and support mechanisms contributes to inaction. Many participants are unsure where to seek funding, mentorship, or institutional support. Administrative complexity is also perceived as a barrier, with processes related to starting a business or applying for support described as unclear and difficult to navigate. Even when support structures exist, they are often seen as inaccessible or insufficient.

Support Needs and Expectations

Participants emphasize the importance of comprehensive support systems that combine multiple forms of assistance. Financial support is identified as particularly important in the initial stages of developing a project or business. Mentorship is also highly valued, especially guidance from individuals with practical experience who can provide advice, encouragement, and direction. Participants highlight the need for step-by-step guidance, particularly in understanding administrative procedures, business development, and project implementation. Access to tools, resources, and opportunities is another important factor. Participants express a need for accessible and affordable digital tools, as well as clear information about available programmes and support mechanisms. Trust plays a key role in support systems. Young people tend to rely on family members and close social networks, but they also show interest in learning from successful entrepreneurs and role models who can inspire and guide them.

Motivation and Areas of Interest

Participants express optimism about their ability to engage in future initiatives, particularly if appropriate support is provided. They show interest in developing ideas related to social support, community services, and small businesses, indicating a growing awareness of social entrepreneurship. There is also a perception that structured initiatives, such as those planned within the CYBER Change project, could increase confidence, improve access to learning opportunities, and reduce barriers to participation. Participants highlight the importance of creating conditions that enable young people to actively contribute to their communities and develop their own initiatives.
Overall, the findings illustrate a group of young people who are highly engaged with digital tools and open to entrepreneurship, but who require structured support, practical learning opportunities, and accessible systems to translate their ideas into action.

Brief Summary of Key Findings from Focus Groups – Youth and Pro-Youth Organisations

The focus group discussion with representatives of youth and pro-youth organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides in-depth qualitative insights into the realities of youth work, particularly in relation to developing digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people. The discussion highlights both existing good practices and a range of structural, behavioural, and social challenges that influence youth participation and engagement.
Participants draw from their direct experience working with diverse groups of young people, including those with fewer opportunities. Their perspectives reflect the complexity of the environment in which youth organisations operate, as well as the multiple factors that shape young people's motivation, skills development, and participation in community life.

Use of Digital Tools and Existing Practices

Youth organisations report regular use of digital tools in their work, although these tools are primarily used as supportive instruments rather than central elements of learning. Commonly used tools include basic office software, online communication platforms, and social media.
Digital tools are most frequently applied for organisational and logistical purposes, such as coordinating activities, communicating with participants, managing project budgets, and promoting initiatives. Social

media platforms are particularly important for outreach and visibility, helping organisations connect with young people and share information about opportunities.

Participants emphasize that while digital tools are useful, their effectiveness depends on how they are integrated into meaningful activities. Successful practices are those that combine digital tools with practical, real-life applications. These include activities such as project development, community actions, and inclusive initiatives that engage young people in hands-on learning experiences.

Peer-based approaches and interactive formats are also identified as effective, especially when they allow young people to learn from each other and actively participate in shaping activities. Overall, the findings suggest that digital tools alone are not sufficient to drive engagement, and that relevance and practical value are key factors in successful youth work.

Challenges in Reaching and Engaging Young People

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the discussion is the difficulty in reaching and sustaining engagement among certain groups of young people. Participants identify several categories of youth who are particularly challenging to engage.

Young people aged 16 to 18 are often described as difficult to involve due to changing interests, developmental factors, and limited long-term commitment. Youth from rural areas face additional barriers, including limited access to resources and lower levels of digital skills. Similarly, young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds encounter structural obstacles that restrict their participation. Participants also note that some young people have limited prior exposure to digital tools or educational opportunities, which further affects their engagement. In certain cases, young men are perceived as less interested in digital learning activities compared to young women, although this varies depending on context. A broader challenge relates to declining interest in traditional forms of youth work. Many young people perceive existing programmes as repetitive or insufficiently engaging. This requires organisations to continuously adapt their approaches and develop innovative formats that align with the interests and realities of young people. An additional barrier is the presence of socially sensitive or “taboo” topics, such as poverty, social exclusion, or lack of education. These issues are rarely openly discussed, which limits the ability of organisations to reach and support young people affected by them. Fear of judgment and social stigma further discourage participation, particularly among youth with fewer opportunities.

Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills Gaps

The focus group highlights significant gaps in both digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people.

Digital Skills

Despite frequent use of smartphones and social media, many young people lack essential digital skills needed for education and employment. Participants point to gaps in basic digital literacy, including the use of common office tools such as Word and Excel. In addition, young people often lack practical ICT skills and do not fully understand how to use digital tools in a productive or professional manner. This creates a situation where young people may appear digitally active, but are not adequately prepared for the demands of the labour market. Participants describe this as a form of functional digital illiteracy, where usage does not translate into competence.

Entrepreneurial Skills

In the area of entrepreneurship, participants identify multiple areas where young people lack knowledge and experience. These include limited ability to identify community needs, insufficient understanding of how to develop and write project proposals, and weak awareness of institutional structures and available support mechanisms. Financial literacy is also identified as a key gap, alongside limited experience in planning and implementing projects. These challenges are often more pronounced among young people with fewer opportunities, who may also experience lower levels of self-confidence and a stronger sense of exclusion.
Overall, the findings indicate that young people require structured support to develop both the technical and conceptual aspects of entrepreneurship.

Barriers to Youth Initiative and Participation

Participants emphasize that barriers to youth engagement are not only structural but also behavioural and cultural. A recurring theme is the perceived passivity among young people, described as a tendency to wait for opportunities rather than actively seeking them. Fear of stepping outside of comfort zones is identified as another significant barrier, limiting experimentation and initiative. This is often accompanied by low motivation and difficulty maintaining long-term commitment to activities or projects. Participants also highlight a lack of awareness of available opportunities. Despite the existence of various programmes and support mechanisms, many young people are not informed about them or do not know how to access them. Administrative complexity is another deterrent. Procedures related to funding applications or project implementation are often perceived as too complicated, discouraging young people from engaging in entrepreneurial activities. In addition, negative social influences play a role. Some young people receive discouraging messages from their families or communities, which reduces their willingness to take initiative or pursue new opportunities.

Organisational Challenges in Supporting Youth

Youth organisations themselves face multiple challenges in their efforts to support young people. One of the main difficulties is mobilising participation, even when opportunities are available. Participants report low attendance and inconsistent engagement in activities, despite initial expressions of interest.
Limited resources further constrain their ability to provide continuous support, particularly in terms of mentorship and follow-up. Organisations often lack the capacity to maintain long-term engagement with participants or to offer individualized guidance. Addressing sensitive or taboo issues within communities also presents a challenge, as organisations must navigate social norms and resistance. Additionally, the broader social environment is not always supportive of youth activism, and in some cases may actively discourage it. These factors create a complex operating environment in which organisations must balance limited resources with high expectations and diverse needs.

Support Needs and Approaches to Youth Development

Participants highlight the importance of comprehensive and continuous support systems for young people. Mentorship is identified as the most critical form of support, providing guidance, encouragement, and continuity throughout the process of developing and implementing ideas. Practical, hands-on training is also emphasized, particularly in areas such as project writing, budgeting, and communication. Participants stress the need for learning approaches that are directly linked to real-life applications and that allow young people to actively practice new skills. Access to clear and accessible information about opportunities, funding, and support mechanisms is another key need. Early engagement is also considered important, with participants suggesting that skills and proactivity should be developed from a young age,

starting in primary education. Creating safe and inclusive spaces is essential, especially for young people with fewer opportunities. Such environments enable participation without fear of judgment and support the development of confidence and social inclusion.

Perceptions of Youth Participation and Future Development

Participants express concern about the overall level of youth passivity, which they describe as a broader social trend. Many young people remain within limited social and geographical contexts, with restricted exposure to opportunities beyond their immediate surroundings. At the same time, there is recognition that targeted and well-designed interventions have the potential to address these challenges. Participants believe that appropriate support can increase awareness, strengthen skills, and encourage more active participation among young people. There is also an expectation that such interventions can contribute to greater inclusion of marginalized groups and foster stronger engagement in community development. However, participants emphasize that achieving sustainable impact requires not only skill development but also changes in social attitudes, cultural norms, and support systems that influence youth behaviour.

Brief Summary of Conclusions from Interviews with Specific Target Groups

The interviews conducted with young people with fewer opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina provide insight into their everyday realities, challenges, and aspirations related to digital skills, entrepreneurship, and participation. The participants represent individuals facing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities, including living in rural areas, financial hardship, health-related challenges, and barriers in education. These conditions significantly influence their access to opportunities and their ability to engage in personal and professional development.

Although participants report regular access to the internet and digital devices, their experiences reveal a gap between access and meaningful use. They demonstrate moderate confidence in basic digital skills, such as searching for information, using common tools like Word and Excel, and participating in online learning. However, their confidence decreases when it comes to more advanced or functional digital competences. Key gaps include limited ability to perform complex digital tasks, use digital tools for collaboration or project management, and understand online safety. Additionally, participants feel unprepared to transfer their knowledge to others, indicating limited depth of understanding.

Artificial intelligence tools are actively used by participants, mainly to support learning, generate ideas, and assist with writing and problem-solving. These tools are perceived as highly useful, particularly for simplifying complex information and supporting individuals with fewer opportunities. However, participants lack awareness of how to strategically use digital tools for long-term personal or professional development, including creating digital solutions or engaging in community-based digital initiatives.

Entrepreneurial competences among participants are generally low to moderate. They report difficulties in identifying community problems, developing project ideas, and understanding how to start or manage a business. Knowledge of formal processes, such as legal registration, taxation, and access to funding, is particularly limited. Awareness of social entrepreneurship is also very low, with participants either unfamiliar with the concept or lacking a clear understanding of its meaning and potential.

A range of barriers affects participants' ability to initiate projects or engage in entrepreneurial activities. Financial constraints are perceived as a primary obstacle, with participants believing that initial capital is necessary before taking action. The lack of mentorship and guidance further limits their ability to move forward, as they do not have access to support systems that could help them navigate processes and build confidence. Skills gaps in areas such as business planning, financial literacy, and digital marketing contribute to uncertainty and hesitation.

Administrative complexity is another important barrier, with procedures perceived as difficult to understand and manage. This is compounded by low confidence and motivation, as participants express doubts about their own abilities and a low likelihood of starting initiatives even when opportunities are available. Limited exposure to information about programmes, funding, and support mechanisms reinforces this passivity and reduces engagement.

In terms of learning, participants clearly prefer structured and practical approaches. They value step-by-step guidance, real-life examples, mentorship, and opportunities for hands-on practice. Learning through trial and error is also seen as beneficial. Blended learning formats, combining online and in-person elements, are preferred, particularly for more complex topics. Notably, participants report no prior participation in training programmes related to digital or entrepreneurial skills, indicating limited access to capacity-building opportunities.

Despite these challenges, participants express interest in areas such as content creation, online safety, project management, and improving digital skills for employment. They also demonstrate awareness of community needs, identifying issues such as improving internet access for students and supporting persons with disabilities. However, their ability to translate this awareness into concrete actions remains limited due to the barriers they face.

Overall, the findings illustrate a situation in which young people with fewer opportunities are digitally connected and interested in learning, but lack the skills, confidence, and support systems needed to fully participate in educational, entrepreneurial, and community activities.

Conclusions and recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Survey – Youth

Conclusions

The findings indicate that young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are highly connected and regularly use digital tools in their daily lives, particularly for communication, learning, and accessing information. Basic digital competencies are relatively well developed, especially in areas such as information search, use of standard software, and participation in online learning. However, significant gaps remain in advanced and job-relevant digital skills, including data analysis, digital project management, and online safety.

The widespread use of artificial intelligence tools reflects openness to innovation, yet also reveals limited understanding of how to strategically apply these tools for long-term educational or professional development. Digital readiness among youth is uneven, with individuals positioned at different levels of competence.

Entrepreneurial skills are generally underdeveloped, particularly in practical areas such as financial planning, business development, and understanding administrative procedures. While young people

demonstrate interest in entrepreneurship and community engagement, this rarely translates into concrete action. Structural and psychological barriers—including lack of financial resources, fear of failure, limited mentorship, and low confidence—significantly affect their readiness to initiate projects.

At the same time, young people demonstrate awareness of community challenges and show clear preferences for practical, interactive, and experiential learning approaches.

Recommendations

- Develop structured training programmes that combine **basic and advanced digital skills**, with a focus on employability and practical application.
- Integrate **entrepreneurship education with hands-on learning**, including project development, financial literacy, and exposure to real administrative processes.
- Establish **mentorship and coaching mechanisms** to support young people in transforming ideas into concrete initiatives.
- Design learning programmes that are **interactive, experiential, and youth-centred**, prioritising face-to-face and blended formats.
- Improve access to **information on opportunities, funding, and support mechanisms** through targeted outreach and communication.
- Incorporate **confidence-building and motivation-focused components**, addressing fear of failure and low self-efficacy.

Survey – Youth and Pro-Youth Organisations

Conclusions

Youth organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina operate within a context of limited financial and human resources, which constrains their ability to plan strategically, innovate, and expand their services. Financial instability is identified as the most significant barrier, directly affecting programme development, staff retention, and long-term sustainability.

Organisations demonstrate strong awareness of the evolving needs of young people, particularly in relation to digital skills, entrepreneurship, and soft skills development. However, there is a clear mismatch between available educational resources and practical needs. Existing materials are often too theoretical, insufficiently adapted to local contexts, and difficult to implement.

Inclusion is recognised as a priority, but organisations face challenges in reaching marginalized groups due to limited outreach capacity, lack of tailored tools, and insufficient funding. At the same time, youth workers require additional support to strengthen their own capacities and improve programme quality.

Recommendations

- Provide **sustainable financial and institutional support** to enable long-term organisational development and planning.
- Develop and disseminate **practical, ready-to-use educational tools and curricula**, adaptable to different contexts and target groups.
- Strengthen **capacity-building programmes for youth workers**, focusing on digital tools, innovative methodologies, and programme design.
- Promote **interactive and experiential learning approaches**, replacing predominantly theoretical formats.
- Support organisations in developing **inclusive programming**, with tailored approaches for youth with fewer opportunities.
- Facilitate **networking and knowledge-sharing platforms** among organisations to exchange good practices and resources.

Focus Groups – Youth

Conclusions

Focus group findings confirm that young people are highly engaged with digital tools, particularly for educational purposes. They benefit from the accessibility and speed of digital information, especially through the use of artificial intelligence tools. However, this reliance also raises concerns regarding over-dependence and reduced critical thinking.

Participants express a strong preference for interactive, participatory, and practical learning methods. Traditional lecture-based approaches are perceived as ineffective, while experiential learning, collaboration, and real-life application significantly increase engagement and motivation.

Although entrepreneurship is generally perceived as achievable and attractive, multiple barriers limit young people's ability to act. Financial constraints, fear of failure, lack of support, and limited awareness of available opportunities are among the most significant obstacles. Additionally, low self-confidence and fear of judgment further discourage initiative.

Young people express a clear need for structured support systems, including mentorship, practical training, and access to resources.

Recommendations

- Design programmes that prioritise **hands-on, project-based learning** and real-life application of knowledge.
- Integrate **practical entrepreneurship training**, including simulations, project development, and problem-solving activities.
- Establish **mentorship schemes** connecting youth with experienced professionals and role models.
- Introduce **financial support mechanisms**, such as small grants or seed funding, to encourage initiative.
- Address **psychological barriers** through activities that build confidence, resilience, and motivation.
- Promote **critical and balanced use of digital tools**, including awareness of the limitations of AI.

Focus Groups – Youth and Pro-Youth Organisations

Conclusions

Youth organisations report significant challenges in engaging young people, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. Barriers to participation are both structural and behavioural, including limited access to resources, low motivation, and a tendency toward passivity.

There is a clear gap between young people's frequent use of digital technologies and their actual competencies, particularly in relation to employability and entrepreneurship. Organisations also face difficulties in maintaining long-term engagement, providing continuous mentorship, and addressing sensitive social issues.

At the same time, organisations recognise the importance of practical, inclusive, and mentorship-based approaches. They highlight the need for early engagement and long-term support systems to foster proactivity and participation among young people.

Recommendations

- Develop **holistic support systems** that combine training, mentorship, and long-term follow-up.

- Strengthen **outreach strategies** to engage hard-to-reach groups, including rural youth and youth with fewer opportunities.

- Introduce **early interventions** within formal and non-formal education to build skills and proactivity from a young age.
- Simplify and improve access to **information, funding, and administrative procedures**.
- Support organisations in creating **safe and inclusive spaces** for youth participation and dialogue.
- Invest in **long-term mentorship and coaching models**, ensuring sustained engagement beyond short-term project cycles.

*NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT – KOSOVO**

The national needs assessment report for Kosovo presents the key findings related to the development of digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people, as well as the specific contextual challenges influencing their participation and engagement.*

Brief summary of the used methodology

The needs assessment activity and research protocol is designed under the project and the template is distributed to **the CYBER Change Consortium** for the execution. The template covered all aspects of the methodology including the questionnaire, target group composition, timeline and expected deliverables output volume.

The methodology of the analysis it was carried out in several phases:

(1) Online survey separated formats for two target groups (youth and CSO's);
(2) In person questioning with the structured interview
(3) Conducting the focus groups of two target groups (youth and CSO's);
(4) Data and focus group information processing - Draft needs assessment Report;

Methodology including type and research volume was conducted through February to April 2026.

The project identified 2 key target groups for the information acquisitions through internet survey and in the focus group format. The target groups in research activities were:

1. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
2. Young People (Adolescents and Youth)

The data acquisition process commenced with the Internet survey followed by the focus groups and with the complementary desk research and data mining activity from the external sources to eliminate biases and outliers thus to produce credible conclusions.

The needs assessment was conducted by using provided research protocol methodology supported by both qualitative and quantitative data collected through online questionnaires. The research incorporated several scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, statistical analysis, historical review, and deduction. Quantitative responses were analyzed using basic statistical methods, while qualitative responses were reviewed to identify thematic trends and insights. All those have been tested through focus groups sessions.

The tools used included structured questionnaires tailored for each target group. The findings have been synthesized into location-specific insights to guide advocacy planning and capacity development.

Focus groups sessions were used as designed under the activity guidelines and more. The online survey provided some insight information that deserved some *"stress testing"*. Focus groups and personal interviews produced critical deliverables were in the final determination of conclusions of this report.

Indicators and requirements in age or gender representation turnout both in the online survey and the focus groups were met in full as expected. More to it, the participants were open and reciprocated kindly and openly in addressing the issues, bottlenecks and other limitations and produced productive debate in focus groups sessions.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire for both target groups separately

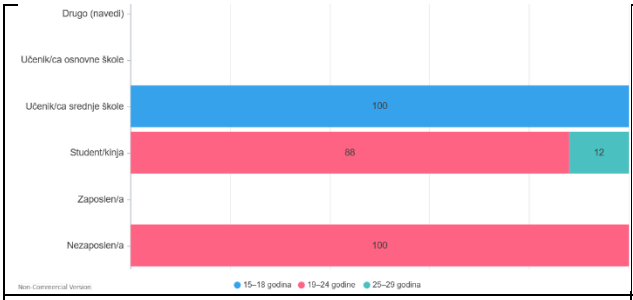
Online survey was developed under the predefined protocol for the needs assessment analysis purpose. Two independent surveys were performed, one for youth needs and one was focused on the CSO's overview of the youth needs. Here are some survey records:

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire for youth

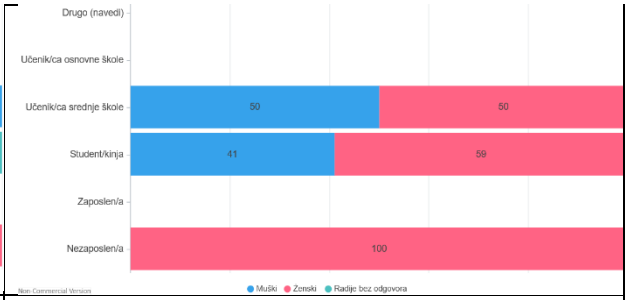
Participants profile

The total survey count is 30 participants. This is their composition: High school age 28%, faculty students 63%, Unemployed young 10%. The age composition is 15-18yr old 29%, 19-24yr old 61% and 25-29 yr old 11%. Gander rate is 62% vs 38% in favor of women.

The questionnaire provides critical aspects of the individual needs and drivers and gives a solid overview of the generational dilemmas about the future prospects. The questionnaire limitations are however the location specific issues including political and security turmoil's that this specific target group is facing on a day-to-day basis. More on this would be exposed in the focus groups sessions.



Q2 vs Q3. Age and status

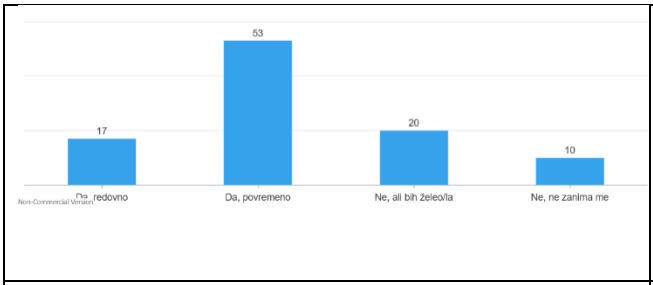


Q1 vs Q3. Gender and status

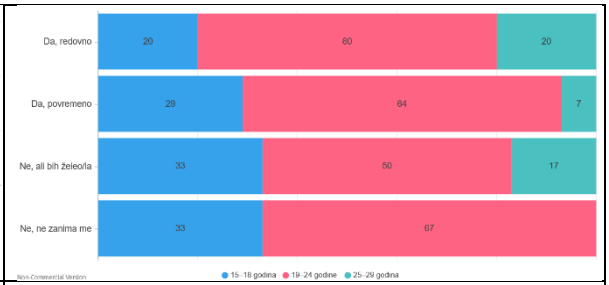
Youth have shown similar tendencies like their peers in the region in using the new technologies and utilization of the connectivity and reach that the internet community provides.

Participants engagement

Participant engagement is a critical locational aspect. Kosovo* is in the constant political and security turmoil and really a market place of ideas and the indifference on engaging is cross-generational. The following chart provides the evidence that ideals and activism are to the significant level hidden in the noise produced by the abundance of internet contents. Activism and community participation for the greater good is equally distributed among the group age from 15-18 and 19-24yr olds. However, the oldest group is still in the upper segment willing to participate and away from indifference presented by the younger generation.

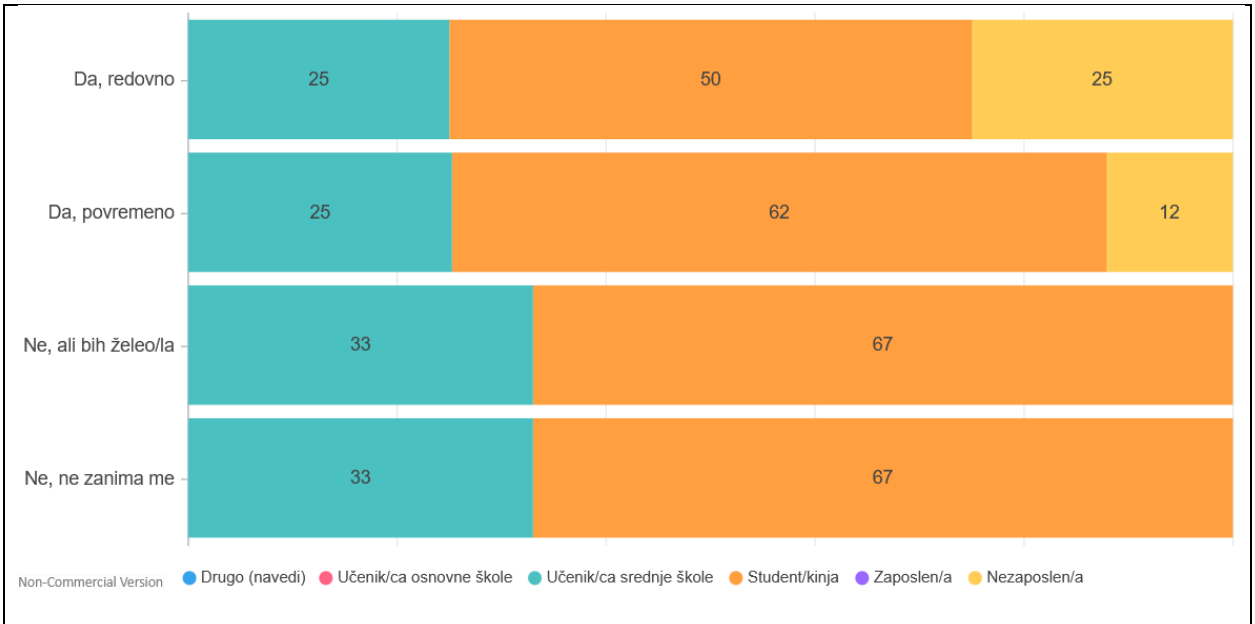


Q11. Use of digital platforms in activism



Q2 vs Q11. Age vs activism

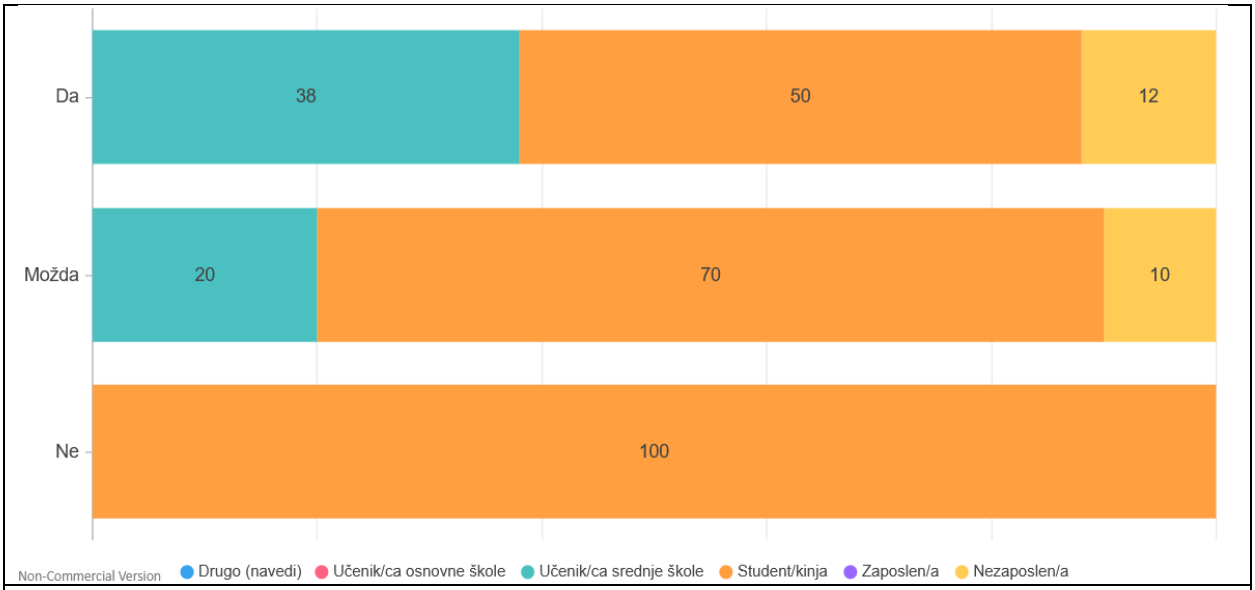
Cross-referencing data from q2 (age) and q11(use of digital platforms in the purpose of supporting public good) shows the global evidence of growing cynicism and indifference in the younger population and one might argue that this is a natural consequence of addiction to the internet entertainment industry. Even unemployment (cross-referenced survey data) shows the evidence to support this statement as it can been seen on the following chart:



Q3 vs Q11. Status vs activism

This exposes some evidence that academics are exploring in the field of human science, that technological adolescence has a different impact on generations that are not even too far apart by age. This could be an impairment in development of the programs but if used appropriately, this element can be used as the advantage in building a resilient system that can create efficiency. Here it is one case point: - The following

chart shows the evidence of the polarity and priority of the age and status groups exposing personal indifference in activism and joint participation in the presence of life hardship:



Q3 vc Q16. Status vs willingness to participate in joint/community entrepreneurship programs

Participants digital skills

Online survey samples are the youth from marginal areas (rural population of small settlements). Regardless of the limitation that the systems on large order provide with the convenience in digital infrastructure, the sample size provided strong urge and interest in using advanced tools in all activities. In spite of the locational limitation on availability of best available digital infrastructure, participants present optimal capacity in using the digital services on computer and on smartphone (100%). Self-evaluation of the participants' skills and the individual capacities to perform tuition on digital skills to their peers shows the average score of 3.5 but the most interesting aspect of this scale is that females are much more confident than men (female 3.9 vs male 3.0 average). Confirmation bias might have some effect on this data, but the evidence stands that digital culture is widely spread and it is part of the social norms in youth activities.

The safety aspect in use of the digital tools and services shows high levels on each aspect but what is again more interesting is that on average females have a higher feeling of safety than males. Case point: -safety in credible data and source total sample average 3.7. On the same issue male average is 3.45 and the female average is 3.84.

It is evident that the younger population is deeply involved in the digital space and it is a critical part of the younger population culture. The level of responsible internet use engagement and screentime evaluation shows the average score 3.2. If this aspect would be evaluated independently and if the screentime is effectively doomscrolling instead of the communication and interaction with the digital tools and potential skill learning or business endeavors opportunities combined with the business ambience limitation in the survey location (Kosovo), that could be a worrying scenario.

Digital space provides open-source platforms and geographical locations in future jobs would have a small or insignificant aspect relative to the individual talents thus there is a space for improvement and personal or generational development as improving the state of readiness to enter the digital era labor force.

Participants use and perception of AI skills

Sample size provided only two negative responses in using the AI tools. Considering that the survey sample individuals are not urban population, this is strong evidence AI reach capacities and high perception and possible expectations from this technology by youth. The same two individuals responded to a negative view of AI application in everyday life.

Survey records show the highest popularity of the use of AI tools in the educational process in writing school reports but also in research activities and problem solving. This is a conventional approach and use of the AI technology that is growing with this generation of survey participants. The survey method had limitations to scrutinize this segment in detail but the focus groups added more meat around those bones.

Entrepreneurship skills

As mentioned before, the level of engagement is low due to the locational circumstances. The biggest fear for entrepreneurship or startup initiative is a fear of failure. In total 12 out of 29 participants marked this aspect of limitation. It is imperative to look into this figure from a locational perspective, where the capital cost of doing business and eventually cost of failure have unreasonably high cost. The evidence from the field supports this statement and focus groups have confirmed this.

The survey data provide evidence of higher self-esteem, fast learning capacity (average score 3.5), high confidence in communication capacities (average score 3.8) and also high level in designating small business ideas (average score 3.06) including the testing and capacities to develop business ideas learning curves (3.48 average score).

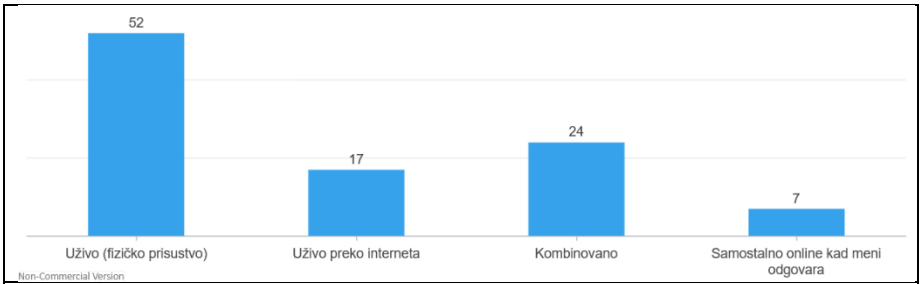
Self-reported limitations are not in the digital space but in the real world. The participants have shown low capacity in understanding the business management process. Corporate rule of law, fiscal and financial aspects of business management including the development of business plans questions are rated in near proximity to the average score around 2. Only score averaging above the 2.5 is individual capacity in promoting business ideas (scored 2.89). Survey data and the local economy do not support this score. Total 10 participants stated that lack of marketing skills in the digital space is a major impairment for the startups.

Survey records are full of evidence of poor investment ambiances and poor business infrastructure. In total 22 out of 29 participants stated that lack of capital investments is posing the biggest limitation to start the business. Business management and complicated procedures are the impediment for the startups for more than half of participants and lack of mentorship and proper guidance to the business management maze is an impairment for the 9 participants.

Unemployed interviewees show more skepticism and younger show willingness to engage and allocate time hoping to get some advancements. This is both the evidence of growing cynicism of the aged group and one might argue unrealistic expectations and idealism of the younger group.

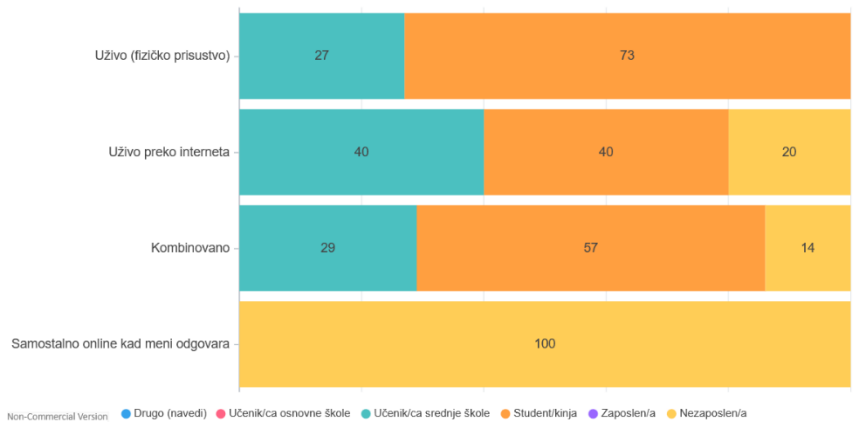
How to reconcile these two and how to produce “better tomorrow” by using the real and Cyber space was a main topic the focus group debated.

Participants in the survey have shown a great deal of interest in skills and other types of training and more than 52% agreed that the training in person would be the preferred method of training. Nearly 25% would prefer blended and 25% online courses.



Q25. Preferred type of training

Focus groups have tested some of these findings and exposed other elements that the unison questionnaire was unable to expose.



Q3 vs Q25 Status vs Preferred type of training

Individual Interviews

To stress test the survey data two individual interviews were conducted using the same survey structure. These interviews proved trends and limitations that survey records provided in almost every aspect and top some degree in the extreme level of hardship from the locational average.

Interviewee 1 was in the age group from 19-24 and a member of a minority group. She is unemployed but eager to commence her own endeavor. She has limited internet access and mostly uses the digital services on her phone.

Interviewee 2 was under 18 from a rural area and member of a minority group. He is facing marginalization from multiple angles and faces the limited internet access but has advanced skills in using the smartphone.

The interviews have shown some extreme level of barriers to entry in the business space due to the lack of the business and investment ambiances. However, in spite of the limitations and poor access to modern technology, both participants expressed the positive attitude toward AI and digital literacy in general.

The interview process revealed the well-known environmental circumstances that impairs entrepreneurship development in Kosovo especially in the fear of failure and lack of financial products (capital investment to start the business). Additionally, both interviewees expressed that the pore digital infrastructure that is producing the isolation from the market place of ideas, lack of skills and complicated business administration process are the critical barriers for the local entrepreneurship. One element can be easily eliminated from this finding and that is availability to the reliable and fast internet since the Star LINK service is available at the affordable scale for Kosovo citizens.

Willingness to participate and engage is high in both cases and the urge to succeed is driven by the potential cost of failure. However, the probability in both cases of commencing initiative without the support or guidance is rated 2 out of 5. This supported the evidence gained from the survey process that guidance and support is necessary

The interview process presented the high level of ambition and confidence in developing personal business ideas in similar and to a degree higher rate than what the survey records presented. In both cases the motivation and ambition were driven to solve the unemployment situation. This is one other factor that is local where CyberCHANGE can find fertile ground to test the proof of concept. Kosovo north labor market is limited and the hypothesis that this generation of young people would be able to get a job in the public sector is narrow. The alternatives are either to leave and look for opportunities elsewhere or use the local resources, develop skills and develop your own business endeavor.

Conclusions

The survey records evidence and personal interviews show high level and frequency of digital platform use. In practice the use of the platforms is for the entertainment, convenience and time saving purpose and other use and really for the business endeavor development purpose. The young population shows the high confidence and low fear in using new technology eager to use and develop advanced digital skills.

There are some limitations in participatory process on community level and engaging in the interest on the public good topics. Those elements are the location specific and the derivative of the Kosovo unstable social, political and even security environment. Regardless of this limitation, it is imperative to stay on the course and ahead of the curve in developing skills and competitive advantage of the local young population to be a global actor.

Digital skills in spite of the limitations that are posed by the pore infrastructure is admirable but it is basically used to solve contemporary problems and save time in the education process. Digital platforms are not only entertainment tools and it can be much more than this, and the survey data shows the evidence of willingness to engage in the training process.

The main barriers are fear of failure, and lack of capital investment but also lack of business management and administration processes. Administrative and additional strict scrutiny processes in the survey location demand creative mentorship process and to a degree some safety net to dismantle the fear of risk taking. In this aspect, the most evident barriers to entry to the only available labor force (public sector)

is an opportunity to develop the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the young population through this project platform.

At the same time, there is clear interest in social entrepreneurship and community engagement, but this is not matched by sufficient planning, implementation, and resource-access skills. A key finding is the gap between motivation and the ability to act on it.

Interviews confirm the willingness to engage in the self interest aspect whether it be in pursuing the talent development or to cater livelihood or other existential needs.

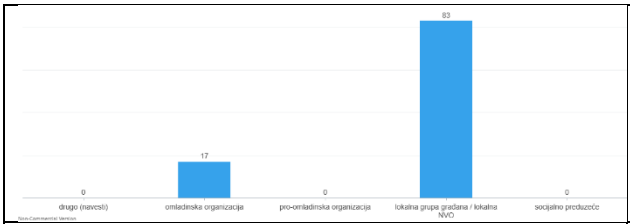
Recommendations for thematic area development

- **Digital skills basics introduction to programming**
  - programing logic
  - simple projects development (practical learning)
- **Strengthening digital security and literacy**
  - working online in a safe way
  - digital hygiene
- **Entrepreneurial bases**
  - about how to develop the idea into a plan
  - basis of budgeting and finance
- **Practical and interactive training**
  - real examples
  - work through tasks
- **Mentoring support and inclusive approach**
  - issues of marginalization
- **Focus on offline or live training**
  - limited internet access

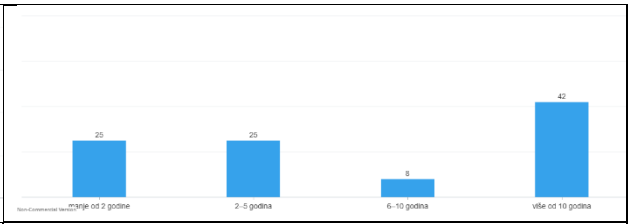
Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire for both target groups separately

Participants profile

The total survey count is 12 organizations and/or informal groups. Here are some of the facts about the survey pool:



Q2. Type of Organizations

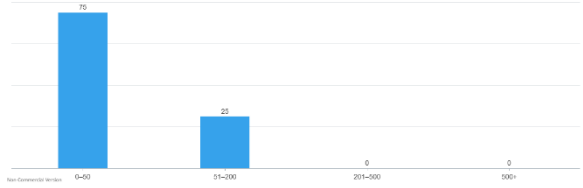


Q3. Yr of experience

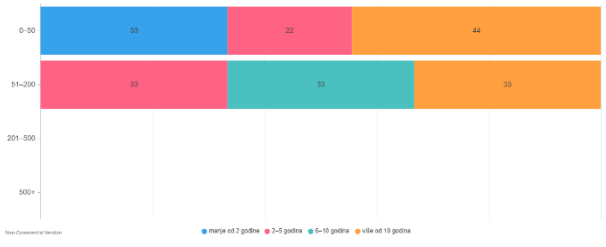
Nearly half of the organizations have a decade of experience. This is a critical aspect that proves the credible sample source. The organization's growth and sustainability depend on technological literacy and ability to adapt into the new political, economic and above all technological working ecosystem.

Current Capacities/Activities

Survey shows some more interesting evidence of the CSO's robust capacities and reach out capital especially among the youth

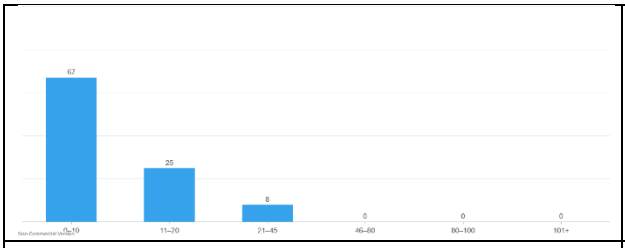


Q5. # of youth active in last 12 months

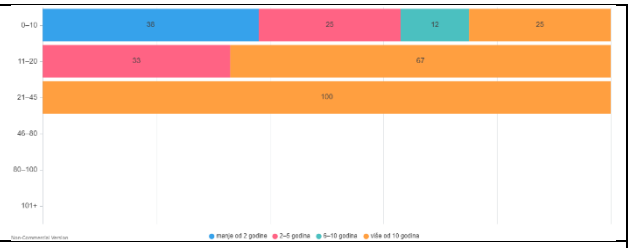


Q3 vs Q5. Yr of experience vs # of youth active

Q5 threshold is 0-50 covers more than 75% of survey participants. However 25% reported that they were servicing more than 51-200 individuals. If we would average this sum, survey participants have serviced and engaged more than 500 people in the last 12 months and that is an admirable and respectable sum.



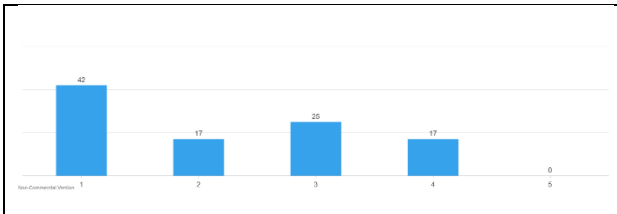
Q6. # of volunteers in last 12 months



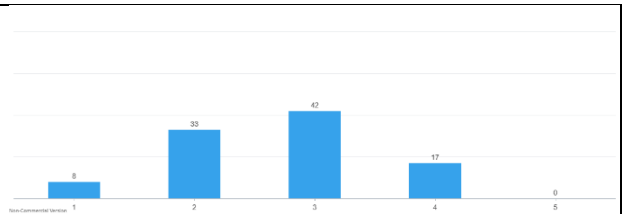
Q3 vs Q6. Yr of experience vs # of volunteers

The number of volunteers also fluctuates but also indicates that the cumulative number is nearly 100 volunteers in the last 12 months.

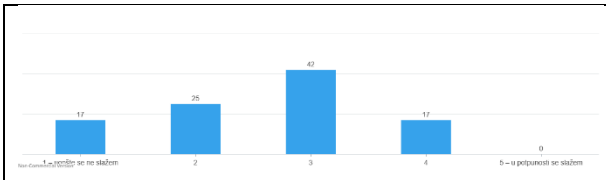
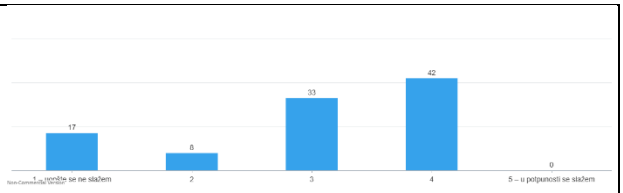
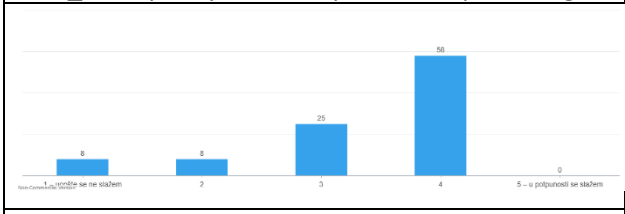
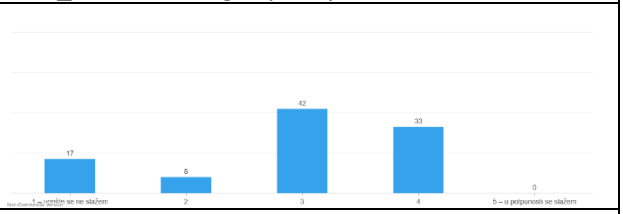
Survey data shows admirable levels of human resource capacities to perform and produce advanced types of skills and technological transfers training. Nevertheless, they also presented a great deal of interest in receiving the training and boosting their capacities to make their operation resilient and vibrant in this digital age.



Q11_04 Experience in digital skills trainings



Q11_06 capacity for the hybrid model / partnership

	
Q12_01 Capacity for entrepreneurship trainings	Q12_04 Mentoring capacity
	
Q12_08 Capacity to adapt trainings	Q12_09 Adaptive training tools and methods

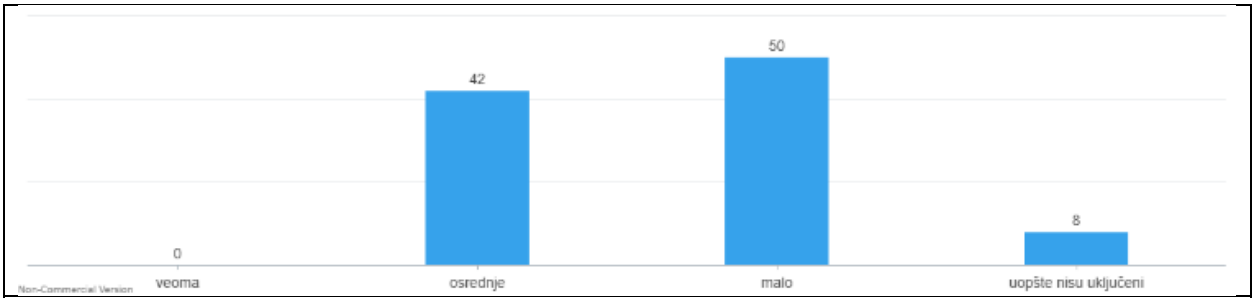
Survey samples show strong capacity and knowhow in performing the training and adapting to the creative process, methods and even experimental. This is not a coincidence considering that the survey sample is from Kosovo and more specifically from Kosovo north where the donor's community was historically strong in the last 20 years. The learning curve developed in this area shows the advanced level in performance and reporting quality. The drive force for these opportunities is sadly political and security turmoil that impairs the true outputs of the good work and attained results of the organizations.

Organizations due to this heritage are equipped with the technical skills and assets on producing training but they lack in skills and experienced training on digital skills and literacy topics. On those topics, survey samples have presented scores near 2 on each of related questions.

Entrepreneurship and business literacy training capacity shows some better results but this segment without the digitalization knowhow has no weight thus the model of training they are capable of produces demands some serious overhauling.

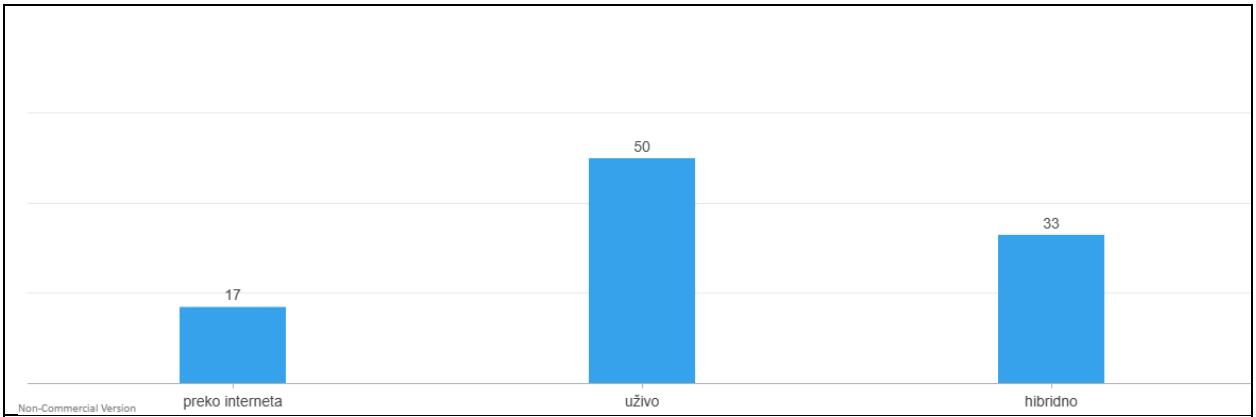
Survey methodology requested the participants to provide insight on the issues and their view of the inefficiencies and gaps in the value chain. Youth indolence is being the most prevalent and threatening for their future livelihood. The following chart shows similar results as from Q11 in the youth survey group. The level of activism and participation is worrying considering that alternatives are not available and that community sustainability is at the highest historical risk due to the political and security turmoil.

Following chart represents opinion of the sample size of the willingness of youth engagement (Q16)



Q16. Level of youth engagement

Same like in the youth survey group, this survey record shows that training in person in real time is the preferable method for the 50% of the survey sample. Hybrid method is preferred by the 25% of the survey sample (unlike 25% in the youth group).



Q25 preferred training model

If the partnership would be established, CSO's presented diverse interests and diverse methods in performance and methodology (workshops, mentoring, training material and deliverables, tools and indicators etc).

Overall, the survey data is presenting some constraints and opportunities in development of the system that could make a shift toward desirable destinations.

Digitalization holds the promise for more economic freedom and it can be a tool to eliminate barriers. Focus groups have exposed more than a few aspects where the true progress and successes could be yielded not in regional but on the global scale.

NGO perspective barriers for youth

All but one survey participant identified that location setting (target group from non-urban area) is producing the most significant isolation effect and 5 mentioned that ethnicity is also a relevant factor for the isolation.

Physical disability and or/heath conditions are according to the 2\3 of NGO survey participants a major barrier to entry in entrepreneurship endeavors. Finally, 5 organizations have reported that the youth with the limited access to the internet service pose a barrier for exercising the entrepreneurship opportunities. This last one is another evidence of the pore and disproportional viability of the critical infrastructure that impairs social mobility and affects the marginal population. One might state that this is a poverty drive element.

NGO perspective for youth needs

NGO organisations reported that their efficiency in providing sufficient training for the youth are caused by lack of funds (11 answers) , lack of adequate trainers (4 answers), low motivation and turnout of participants (9 answers). Organizations reports also pore capacity in technical and material assets to conduct appropriate training courses. This is baseline evidence of NGO inability to change the operational capacity. Organizational behavior still follows the norms from a recent past when it was effective and when the donor climate was more favorable. It is obvious that local organizations have to work more on resilience.

In spite of the compromising findings, organizations set some critical recommendations in respect to the needs assessment. The young population have to be more educated in cyber security, digital safety/hygiene. Above all, the young population have to be educated in the development of critical thinking and identifying misinformation (7 out of 12 organizations).

Digital literacy is another aspect that organisations find critical in productivity development (5 answers) automatization (3 answers), editing images and video material (3 answers), activism through digital platforms (5 answers), ethical use of AI tools (2 answers).

Young population needs have to be addressed through the guidance program not only in development of skillsets and business administration knowhow but more in development of the motivation for successes and boost ambitions.

Recommendations for NGO's capacity development

- **NGOs resilience to change**
  - NGO's have to reinvent or develop its role
  - NGO's have to adapt programs and skills
- **Material assets development**
  - overhaul NGO's capacity on digitalization topic
  - reinvest in material assets and digital techniques operation management
- **Entrepreneurial development (local regional global)**
  - budgeting, finance, fiscal, rule of law
  - promotion of local brands
  - leadership programs
  - collaboration on policy development work
- **Innovative training methodology**
  - networking with the training providers
  - transfer knowledge

  - online webinars
  - work through tasks
- **Mentoring support and inclusive approach**
  - issues of marginalization (women, marginal communities, minorities, etc)
- **Business infrastructure**
  - bottom up collaboration on development suitable business ecosystem

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups for both target group

Two focus groups were organized as per defined protocol.

The first focus group was organized in person in the IDCSI office space. The sample size was admirable and more than representational. There were students and young educators including scientists. A focus group was organized on March 20th 2026.

The second focus group was reserved for the CSOs and there were some logistical issues to organize and ensure successful turnout that caused some delays. Finally, we conducted an online session on April 14th 2026. Turnout was outstanding and contributions made by the participants provided the critical elements in testing some hypotheses.

Opening sessions and remarks were made by IDCSI project manager Marko Marjanovic and the moderation was done by the assignment researcher and author of this report Ljubisa Mijacic.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups - Youth

The focus group was asked questions upon the protocol to investigate areas and willingness to engage. On both aspects the positive feedback was well received and the message from the generational point of view is that today's younger generations eagerly awaits the opportunities to explore its potential, however the business and investment ambience climate is working against the growth.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the focus group presented a credible sample of the youth that overall have outstanding levels of digital literacy. This literacy could be potential if used well for personal and professional growth. But if it would be left unguided, noise and general purpresture could produce obsessive unproductive engagement in futile activities that would be a significant threat to the individual livelihood in the foreseeable future. Unreasonably high screen time would inevitably produce the unskilled and uncooperative individuals in the future labor market.

The focus group proved one known common wisdom and that this generation of youth was born and raised with the digital technological development that exceeds the capacities and knowledge of an average educator and education institutions in general. Case point is presented at the focus group table where the participants openly discussed that they are using ChatGPT and other AI platforms to complete the homework assignment while educators at the table admitted that they do not have capacity and instruments to defeat this **"cheat code"**. Young and future professionals are aware of the dependence level that the digital age and AI are placing on individuals, however, they have no other alternative that provides greater efficiency and performance that promise the best results in the short run.

On the general note, it was a consensus opinion that internet platforms serve more as an entertainment instrument than to any other. If it is not a simple entertaining use purpose, then the remaining part of the digital platform use is for education in the leisure activities (hobbies, gardening, cooking, repair work etc).

Provoked discussion in connecting the digital skills and business models developed in the region known to the focus group shifted discussion into the desired discussion in evaluating cyber space capacity into the local business model development. Case points of development of small art and craft shops and services and brands developed out of a tin air in the recent past (Leposavic vine industry) presented to the youth evidence of potential successes.

Young, future professionals have presented the ambition and interest in most creative and conventional industries including science. In unison voice, they all presented fear of what the AI models would do with these ambitions.

It was a general opinion of the focus group that in the research area (focus group participants are mostly from Kosovo North) have outstanding qualities and capacities for development that were never exploited well and fair throughout its history. This opinion was supported with the evidence from the COVID19 era, where the community sustainability and social cohesion was critical capital that helped mitigating unforeseen hardships (social, economic and even mental health). Digitalization helped connect the market players directly and transactions were completed in full by following the rules of isolation. Small scale economies presented a high level of resilience and quality product producers developed some entrepreneurship programs that were never possible before.

Unpondered opinion of the focus group is that allocation of the quality raw materials and environmental goods and services critical for the local economic development in research LOCATION AREA. This is especially true for the rural and marginal area. Additionally, skillset to process this material in a traditional way is critical even in the Cyber future.

What is a critical missing link is misalignment of the market players. Demand size does not know what this area can provide and the supply side (research location area) does not know what the market wants and what is a market value of this product.

In focus group a case point used to exploit this market behavior was a local handcraft blacksmith workshop that reached an admirable level of self-sufficiency exporting its crafts in nearly all Balkan countries. Product quality was recognized and self-promoted in social media and the marketing trend perpetually drives the market value of his products. This exercise presented the evidence of the focus group that marketing and adequate promotion of the known quality product could be a critical way forward in local economic growth and empowerment of the young individuals. Similar findings were exposed in the CSOs focus group.

Another exercise explored in this and other focus groups is underexploited aspects of branding the local products in Serbia (Products from Kosovo have a strong sentimental value in the market of Serbia). There are multiple examples

General conclusion of youth focus group is that remote areas and small settlements do have:

- Strong resource base and raw material availability for comitative quality production.

- High social cohesion and level of communitarianism and the support system for entrepreneurship.
- Strong traditional technical skills (arts and crafts) that are in demand.
- Vibrant young population that has optimal level of digital literacy.
- Solid good digital connectivity and alternatives (including Starlink availability in Kosovo)

Obstacles and limiting factors according to the focus groups are:

- Compromised investment ambiance due to the political and security instability
- Pore local business infrastructure capacities including the business support systems.
- Bad or absent currier, post and delivery services.
- Absence of investment products (loans, credits etc)
- Impaired market connectivity.
- No marketing skills limit the product reaching high value marketplaces.

The focus group expressed the interest in any type of formal training in developing entrepreneurship and business skills. However, their interest is not limited to developing skills only to make a final product but more into the business model development that could expand the product reach in regional and global realms. To attain these objectives, it is imperative to develop internet communication skills and marketing skills.

Focus groups debated individual platforms and end methods and all agreed that INSTAGRAM could produce the biggest **"bang for a buck"**. This platform could be a test vessel for the local economy and it could boost the local capacities among the young professionals in photography, communication, assist or develop products distribution methods. The training in this aspect could be a probe and proof of concept for some other branching activities in local business development.

This focus group also expressed the opinion that the young have no support from the local and central institutions and that the situation like that is unattainable. Some level of communication and coordination activities to create a business infrastructure ecosystem is necessary.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups - Youth and pro-youth organisations

Second focus group moderation was developed under the protocol but more than half of the time was allocated to test concepts and findings from the questionnaire and the first focus group.

Participants presented a significant level of experience and to some degree a frustration with the poor economic ecosystem environment especially in Kosovo north. However, they expressed a high level of optimism that is grounded on the real data and the evidence of research area competitive advantages that are unexploded.

Same like in the first focus group, the evidence of the strong material and human resource base of the quality products is placed at the highest level of interest. The young, digitally literate generation could be a bridge and fill the gap in the value chain for the local products to reach more lucrative markets. This focus group reached the same conclusion like the first focus group in not pondered moderation. That

shows the high level of evidence of the opportunity cost for the local economy posed by the external economic factors.

On the focus groups, the debate about the local economic base went to the specifics and they are all grounded in the traditional business models with the strong skillsets (woodworking and wood craftsmanship, energy production and green economy potential, traditional skills, art and craft customization products and other).

A focus group produced similar answers in the aspect of improving the business infrastructure. This focus group elaborated in detail, proposing development of the E-Commence (E-SHOP was proposed or as working title KOSOVSKA KUCA) platform for more efficient market communication between demand and supply side. Some details were exchanged and more details would be necessary to obtain to develop the solid platform since this program would exceed the local actors thus it would require more effort and resources.

Digital literacy in entrepreneurship especially in using the AI in production lines and product customization is also debated through examples. Competitiveness in the digital era would be determined with the efficient use of energy, labor and production methods and all these aspects would require digital literacy. Any type of the raw material processing, trade and delivery have a digital signature and also a footprint. Lack of knowhow how the modern production process works and digital trading would define the future growth.

As an exercise and example for productivity and efficiency enhancement focus group produced several propositions in advancement of the conventional production activity:

- Use of drones in monitoring the agrarian activity / yield quality
- Use green energy in production processes to access more lucrative markets (CBAM)
- Use AI tools in improving production process efficiency

Digital tool applications and methods pose specific challenges and digitalization audit service could be developed out of necessity on its own but might be too late. It is the opinion of this researcher that this digital audit service could be a good starting point to estimate a baseline (starting point mapping – discussed in the focus group).

Same like in the first focus group, this one presented that the marketing capacities are lacking the critical skills to break through the existing economic barriers.

General conclusion of CSOs focus group are that the competitive advantages are:

- Quality raw materials and local skillsets,
- Good position to access and use alternative and renewable energy (CBAM issue)
- Production of the high value products that are in demand
- Strong CSOs regional infrastructure to mitigate AI impact on future jobs.

Obstacles and limiting factors according to the focus groups are:

- Political and security instability
- Pore state of readiness when AI is disrupting the labor market
- Pore communication and collaboration with the local and central institutions

- Pore local business infrastructure and access to technological transfers.
- Bad or absent currier, post and delivery services.

National level conclusions

The needs analysis shows that focus on employment through entrepreneurship due to the absence of any alternative is the only way forward for Kosovo youth. Second element and opportunity is due to the barriers to entry in the public sector and to a degree economic nationalism (Albanians are buying from Albanians and Serbs are buying from Serbs), digital space and accessing the regional or global markets providing local skills/talents and other resources is efficient alternative to the current labor market failure. The current educational system is not resilient to change and has value only in providing classical education. Digital skills development responsibility is shifted to the personal interest and responsibility of the individuals. If left unguided, digital space would remain with the entertainment purpose waiting for the local talents and skills potential in doomscrolling activity.

Local business and digital infrastructure do not provide solid investment ambience, capital investments are scarce and business climate is unfavorable due to the political and security reasons. Regardless, local resources in environmental goods and services, skillset and abundance of resources in quality raw material provide solid baseline for the development of SME and Micro Enterprises

This needs assessment analysis revealed ample levels of fear about the future of jobs that would be affected by the AI entering the labor market. However, the research area is a marginal area that has a strong social cohesion and where community sustainability has a different merit unlike the system on large orders (cities and metropolitan areas). This imminent threat fear factor has a limiting effect considering that this community sustainability is depending on the local resources.

This setting could be a great safety net to experiment and produce the results in the global realm (as one CSO focus group participant stated). Digital space could provide the reach and visibility of the local products and digital space can provide access to the global market for the local products. That could be an attainable goal considering that local products have been valued and recognized but the information reach is limited due to the pore marketing and promotional activities.

Digital transformation of existing production processes in each and every aspect is needed with building adequate skills to produce attainable results for the local entrepreneurship.

Focus and concentration on startups and SME and even more in the Micro Enterprises that could provide the necessary skills to the existing traditional practices (examples like drone agrarian survey analysis, G-Coding of the local CNC milling operation, photography used in marketing and communication purposes, etc.) All these training and other digital skillsets developed could add value and expand the unleash capacity of the local businesses to grow.

Parallel to this, the collaboration and communication and even consolidation of the digital service business in the formal association could produce the pressure point for the local and central institutions to react and produce favorable business infrastructure for local growth.

Coming back from the focus group in youth when the objection was made that local and central institutions are not supportive to entrepreneurship. Moderator and the author of this research study confronted this statement with the question:

"Regardless of the high evidence of corruption cases we all know, idealistically -How it is possible to select indiscriminately good ideas from the bad? Instead of upfront support for a business idea, would it be more efficient to reward a successful idea in the mid process when the concept has proven some results?"

The focus group had no opposition to this approach, but the question remains: -How to get there to build individual and collective credentials that have weight and leverage to produce favorable policies.

The key aspect is using the digital space and contemporary technologies as a tool and vessel for growth and communication with the world market. The world becomes a single community linked by telecommunications and that is the topography of our modern economy. It is imperative to start somewhere and trust the young people's talents and ambitions.

Indecisions and lack of readiness in digital skillsets to address the challenges of the future of jobs would effectively impair our capacity to produce the "better tomorrow" for ourselves and next generations.

Recommendations

Critical aspects that demand skills and focus in national context:

- Business administration skills (registration, business literacy, fiscal diligence etc.)
  - Learning business skills.
  - Making safety net for local businesses to reduce the cost produced by arbitrary and capricious strict scrutiny procedures produced by central institutions of Kosovo
- Business infrastructure development
  - Business community development – associations
  - Collaboration with the local and national institutions
  - Producing solid economic bases that use digitalization in business model platforms.
  - Collaboration with the finance institutions
  - Development of investment ambiances
  - Create value chain complementary services (internet providing, delivery services…)
- Local and regional brands development
  - Digital products
  - Finish quality products
    - Art and craft products
    - Food and beverages
- Access to regional and global markets
  - Marketing skills
  - Product reach development
  - Venture capital investments
- Mentoring and inspiration
  - Local heroes (branding local entrepreneurship success stories)
  - Product reach development

Venture capital investments

NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT – MONTENEGRO

The national needs assessment report for Montenegro provides an overview of the identified needs and challenges related to youth skills development, participation and access to opportunities, including the perspectives of organisations working with young people.

Brief summary of the used methodology

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of young people's needs in the field of digital skills and entrepreneurship, the research was designed as a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach enabled the collection of both measurable data and deeper insights into the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of different target groups.

The research process included several complementary methods: two online questionnaires, two focus groups, and two individual interviews. Each of these methods had a specific role in data collection, allowing the topic to be examined from multiple perspectives and increasing the reliability of the findings through the cross-validation of information.

The quantitative part of the research was implemented through two separate online questionnaires—one targeting young people and the other targeting representatives of non-governmental organisations working with youth. The questionnaire for young people focused on assessing the level of digital and entrepreneurial skills, identifying needs for additional knowledge, and understanding the barriers young people face in the process of employment and launching initiatives. In addition, it included questions related to the use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence tools, as well as preferred learning methods among young people.

On the other hand, the questionnaire for civil society organisations aimed to gather insights into the experiences of organisations that work directly with young people, their perceptions of youth needs, and the identification of key challenges in implementing support programmes. This instrument made it possible to examine the extent to which organisations' perceptions align with the experiences of young people themselves, as well as to identify potential gaps between available support and actual needs.

The qualitative part of the research included the organisation of two focus groups—one with young people and one with representatives of non-governmental organisations. The focus group with young people enabled a deeper understanding of their experiences in using digital tools, their motivation for learning, as well as their attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Through interactive discussion, participants had the opportunity to exchange opinions, build on each other's responses, and jointly identify key challenges and needs.

The focus group with representatives of organisations provided an additional perspective, particularly in relation to long-term trends and systemic challenges. The discussion focused on experiences in working with young people, the effectiveness of existing programmes, as well as recommendations for improving support in the areas of digital and entrepreneurial skills. This method enabled a better understanding of the broader context in which young people develop and operate.

A special significance in the research was given to individual interviews with young people with fewer opportunities. This method was chosen in order to provide space for more detailed and open expression of experiences that are often not sufficiently visible in group discussions or standardised questionnaires. The interviews provided insight into the specific challenges faced by young people with limited access to resources, including digital equipment and stable internet connectivity, as well as into their coping strategies and personal development perspectives.

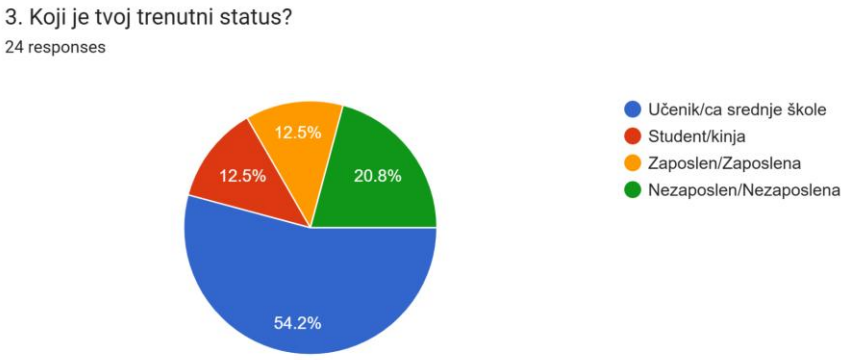
By combining these methods, methodological triangulation was achieved, meaning that data collected from different sources and through different approaches were compared and analysed together. In this way, the reliability and credibility of the findings were increased, as key insights were confirmed through multiple methods and by different groups of respondents.

It is important to emphasise that the research also had an inclusive dimension, through the involvement of young people from different social and economic contexts, as well as organisations working with diverse target groups. This ensured that the findings do not reflect only the experiences of one homogeneous group, but provide a broader picture of the needs and challenges of young people in Montenegro.

This methodological framework made it possible to complement quantitative data with qualitative insights, thereby increasing the depth and relevance of the research. While the questionnaires provided an overview of general trends, the focus groups and interviews enabled an understanding of the reasons behind those trends, as well as the identification of concrete needs and recommendations for future action.

Brief summary of key findings from the online survey – Youth

The analysis of responses collected through the online questionnaire for young people provides a diverse yet highly informative picture of digital competences, interests, and challenges faced by young people. A total of 24 young people participated in the research, of which 15 were female and 7 were male, while two respondents chose not to disclose their gender. The sample includes respondents of different ages (predominantly between 15 and 30 years old), with different educational (picture 1) and employment statuses (students, pupils, employed and unemployed young people), as well as young people coming from various social contexts, including rural areas, minority communities, and young people facing socio-economic difficulties.



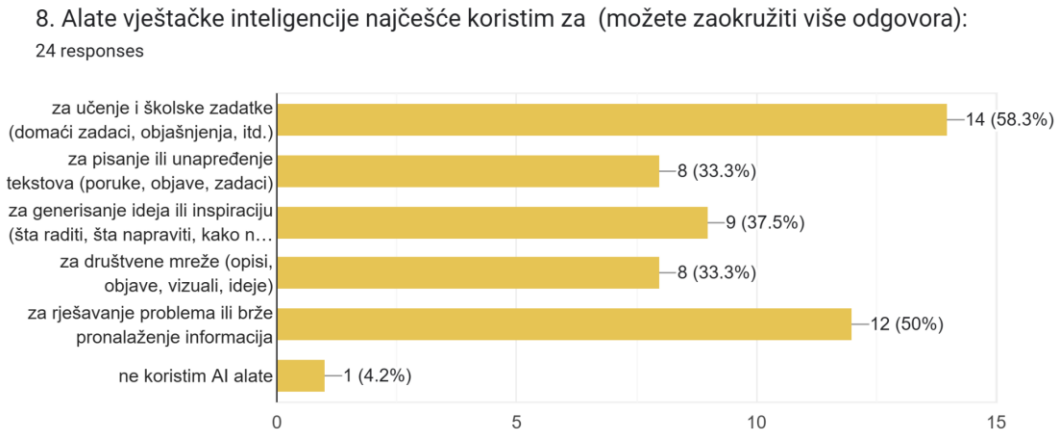
Picture1: Q3 - current educational and employment status

First of all, the results show that most young people have the basic technical prerequisites for digital participation – almost all respondents report having regular access to the internet and digital devices such as smartphones or computers. However, it is important to note that access is not always equal in quality, which is particularly visible among young people from vulnerable groups who sometimes report limited access or infrequent use of digital tools.

When it comes to self-assessment of digital skills, the results indicate clear differences between basic and advanced competencies. Most young people express a high level of confidence in using basic digital tools, including searching for information, communicating via digital platforms, and using productivity tools. A significant number of respondents also feel confident in using online learning platforms, as well as in creating content for social media.

In contrast, when it comes to advanced digital skills—such as working with data, programming, or developing digital solutions—there is a significantly lower level of confidence. This gap indicates the need for additional educational programmes that would enable young people to progress from basic to advanced levels of digital literacy.

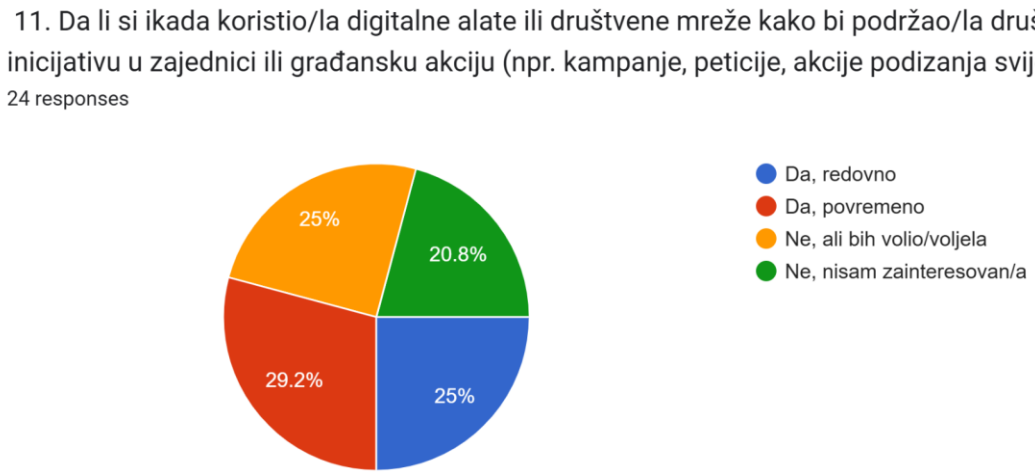
The use of digital tools in the daily lives of young people is predominantly focused on social media, communication platforms, and content creation tools. Artificial intelligence is already being used among young people, most commonly for learning purposes, idea generation, text writing, and problem-solving (picture 2). Although most respondents recognize the potential of AI tools, especially in the context of supporting young people with fewer opportunities, there is also a certain level of uncertainty and insufficient understanding of their full potential.



Picture 2: Q8 - the use of the AI tools

In the context of employability, young people clearly identify digital skills as key to improving their opportunities in the labour market. Among the most frequently mentioned skills are digital marketing, the use of AI tools, basic programming, data analysis, and adaptability to different digital platforms. These findings indicate a high awareness among young people of the needs of the modern labour market.

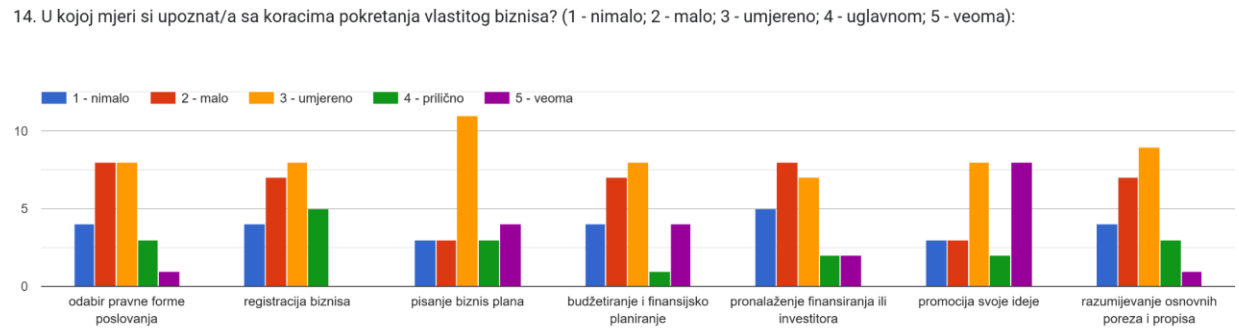
Regarding social engagement, a portion of young people already use digital tools to support community initiatives, although this is not a universal practice (picture 3). Nevertheless, responses to questions about potential digital solutions for the community show a high level of creativity and awareness of social issues. Young people propose solutions related to the digitalisation of public services, employment, education, as well as concrete local issues such as infrastructure or communal challenges.



Picture 3: Q11 - the use of digital tools for supporting community initiatives

In the segment of entrepreneurial competences, the results indicate a moderate level of confidence. Young people generally believe they can identify problems in their communities and collaborate with

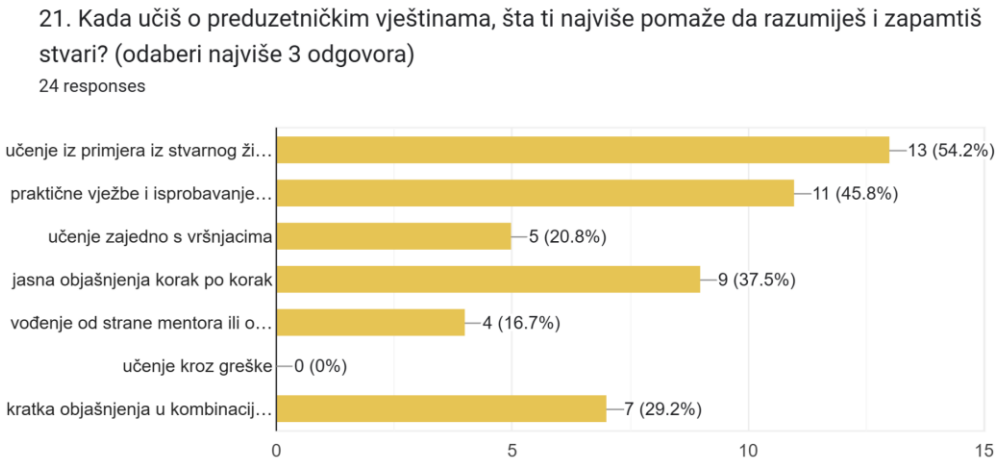
others, but they are less confident in the concrete steps of developing an idea, testing solutions, and accessing financial or mentoring support. In particular, there is a low level of familiarity with formal aspects of starting a business, including administrative procedures, financial planning, and the regulatory framework (picture 4).



Picture 4: Q14 - familiarity of starting their own business

The main barriers identified by young people for starting initiatives or businesses include lack of financial resources, fear of failure, lack of specific skills, and absence of mentorship support. These findings are consistent across different subgroups of respondents and point to systemic challenges that go beyond individual capacities.

Interest in developing digital and entrepreneurial skills is high, with young people most frequently highlighting topics such as idea development, business planning, financial literacy, digital marketing, and project management. When it comes to learning methods, respondents clearly prefer practical approaches—learning through real-life examples, hands-on tasks, and mentorship—while traditional theoretical approaches are less frequently identified as desirable (picture 5).



Picture 5: Q21 - preferred learning methods and approaches

Finally, the findings show that there is significant potential for the active involvement of young people in the development of projects and initiatives, especially if adequate support is provided through training, mentorship, and access to resources. Although some young people express uncertainty or low motivation,

a significant number demonstrate readiness to initiate or support activities in the near future, representing an important resource for community development.

Brief summary of key findings from the online survey - Youth and pro-youth organizations

General Overview of Participating Organisations

The online questionnaire for civil society organisations provided insights into the perspectives and capacities of organisations working with young people, with a total of five organisations participating in the research. Although the sample is small, the findings offer valuable qualitative insights that complement the perspectives of young people.

Importance of Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills

The organisations that participated in the research generally recognise the importance of digital and entrepreneurial skills for young people, but they emphasise that there is significant room for improvement in existing programmes. Most organisations report that they integrate digital tools into their work to some extent, particularly in the context of communication, promotion, and activity organisation. However, advanced digital skills and innovative approaches, such as the use of AI tools or the development of digital solutions, are still not systematically included in their programmes.

Skills Gaps Among Young People

Organisations recognise that young people often possess basic digital skills, but lack practical knowledge that is directly applicable in a professional context. A particular need is highlighted for the development of skills such as digital marketing, project management, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial thinking.

Challenges Faced by Organisations

One of the key findings relates to the challenges organisations face in working with young people. These include limited resources, a lack of long-term support programmes, and difficulties in reaching young people from vulnerable groups. Organisations emphasise that additional efforts are needed to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility of programmes.

Importance of Mentorship and Long-term Support

Organisations also highlight the importance of mentorship and an individualised approach in working with young people. They believe that short-term training courses are not sufficient to achieve sustainable results, and that it is necessary to develop longer-term programmes that include continuous support, practical work, and connection with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector.

Barriers to Youth Entrepreneurship

In the context of entrepreneurship, organisations recognise a low level of awareness and self-confidence among young people when it comes to starting their own initiatives. They emphasise that administrative barriers, lack of funding, and the absence of clear support mechanisms are key factors that discourage young people.

Need for Innovative Learning Approaches

Organisations also highlight the need for more innovative learning approaches that combine digital tools, practical work, and non-formal education. The importance of developing programmes tailored to the real needs of young people and the labour market is particularly emphasised.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings indicate that civil society organisations play an important role in developing the capacities of young people, but that they require additional support in order to improve the quality and reach of their programmes. Synergy between organisations, institutions, and the private sector is recognised as a key factor in creating a sustainable youth support ecosystem.

Brief summary of key findings from focus groups – Youth

The focus group with young people brought together a total of 10 participants (5 male and 5 female), who come from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The discussion was structured around the themes of digital skills and entrepreneurship, with the aim of understanding personal experiences, motivation, as well as the barriers young people face.

Digital skills – experiences and preferred learning approaches

When asked about concrete experiences in which digital tools helped them learn something or solve a problem, participants most often referred to situations related to studying, completing school assignments, creating content, and finding information for both educational and personal purposes. Digital tools were also frequently mentioned as essential for communication, collaboration, and quick access to knowledge in situations where traditional sources were not sufficient or were too slow.

The most frequently used tools include social media platforms, communication applications, online learning platforms, and artificial intelligence-based tools. What made these experiences successful, according to participants, was a combination of independent research, the availability of fast and easily understandable information, and the possibility to immediately apply what was learned in practice. Many participants emphasized that digital tools allow them to “learn by doing” and adapt information to their own needs in real time.

However, although young people often learn independently and demonstrate a strong level of self-initiative, a significant number of participants emphasized the importance of additional support—whether through peers, mentors, teachers, or online communities. They highlighted that learning becomes significantly more effective when it is interactive, practical, and when there is an opportunity to receive feedback and confirmation that they are progressing in the right direction.

When speaking about an ideal learning experience, young people clearly stated that they prefer activities that are dynamic, practical, and participatory, rather than passive or lecture-based. The most preferred format includes working in smaller groups, a combination of online and offline approaches (blended learning), and tasks that simulate real-life situations or challenges. Participants also stressed the importance of flexibility and engagement, allowing them to actively contribute rather than just listen.

Long, theory-heavy activities were generally assessed as less motivating and harder to maintain focus on, while short, focused, and practical learning segments were recognized as the most effective. Participants also highlighted that motivation increases significantly when they can immediately see the relevance of what they are learning.

Entrepreneurship – perceptions and reality

The discussion on entrepreneurship showed that young people most often associate this concept with starting their own business, achieving financial independence, and having the freedom to make their own decisions. At the same time, entrepreneurship was also frequently associated with risk, uncertainty, and responsibility.

Although most participants see entrepreneurship as a potential life or career option, it is often not perceived as realistically achievable in the short term. The reasons for this perception include lack of financial resources, limited knowledge of how to start a business or initiative, lack of practical experience, and insufficient institutional or mentoring support.

Young people emphasized that entrepreneurship would become significantly more accessible if they had clearer step-by-step guidance, concrete examples from real practice, and continuous support throughout all stages of idea development. They particularly highlighted the importance of understanding the full process—from identifying an idea, through planning and testing, to implementation and sustainability.

Barriers and challenges

When it comes to barriers, participants identified several key factors that prevent them from starting initiatives or businesses. The most frequently mentioned obstacles were lack of financial resources, fear of failure, lack of specific knowledge and practical skills, as well as the absence of mentorship support and role models.

The discussion showed that young people often lose motivation in the early stages of idea development, especially when they encounter administrative complexities, lack of funding opportunities, or uncertainty about the next steps. This early-stage “drop-off” was described as a common pattern, where initial enthusiasm decreases once practical challenges appear.

Additionally, many participants are not sure where they can seek support, which further complicates the process and reduces their willingness to take initiative. This lack of clear information pathways contributes to a sense of uncertainty and hesitation.

Needed support

When asked about the type of support that would be most helpful to them, young people most often emphasized mentorship, practical hands-on training, and financial support. They clearly expressed that theoretical knowledge alone is not sufficient, and that real-life application is essential for building confidence and competence.

The need for continuous support, rather than one-off training or short-term interventions, was particularly highlighted. Participants stated that ongoing guidance throughout the learning or entrepreneurial process would significantly increase their chances of success.

They also emphasized that they trust most those individuals who have practical experience, real-life examples, and the ability to provide concrete, actionable advice rather than abstract information.

Final reflection – expected impact

In the final part of the discussion, young people expressed the expectation that successful implementation of the project could lead to greater opportunities for learning, improved employability prospects, and increased active participation in their local communities.

They particularly emphasized the importance of creating an environment that encourages initiative, creativity, and self-confidence, as well as an environment in which young people feel that their opinions and contributions are valued and taken seriously. Participants also highlighted that such opportunities could have a long-term positive impact on motivation, engagement, and youth empowerment at the community level.

Brief summary of key findings from focus groups – Youth and pro-youth Organisations

The focus group with representatives of civil society organizations brought together three participants with experience in working with young people, particularly in the area of skills development and non-formal education.

Digital skills – practical experiences
When asked about successful activities, representatives of organizations emphasized that the most effective programmes are those that combine practical work, peer learning, and the use of digital tools. Digital tools are most commonly used for communication, collaboration, and presentation of results, but their full potential application is still not sufficiently utilized.
Organizations highlighted that young people respond best to activities that are interactive and allow active participation, while passive forms of learning have limited impact.

Hard-to-reach groups
One of the key findings relates to challenges in engaging young people with fewer opportunities. According to the organizations' experience, the hardest groups to reach are young people from rural areas, those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), as well as those facing socio-economic barriers. The reasons include lack of access to resources, low motivation, and limited information about available programmes.

Missing digital skills
Organizations identified that young people face the greatest difficulties in advanced digital skills, including critical thinking in online environments, the use of digital tools for professional purposes, as well as understanding online safety and responsible behaviour. The need for the development of practical skills with direct applicability was also emphasized.

Entrepreneurial skills – key gaps
In the area of entrepreneurship, representatives of organizations highlighted that young people most lack skills in idea development, financial literacy, project planning, and digital marketing. These gaps are particularly pronounced among young people with fewer opportunities.
It was also noted that these challenges most often arise in the phase of transitioning from an idea to concrete implementation, when young people do not have sufficient knowledge and support to continue further.

Where young people get stuck and why
Organizations agree that young people most often lose motivation in the planning and implementation phases. The main reasons include lack of financial resources, complicated administrative procedures, and lack of continuous support.
For young people with fewer opportunities, these barriers are additionally pronounced due to limited access to information, mentors, and support networks.

Needed support and the role of organizations
Representatives of organizations believe they can provide significant support through training, mentorship, and facilitation of learning processes, but emphasize that their capacities are often limited. The need for longer-term programmes, better cross-sector cooperation, and additional resources was highlighted.

Final reflection
In the final reflection, participants emphasized that a successful project should result in more active youth engagement, higher quality learning programmes, and a stronger role of youth workers. The importance of creating an environment in which young people have more opportunities to express their ideas and actively participate in decision-making was also emphasized.

Brief summary of conclusions from interviews with specific target groups

As part of the research, two in-depth interviews were conducted with young people with fewer opportunities – one male and one female participant. Both participants come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, which significantly affects their access to digital tools, education, and development opportunities. Their experiences provide an important qualitative insight into the everyday realities behind the broader quantitative trends identified in the survey and focus groups.

One of the most important findings relates to limited and unstable access to digital infrastructure. Although both participants report having access to digital devices, this access is often indirect and shared with other family members. The use of laptops or computers must be carefully coordinated with the needs of other household members, which directly affects the continuity of learning, online participation, and the ability to engage in structured educational activities. This often results in fragmented learning processes, where young people are forced to adapt their learning time to availability of devices rather than their own learning needs or schedules.

In addition, internet connectivity is not always available or stable, which further complicates participation in online activities, including online training, video-based learning, and communication with peers or trainers. Interruptions in connectivity, limited data availability, or weak signal quality often reduce the effectiveness of digital learning experiences.

As one participant stated: “It is not just whether you have internet, but what kind you have. It happens that I have a connection, but it is so weak that I cannot follow a training or a video.” This insight highlights

that formal access to the internet does not necessarily mean functional digital inclusion, as the quality and reliability of access play a crucial role in enabling meaningful participation.

In the context of digital skills, the interviews show that young people with fewer opportunities often possess basic digital competencies, such as using communication tools, browsing the internet, or accessing social media platforms. However, they lack opportunities for structured learning and further development of more advanced or professionally relevant digital skills. Learning most often takes place independently, without formal guidance or structured support systems, which slows progress and reduces self-confidence in their abilities.

One of the participants noted: “Everything I know I learned on my own, but I often don’t know if I am doing it correctly.” This reflects a broader sense of uncertainty and lack of validation, which is common among young people who rely on self-learning in the absence of mentorship or institutional support.

Both participants emphasized that what would help them the most is clear, practical, and continuous support in learning. They particularly highlight the importance of mentorship and guided learning processes, which would help them develop concrete skills, gain confidence in their abilities, and better understand how to apply knowledge in real-life contexts such as employment, education, or entrepreneurship. They also pointed out that one-off training is not sufficient, and that ongoing engagement is necessary for real progress.

When it comes to employment and entrepreneurship, the interviews indicate a combination of interest, ambition, and uncertainty. Although there is a clear desire for personal progress and development, participants often do not see clear pathways to employment or to starting their own initiatives. This uncertainty is strongly linked to limited access to information, lack of role models, and absence of structured support systems that would guide them through the process.

The main barriers mentioned include lack of financial resources, limited access to reliable information, lack of mentorship, and insufficient knowledge about administrative and practical steps required to start an initiative or enter the labour market. These barriers are perceived not only as individual challenges but also as systemic obstacles that reduce motivation over time.

One participant stated: “I have ideas, but I don’t know where to start or who to turn to.” This quote further confirms the findings from the focus groups and questionnaires, where lack of guidance, unclear pathways, and insufficient support structures were consistently identified as key challenges for young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

The interviews also highlight the importance of psychological and social factors, including self-confidence, motivation, and a sense of belonging. Young people with fewer opportunities often feel excluded from opportunities available to their peers, which affects their motivation and willingness to engage in new activities. This sense of exclusion is not only related to material conditions but also to perceived inequality in access to opportunities, information, and networks.

In some cases, this leads to reduced initiative-taking and hesitation to participate in programmes or apply for opportunities, even when they are available. At the same time, when adequate support is present, participants demonstrate willingness to learn and a strong interest in improving their situation.

In conclusion, the interview findings confirm that digital exclusion is not only a matter of access to technology, but also of the quality of that access, the continuity of use, the availability of structured support, and the sense of empowerment among young people. Young people with fewer opportunities clearly demonstrate potential, motivation, and readiness to engage, but they require targeted, sustained, and context-sensitive support that takes into account their specific socio-economic circumstances and lived realities.

Conclusions and recommendations for Montenegro

Survey – Youth

Conclusions

Survey data from young people highlights a strong overall digital presence and high levels of confidence in basic digital skills, including communication platforms, information search, and content creation tools. However, there is a significant gap in advanced digital competencies, particularly those linked to employability and innovation.

Artificial intelligence tools are already being used by young people, mainly for learning support and idea generation, but without a structured understanding of their potential for long-term skill development or career use.

In entrepreneurship, young people express interest and awareness but lack practical knowledge, structured guidance, and confidence to translate ideas into action. The most common barriers identified are lack of financial resources, fear of failure, and absence of mentorship.

Recommendations

- Introduce targeted training programmes focusing on advanced digital skills, including AI literacy, data analysis, and digital problem-solving
- Develop entrepreneurship education that focuses on practical steps from idea generation to implementation
- Strengthen access to mentorship programmes connecting young people with experienced professionals
- Promote experiential and project-based learning models that reflect real-life challenges
- Ensure accessible information on funding opportunities and support mechanisms for youth initiatives

Survey – Youth and Pro-Youth Organisations

Conclusions

The combined survey findings from young people and youth/pro-youth organisations show a broadly consistent picture regarding digital and entrepreneurial skills development in Montenegro. Both groups confirm that young people are highly engaged with digital tools in their daily lives, primarily for communication, learning, and content creation. However, there is a shared recognition that this digital engagement does not automatically translate into advanced or labour-market relevant competencies.

A key conclusion is the clear mismatch between youth self-perceived digital confidence and the depth of their actual skills, particularly in areas such as data use, structured digital problem-solving, and professional application of digital tools. Organisations confirm that while basic skills are widely present, structured pathways for progression into advanced competencies are largely missing.

Both surveys also highlight entrepreneurship as an area of interest but limited readiness. Young people show motivation and creativity, while organisations observe low levels of practical knowledge, confidence, and understanding of procedural and financial aspects of entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

- Develop structured, progressive learning pathways that connect basic digital literacy with advanced, job-relevant digital skills
- Strengthen cooperation between youth organisations and education providers to ensure continuity of skills development
- Introduce practical entrepreneurship modules that include financial literacy, project management, and digital business tools
- Improve alignment between youth needs and existing non-formal education programmes through regular needs assessments
- Support organisations in updating methodologies to include more applied, skills-based learning approaches

Focus Groups – Youth

Conclusions

Focus group discussions with young people confirm that experiential, interactive, and practical learning approaches are significantly more effective than traditional theoretical methods. Young people demonstrate strong preference for collaborative learning, peer exchange, and tasks that simulate real-world situations.

Digital tools are widely used in everyday learning contexts, but their educational potential is maximised when combined with guidance, structure, and feedback. Independent learning is common but often leads to uncertainty and inconsistent skill development.

In entrepreneurship, young people associate the concept with independence and opportunity but also with high risk and uncertainty. A key conclusion is that motivation exists, but it is not matched by sufficient confidence, knowledge, or support systems.

Recommendations

- Shift non-formal education approaches towards experiential, practice-based learning models
- Integrate peer learning and collaborative formats as standard practice in youth programmes
- Provide structured pathways that guide young people from idea to implementation in entrepreneurship
- Increase access to continuous mentorship rather than one-off training sessions
- Design programmes that build confidence alongside technical and entrepreneurial skills development.

Focus Groups – Youth and Pro-Youth Organisations

Conclusions

The combined focus group findings highlight both alignment and gaps between youth experiences and organisational perspectives. Both groups agree that interactive, practical, and participatory approaches are the most effective for skills development. There is also shared recognition that digital tools are underutilised in terms of their full educational and professional potential.

A key conclusion is the shared identification of structural barriers affecting young people with fewer opportunities, including limited access to resources, weaker inclusion mechanisms, and insufficient tailored support. Organisations additionally highlight capacity constraints that limit their ability to scale and sustain long-term support.
Both groups confirm that young people often struggle most at the transition phase—from idea development to implementation—particularly in entrepreneurship and project-based initiatives.

Recommendations

- Strengthen cross-sector cooperation between youth organisations, educational institutions, and policy actors.
- Develop long-term, structured programmes that support continuous learning and follow-up.
- Increase investment in inclusive approaches targeting rural youth and young people with fewer opportunities.
- Build organisational capacity for delivering advanced digital and entrepreneurial training.
- Establish clearer support systems for the transition from idea to implementation, including incubation and mentorship mechanisms.
- Promote shared methodologies that combine digital tools, experiential learning, and real-world application.

NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT – ROMANIA

The national needs assessment report for Romania provides insight into the current situation, needs and challenges related to digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people, as well as the capacities of organisations working with them.

Methodology

The needs analysis conducted within the CYBER Change project aimed to identify the main needs of young people and youth and pro-youth organizations in the areas of digital skills, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship, with particular attention given to young people with fewer opportunities. In order to obtain a realistic picture of the current situation, the research was based on a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative tools. This approach made it possible not only to collect comparable data at national and transnational levels, but also to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by the target groups.

Data collection was carried out using three main methods: online questionnaires, focus groups, and structured interviews. The use of these complementary methods allowed not only for triangulation of the results, but also for capturing different perspectives on the same reality. The questionnaires provided an overall view of trends and skill levels, while the focus groups and interviews enabled a more in-depth exploration of participants' motivations, barriers, and specific needs.

The needs analysis focused on assessing the current situation and identifying existing gaps across several areas relevant to youth development. Specifically, the research examined the level of digital skills, including the use of artificial intelligence tools, entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship competences, as well as access to learning opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities. These include young people from rural areas, those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, NEET youth, girls and young women, as well as young people with limited access to education or digital tools. In addition, the research explored the capacity of youth and pro-youth organizations to support youth development through programs based on digital skills, entrepreneurial competences, and peer-to-peer learning.

In this context, the analysis examined the current level of digital and entrepreneurial skills among young people from different communities, the barriers limiting their participation in digital and entrepreneurial initiatives, and the challenges faced by organizations in delivering effective and inclusive training programs. At the same time, opportunities for improving learning formats, tools, and non-formal education methodologies were also explored.

The results of the research are used as a basis for updating the needs analysis of young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, and for developing tailored educational materials. These include training manuals, digital tools, and practical activities designed to support the development of digital skills for social entrepreneurship as well as entrepreneurial competences. At the same time, the findings contribute to strengthening the capacity of the organizations involved in the project to implement training activities based on practical, digital, and peer-to-peer learning. Through this approach, the interventions developed within the CYBER Change project are grounded in real data and respond directly to the identified needs of the target groups.

The research included two main categories of participants. The first group consisted of young people aged between 15 and 29, with a focus on those with fewer opportunities. The second group included youth and pro-youth organizations working directly with young people. Participant selection aimed to ensure diversity in terms of gender, place of residence (urban and rural), socio-economic status, access to education and technology, as well as belonging to vulnerable groups such as NEET youth, young people from rural areas, minorities, or young people with disabilities.

For data collection, two types of online questionnaires were used: one addressed to young people and one to organizations. The questionnaire for young people aimed to assess digital skills, including the use of artificial intelligence, entrepreneurial competences, interest in social entrepreneurship, perceived barriers, and training needs. Additional information was collected regarding access to technology, previous participation in training activities, and preferred learning formats. The questionnaire for organizations focused on assessing their capacity to develop young people's skills, identifying gaps observed among beneficiaries, challenges encountered in implementing activities, and needs related to the development of tools and educational methodologies. The questionnaires were distributed online using platforms accessible via both mobile and desktop devices, and the language was adapted to an accessible level in order to facilitate participation from young people with fewer opportunities.

Focus groups were organized to deepen the findings from the questionnaires and to gather qualitative perspectives on participants' experiences. Separate discussions were held with young people and with representatives of youth organizations. Topics covered included the use of digital skills, the role of artificial intelligence, perceptions of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, participation barriers, preferred learning methods, and support needs for social initiatives. Discussions were facilitated using structured guides to ensure balanced participation and allow participants to express their views freely.

To include the perspectives of young people with limited access to the online environment, structured face-to-face interviews were also conducted. These followed the structure of the youth questionnaire, adapted for individual discussions, and allowed data collection from young people in rural or isolated areas, NEET youth, those from marginalized communities, and young people facing socio-economic challenges. This method complemented the quantitative data and helped identify specific needs that could not be fully captured through online tools alone.

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with a focus on identifying key trends and skill gaps. Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were analyzed

thematically by identifying main categories and recurring patterns. The results from all three methods were then integrated to formulate national-level conclusions regarding the development needs of digital and entrepreneurial skills, participation barriers faced by young people with fewer opportunities, the capacity of organizations to deliver training programs, and priorities for developing educational materials within the CYBER Change project.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire - Youth

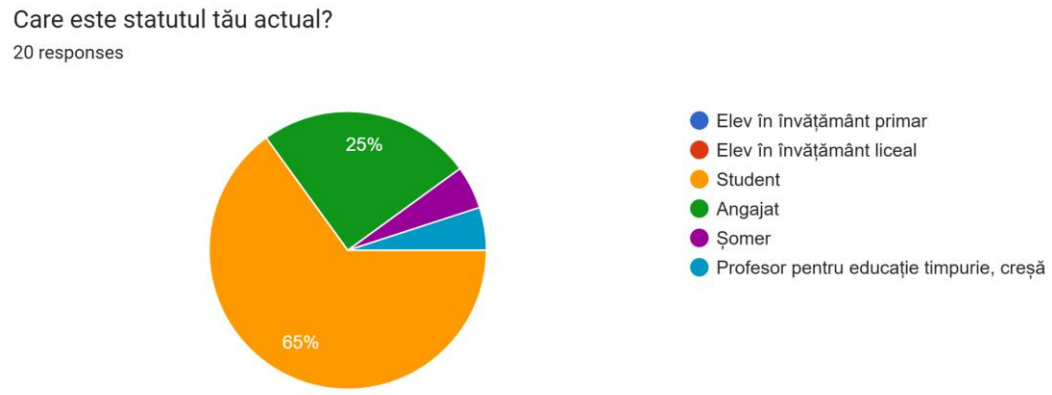
Respondent Profile

A total of 20 young people aged between 15 and 29 completed the online questionnaire. In terms of age distribution, most respondents fall within the 19–24 age group, accounting for 13 individuals (65%). The 25–29 age group includes 5 respondents (25%), while only 2 respondents (10%) are aged 15–18. This profile suggests that the majority are in a transitional phase between education and entering the labor market.

Regarding gender, the sample is predominantly made up of girls and young women, representing 15 respondents (75%), while boys and young men account for 5 respondents (25%). This distribution is relevant, particularly in relation to the project's objectives, but should also be considered when interpreting the overall results.

In terms of current status, most respondents are students (13 individuals). Five respondents are employed, while the remaining two indicated other situations: one is unemployed and one selected "other status." An important aspect is that all respondents reported having regular access to both the internet and a smartphone or computer. This suggests that, within this group, the main issue is not access to technology, but rather how it is used, the level of skills, and confidence in applying them in practice.

Picture 1: Q3 - current educational and employment status



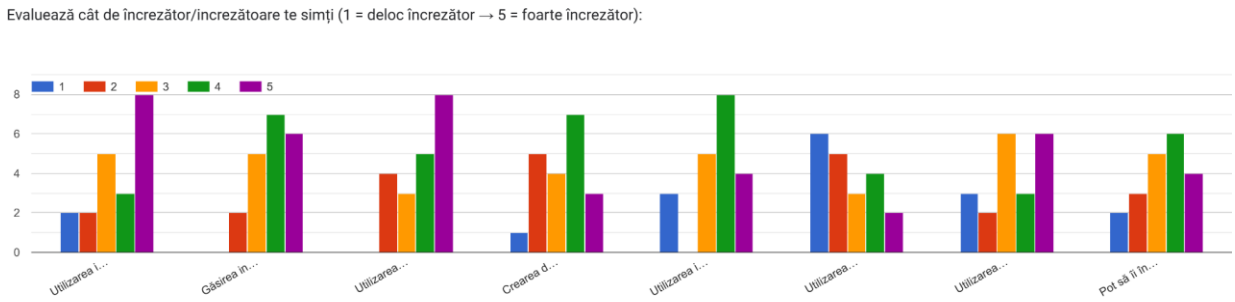
Level of Digital Skills

Digital skills were assessed on a scale from 1 to 5. The responses indicate a moderate to fairly good level of confidence in using technology for everyday tasks. The highest average scores were recorded for verifying online information and using online learning platforms, both at 3.85. These are followed by the use of productivity tools (3.65) and using digital tools to organize projects with others (3.50).

Intermediate levels were observed in online safety and responsible behavior (3.35), as well as in the perception of being able to teach basic digital skills to others (3.35). Creating digital content scored slightly lower, with an average of 3.30, indicating moderate familiarity with the creative use of technology.

The weakest area is advanced digital skills, with an average score of 2.55. This gap suggests that while young people feel comfortable with everyday uses of technology, they feel less prepared when it comes to more complex applications relevant to innovation, entrepreneurship, or developing their own digital solutions. Overall, the results point to a group of young people who are frequent users of technology, but less often creators or advanced users.

Picture 2: Q7 - the level of confidence in using technology for everyday tasks



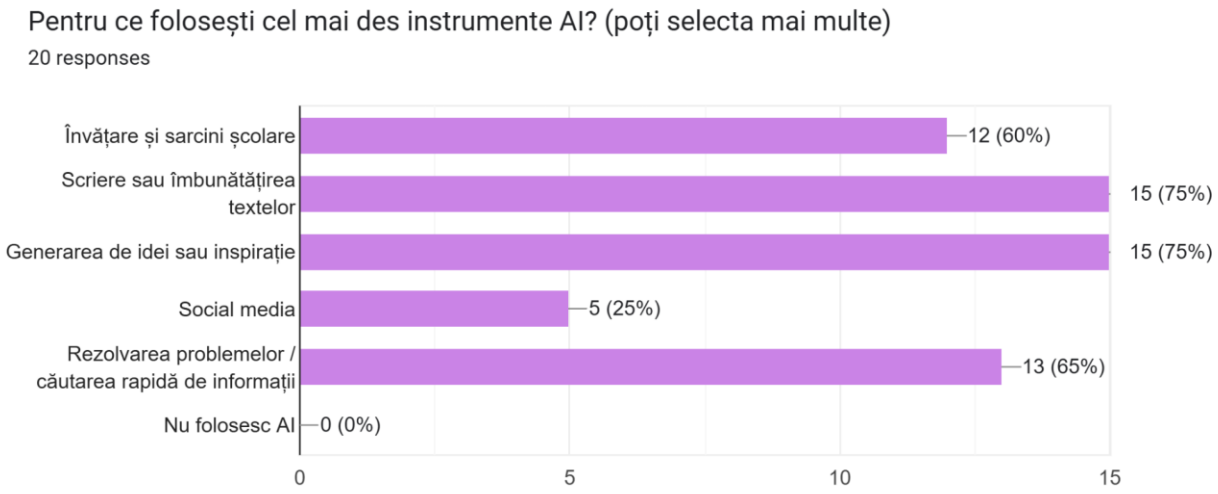
Use and Perception of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence tools are already part of the daily routine for many respondents. The most commonly mentioned uses are writing or improving texts and generating ideas or inspiration, each selected by 15 respondents. Thirteen respondents reported using AI for problem-solving or quickly finding information, and 12 use it for learning and school-related tasks (picture 3).

The overall perception of AI, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities, is generally positive. Eight respondents believe AI can help “a lot,” while ten think it can help “to some extent.” Only two respondents were unsure, and none expressed a clearly negative view. These responses indicate openness toward using AI in educational and social contexts, but also highlight the need for further guidance, especially regarding critical, ethical, and practical use.

At present, AI is mainly used for individual tasks and short-term support. It is less associated with developing projects, initiatives, or community solutions. This points to a clear direction for future work: helping young people move from using AI for efficiency and consumption toward using it for creativity, initiative, and social impact.

Picture 3: Q9 - use of artificial intelligence tools



Entrepreneurial Skills

A similar pattern appears in the area of entrepreneurial skills. The highest scores are linked to collaboration and interpersonal abilities. The statement "I can work with others and communicate ideas clearly" has an average of 4.00, while "I can test ideas and learn from feedback" scores 3.90. These results suggest that young people feel relatively confident in teamwork and reflective processes.

However, scores decrease when it comes to the practical side of entrepreneurship. Identifying problems that could be turned into project or business ideas has an average of 3.05. Knowing how to access mentors, grants, or other forms of support scores 2.65, and confidence in creating a simple project or model is 2.60.

These findings indicate that young people feel more confident in relational aspects than in the concrete structuring of an initiative. In other words, they feel more prepared to collaborate and contribute than to independently initiate and develop an entrepreneurial project.

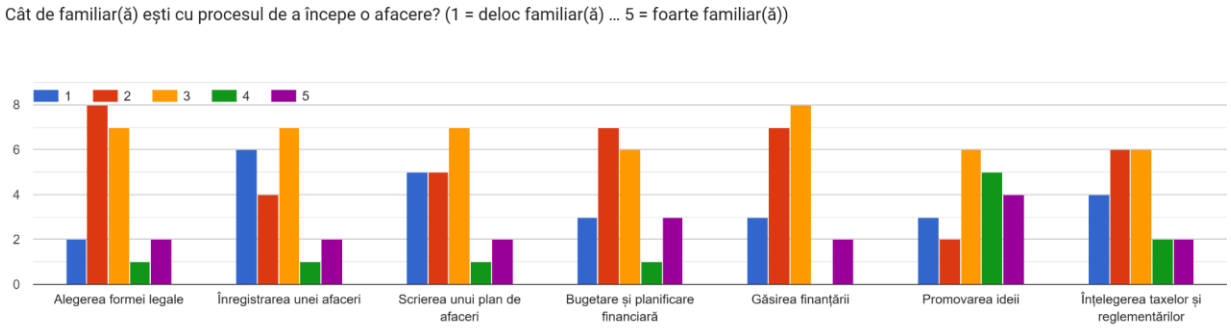
Familiarity with Starting a Business

The section focused on the practical steps involved in starting a business confirms this pattern. The highest score is for promoting an idea (3.25), suggesting that communication feels more accessible. In contrast,

planning and implementation aspects score significantly lower: budgeting and financial planning (2.70), choosing a legal structure (2.65), taxes and regulations (2.60), finding funding (2.55), writing a business plan (2.50), and business registration (2.45), which has the lowest score.

These results clearly show that the main challenge is not necessarily coming up with an idea, but what comes afterward. Administrative, financial, and procedural aspects remain unfamiliar and are likely perceived as complex without external support.

Picture 4: Q14 - familiarity of starting their own business



Perceived Barriers

When asked about the main obstacles to starting a business or initiative, respondents most frequently mentioned lack of initial funding (15 responses) and lack of specific skills (13 responses). These are followed by fear of failure (9 responses), bureaucracy and complex regulations (7 responses), and lack of a mentor (4 responses).

These responses show that perceived barriers are not only financial. They also relate to confidence, guidance, and limited understanding of the process. The lack of skills aligns with the lower scores in planning and implementation, while the lack of mentorship highlights a clear need for practical guidance.

Interest and Willingness to Engage

The data indicates a strong openness toward social and entrepreneurial engagement. Sixteen out of the 20 respondents said they would be interested in using digital or entrepreneurial skills to support a social initiative, while only one respondent answered “no.”

However, when asked about the likelihood of actually starting a project within the next 12 months, even with training and support, the average score is 3.05 out of 5. This suggests real interest, but also some hesitation. The gap between declared interest and actual readiness to act indicates that young people need more than motivation—they need structured support, mentorship, concrete examples, and guidance throughout the process.

Previous Training and Learning Preferences

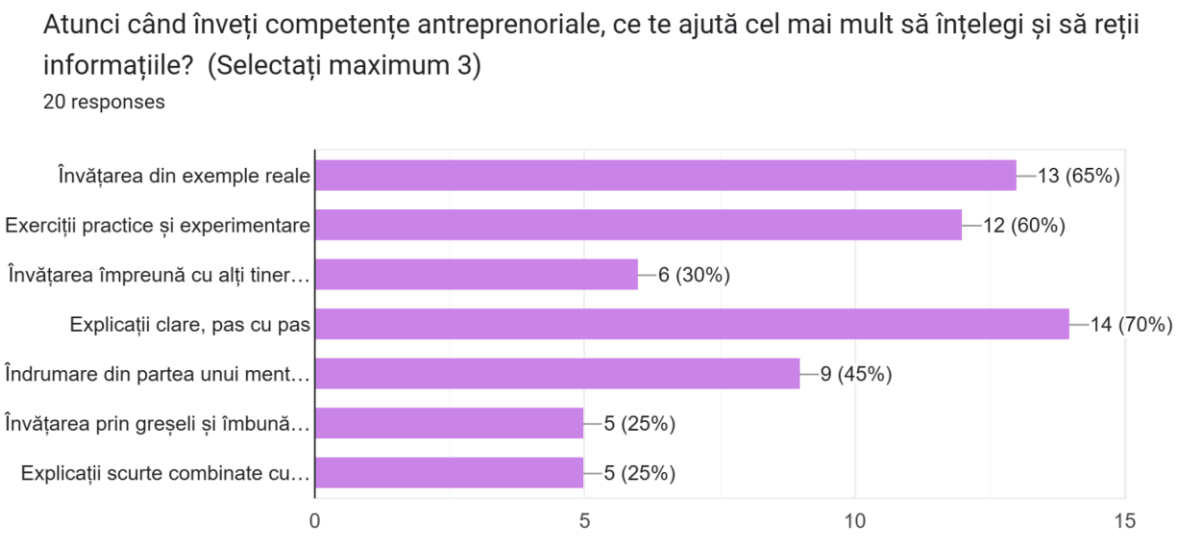
Eleven respondents reported having previously participated in training related to digital or entrepreneurial skills, while nine had no such experience. This suggests a relatively balanced group between those with prior exposure and those for whom this would be a new experience.

In terms of preferred learning formats, face-to-face training is clearly favored (11 respondents), followed by blended learning (8 respondents), while only one respondent selected live online training. This highlights the importance of direct interaction, immediate support, and the relationship with trainers and peers.

Regarding topics of interest, the most frequently mentioned are design thinking and creative thinking (10 mentions), basic digital skills for work and learning (9 mentions), and content creation and storytelling (9 mentions). Fundraising and pitching were mentioned by 7 respondents, indicating interest in practical, initiative-oriented skills.

When asked what helps them most in learning entrepreneurial skills, respondents highlighted clear, step-by-step explanations (14 mentions), learning from real-life examples (13 mentions), and hands-on exercises and experimentation (12 mentions). These responses strongly support the need for practical, applied learning approaches (picture5).

Picture 5: Q21 - preferred learning methods and approaches



Additional Insights from Individual Interviews

To complement the questionnaire data, two individual phone interviews were conducted using the same structure. Their purpose was to deepen the responses and better understand specific training needs, as well as differences in skill levels. One respondent was a high school student (aged 16–18), and the other a university student (aged 19–24), allowing for comparison across age and educational experience.

The interviews confirm the trends identified in the questionnaire, while also adding nuance. One respondent reported higher digital skills, including frequent use of productivity tools, content creation tools, and AI for learning and idea generation. However, they still identified development needs, particularly in PC use, Microsoft Office, and AI prompt writing. The second respondent reported solid basic digital skills, but lower levels in advanced skills and content creation, as well as limited use of AI, mainly for school tasks.

Both interviews show that digital tools are used daily, especially for communication, learning, and individual tasks. However, their use for project development remains limited. Differences between respondents highlight uneven levels of digital literacy and the need for tailored training.

In terms of entrepreneurial skills, both interviews indicate interest in social initiatives but varying levels of confidence in implementation. One respondent feels capable of generating ideas and working in a team but mentions fear of failure, lack of funding, and lack of mentorship as barriers. The other feels less prepared and emphasizes the need for support in turning ideas into concrete plans and identifying resources.

Both interviews confirm that, despite motivation, young people need support in planning, financial literacy, digital marketing, and project management. The barriers mentioned align closely with questionnaire findings.

Developed Conclusions

The results show that young people have good access to technology and use it frequently, but advanced and applied digital skills remain limited. While they are comfortable using technology for learning, communication, and organization, many do not yet use it to develop projects or community-oriented solutions.

Interviews confirm this pattern and highlight both differences in skill levels and shared gaps. Some young people use AI and digital tools more advancedly, while others remain at a basic level.

At the same time, there is clear interest in social entrepreneurship and community engagement, but this is not matched by sufficient planning, implementation, and resource-access skills. A key finding is the gap between motivation and the ability to act on it.

Young people show strong social and collaborative skills but need additional support in structuring ideas, budgeting, accessing funding, understanding administrative processes, and using digital tools for entrepreneurship. AI use is present but mainly individual, pointing to an opportunity for more applied uses in social innovation and problem-solving.

The main barriers—lack of funding, fear of failure, and lack of mentorship—highlight the need for clearer processes and better access to support. Learning preferences are also very clear: young people favor practical, interactive, project-based learning, supported by mentorship and peer learning.

Overall, the findings point to the need for integrated programs that combine applied digital skills, social entrepreneurship, AI use, personal development, mentorship, and peer learning. Such approaches could significantly improve young people's participation in social and entrepreneurial initiatives, especially for those with fewer opportunities, and support the development of meaningful solutions within their communities.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire – Youth and pro-youth organisations

Profile of Responding Organizations

Seven youth and pro-youth organizations took part in the survey. Among them, three are youth organizations, two are local/grassroots NGOs, and two are pro-youth organizations. Although the sample is relatively small, it still provides a fairly diverse picture of the actors involved in youth work.

In terms of experience, most organizations are still in a development phase: five have between 2 and 5 years of experience working with young people. One organization reported 6–10 years of experience, while another has more than 10 years of activity. This profile suggests a mix of organizations that are still consolidating their work and others with more established experience. As such, the findings are useful both for understanding the needs of emerging organizations and the challenges faced by more mature ones, especially in relation to scaling, innovation, and sustainability.

Regarding target groups, four organizations stated that they primarily work with young people in general, while two explicitly mentioned working with young people with fewer opportunities. In terms of outreach over the past 12 months, the distribution is relatively balanced: two organizations worked with 51–200 young people, two with 201–500, and two with over 500. One organization reported a smaller number, between 0 and 50. Volunteer engagement also varies: three organizations worked with 21–45 volunteers, while the others reported ranges between 11–20 and over 101 volunteers. Overall, these figures indicate different levels of operational capacity and activity coverage.

Current Capacities and Types of Activities

The responses show that organizations are involved in a wide range of activities for and with young people. These include non-formal education, digital skills development, Erasmus+ mobilities and projects, STEAM-related activities, cultural and community initiatives, as well as entrepreneurship and inclusion-related work.

This diversity is also reflected in the types of services provided. All seven organizations reported engaging in advocacy or digital civic participation activities. Five offer entrepreneurship training, five support social entrepreneurship, four provide career guidance, and three explicitly deliver digital skills training.

Overall, these responses suggest a strong level of engagement and practical experience. However, the fact that only three organizations explicitly mentioned structured digital skills training indicates that practical experience does not necessarily translate into well-developed, systematic digital education or advanced training programs.

Organizational Capacity (Self-Assessment)

In their self-assessment, organizations generally rate their capacity as medium to high. The highest scores are related to adapting content for inclusion and gender equality (average 4.71). Similarly high scores appear for designing and delivering non-formal, flexible learning formats (4.57) and for advocacy capacity (4.57). The ability to implement peer-to-peer or youth-led initiatives scores 4.43.

Good scores are also reported for access to logistical resources such as equipment and training spaces (4.29) and for staff knowledge of entrepreneurship and social innovation (4.14).

The lowest scores relate to stable funding for youth programs (2.71), practical experience in delivering digital skills training (3.71), and staff capacity to support entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship learning (3.86).

These findings suggest that organizations have a solid foundation in youth work and participatory approaches but face challenges in ensuring continuity, securing stable resources, and developing specialized, structured, and sustainable programs.

Digital Capacity and Online Learning

In the area of digital work and online learning, organizations report high levels of confidence. The strongest scores are for the ability to organize and manage online or hybrid activities with partners, trainers, or young people from other regions or countries (4.71), as well as for using or adapting open educational resources (OER) (4.71).

Organizations also rate themselves highly in terms of virtual exchanges and blended learning formats (4.57), as well as in creating engaging and interactive online learning experiences (4.43).

At a slightly more moderate level are staff competences in teaching digital topics (both basic and advanced), promoting safe and ethical use of digital tools, applying interactive teaching methods, supporting peer trainers, and openness to experimenting with new approaches—all scoring around 4.14. Adapting activities for girls and young people with fewer opportunities scores 4.29.

While these results show strong confidence in digital delivery, when compared to youth data, a gap becomes evident: organizations feel prepared to offer digital activities, but young people do not always have the level of skills needed to fully benefit from them.

Capacity in Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship

In the field of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, scores are generally high. The highest average score is for openness to testing new approaches in entrepreneurial education (4.71). This is followed by experience or interest in supporting social initiatives (4.57) and developing transversal skills relevant to entrepreneurship (4.43). The ability to guide young people through the basic stages of a project scores 4.29.

Moderately high scores are also seen for supporting idea development, offering early-stage mentoring, and using practical tools (all 4.14), as well as adapting entrepreneurship training for girls and youth with fewer opportunities (4.00).

The lowest score in this section relates to connecting young people with external opportunities such as mentors, funding sources, or incubators (3.43). This is particularly important, as it directly reflects what young people also reported: while ideas and interest exist, the link between learning and real-world implementation ecosystems remains weak.

Identified Gaps Among Youth (NGO Perspective)

From the organizations' perspective, the main digital gaps among young people relate to safe and responsible online behavior (mentioned by 6 organizations), critical thinking and identifying misinformation (5 mentions), and basic knowledge of programming, no-code tools, or automation (5 mentions). Other frequently mentioned areas include using digital tools for entrepreneurship or income generation and for civic engagement or advocacy (each with 4 mentions).

In terms of entrepreneurial skills, the most frequently identified gap is financial literacy (6 mentions), followed by basic business planning (5 mentions). Teamwork, communication and leadership, motivation and self-confidence, and using digital tools for income generation were each mentioned 4 times.

These observations largely align with the responses from young people themselves: while they use technology frequently, this use often remains at a basic functional level rather than evolving into applied, higher-level competencies.

Barriers for Young People (NGO Perspective)

All seven organizations indicated that young people from rural or isolated areas face the greatest barriers in accessing digital and entrepreneurial learning opportunities. Five organizations also highlighted young people with financial difficulties, and five mentioned youth with disabilities or chronic conditions.

Three organizations identified significant barriers for youth from minority or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as for those with limited access to devices or the internet. Two organizations explicitly mentioned NEET youth and related social barriers.

These findings clearly show that simply offering activities is not enough. A genuinely inclusive approach is required—one that is adapted to different contexts and forms of vulnerability. These results strongly support the project's objective of reducing social and digital inequalities.

Organizational Challenges

The main challenges organizations face in delivering more effective training activities are lack of funding (mentioned by 6 organizations) and lack of qualified trainers (5 mentions). These are followed by administrative barriers (4 mentions) and low motivation among young people (3 mentions).

Two organizations also mentioned limited digital infrastructure and safeguarding requirements as additional obstacles. These findings explain why, even when organizations have experience and willingness, they do not always succeed in building scalable and sustainable programs. The challenges are not only pedagogical, but also structural and institutional.

Resource and Material Needs

In terms of training materials, the greatest need is for tools adapted to young people with fewer opportunities (6 mentions). Other commonly identified needs include ready-to-use workshop activities, tools for digital advocacy and civic participation, and real-life case studies (each with 3 mentions). Digital learning content and step-by-step guides were mentioned by one organization each, while practical manuals were not explicitly mentioned.

Regarding the level of materials needed, three organizations indicated a need for intermediate-level resources, two opted for a mix of all levels, and one organization each mentioned basic and advanced levels.

For youth workers and trainers, the most frequently mentioned needs are tools adapted to vulnerable youth and mentoring or exchange with other organizations (5 mentions each), followed by

reusable/adaptable online resources (4 mentions), and real-life examples, case studies, and clearer step-by-step guidance (3 mentions each).

These responses clearly show that organizations are not primarily looking for theoretical training, but for practical, easy-to-use, and adaptable resources.

Implementation Preferences

In terms of delivery format, the clear preference is for hybrid models (5 organizations), followed by face-to-face formats (2 organizations). No organization selected fully online delivery as their primary option.

When asked which type of material they would adopt first, three organizations chose ready-to-use training sessions, three selected mentoring toolkits for youth workers and peer mentors, and one chose digital/online learning content.

These preferences highlight the need for flexible solutions that are also strongly oriented toward practical application.

General Conclusions

The results point to a clear gap between the experience organizations already have in working with young people and their capacity to develop structured, sustainable, and scalable digital and entrepreneurial training programs. While self-assessments are generally positive, key vulnerabilities remain—especially regarding stable funding (average 2.71) and the ability to connect young people to relevant external resources (3.43).

At the same time, organizations show strong capabilities in inclusion, flexible learning, peer learning, advocacy, and openness to innovation. This is reflected in high scores for inclusive content adaptation, use of open educational resources, online and hybrid delivery, and willingness to test new approaches.

Overall, the data suggest that youth organizations play a crucial role in developing young people's digital and entrepreneurial skills, but their impact is still limited by resource constraints, support infrastructure, and lack of appropriate tools. Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities remains a major challenge, especially for those from rural areas, economically disadvantaged backgrounds, or with special needs.

In this context, the CYBER Change project has a strong opportunity to build on existing experience within organizations and transform it into clearer, more structured, and replicable learning models. At the same time, it can support the development of practical tools for applying digital skills in social entrepreneurship and strengthen the role of organizations in promoting inclusion, participation, and initiative among young people.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups – Young People

The focus group discussions show that young people use digital technology frequently in their daily activities, especially for learning, organizing, and completing academic tasks. Participants mentioned different types of tools, ranging from online platforms for searching information and community-based apps for solving problems, to artificial intelligence tools for summaries and content organization, design applications for presentations, and various digital solutions for managing activities. These examples suggest that young people are used to working with a wide range of digital tools and use them consistently in educational contexts. For them, the advantages are clear: quick access to information, greater flexibility, and a more efficient working process.

At the same time, the discussions suggest that technology is used mostly for information consumption, completing school tasks, and personal organization, and much less for initiating or developing projects. Participants said they often use applications that help them obtain summaries, quick explanations, or ready-structured content, but far less often for project planning, organized collaboration, or developing their own digital solutions. Some also mentioned that certain more complex tools seem difficult to use, which points to gaps in advanced digital skills. In other words, although access to and familiarity with technology exist, its use for entrepreneurial or innovation-related purposes remains limited.

When it comes to how they prefer to learn, participants emphasized the value of interactive, practical, and experience-based activities. Most said they learn better when there are concrete demonstrations, hands-on exercises, and the opportunity to immediately apply what has been presented to them. The importance of clear, step-by-step explanations and guidance from a trainer or mentor was also highlighted. In their view, exclusively theoretical learning does not produce sufficient results and does not provide the support needed to truly understand concepts.

Participants also talked about their preference for small working groups, where they can interact directly both with the trainer and with other participants. In this type of setting, the exchange of ideas and collaborative learning are seen as very useful. Several young people explained that it is easier for them to understand and remember information when they have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss, and receive immediate answers. They also mentioned that a combination of face-to-face and online activities seems more effective than either of the two formats alone, precisely because it offers both flexibility and direct contact.

Another important element that emerged in the discussions relates to motivation. Young people said that they find it difficult to complete online courses when these lack a clear structure, do not involve interaction, or are not supported by mentoring or concrete deadlines. Self-paced courses without feedback and without any form of accountability are perceived as harder to complete. In contrast,

activities that include interaction, responses, support, and a certain working rhythm are considered more effective. This suggests that training programs for young people should include not only content, but also elements that sustain engagement throughout the process: mentoring, guidance, and real interaction.

Different perspectives also emerged in the discussions about entrepreneurship. For some participants, entrepreneurship means independence, professional freedom, and the chance to turn an idea into a concrete project. They see it as an opportunity to create something new and to work in a field that motivates them. For others, however, entrepreneurship is associated more with risk, responsibility, and administrative difficulties. Aspects such as the need for initial investment, obligations toward potential employees, and uncertainty of results were mentioned.

These responses show that perceptions of entrepreneurship are mixed. There are participants who are interested and motivated to develop projects or even businesses, but there are also young people who do not feel prepared or who do not see themselves in this direction. Interest exists, but it is influenced by personal confidence, access to information, and previous experiences. In addition, the way they spoke about the topic suggests that entrepreneurship becomes easier to imagine as a realistic option when support, examples, and access to resources are available.

Participants identified several barriers that prevent them from starting a project or a business. One of the most frequently mentioned is the lack of entrepreneurial and financial education. They said that what they learn formally about entrepreneurship is limited, superficial, or poorly connected to reality. In addition, much of the information comes from the online environment, where examples are often simplified or overly optimistic, which can create unrealistic expectations and confusion.

Another difficulty mentioned is the lack of real examples and practical experiences. Participants said it would help them to see not only success stories but also examples of projects that did not go well, so they could better understand what such a journey realistically involves. At the same time, the lack of mentoring and guidance emerged clearly: many of them do not know where to start and feel they need support in turning an idea into a clear and feasible plan.

As for support networks, most participants said they would rely first on their personal network. They mentioned that they would talk to friends, colleagues, or people who already have experience in a relevant field. Networking is seen as a valuable resource, both for accessing information and for clarifying ideas. Participants stressed that talking to people who have already gone through the process of starting a project can reduce uncertainty and provide more clarity. In this context, mentoring was seen as an important element in supporting young people who want to put their ideas into practice.

Participants also spoke about the effects that digital and entrepreneurial skills development programs could have. In their view, such programs could help increase confidence, make the necessary steps easier to understand, and encourage more young people to get involved in projects or their own initiatives. They also mentioned that access to training opportunities could stimulate interest in entrepreneurship and support the emergence of local initiatives. At the same time, participants emphasized that changes in

mindset do not happen immediately and that the effects of such interventions would become visible over time.

Overall, the focus group results show that young people have a natural and consistent relationship with digital technology and frequently use online tools for learning and organization. However, applied digital skills and the use of technology for project development remain limited. At the same time, there is a moderate interest in entrepreneurship, but this is not sufficiently supported by practical skills and access to relevant information. Young people prefer interactive, practical, and guided forms of learning and need mentoring, financial education, entrepreneurial skills development, and concrete support to turn ideas into real initiatives.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups – Youth and pro-youth NGOs Representatives

The focus group organized with representatives of youth and pro-youth organizations aimed to understand how they perceive the level of young people's digital and entrepreneurial competences, the difficulties organizations face in their daily work, and the types of training and tools needed to build more effective programs. The discussions highlighted both the direct experience accumulated by organizations in working with young people and a number of limitations related to skills, access to resources, and the lack of sufficiently well-structured educational methodologies.

From the very beginning of the discussion, participants emphasized that the CYBER Change project responds to a real need. They mentioned that many young people face difficulties when trying to access educational or professional opportunities, and that organizations need more up-to-date and better-adapted tools to support them in developing digital, entrepreneurial, and civic competences. This is especially true in the case of young people with fewer opportunities.

One of the ideas that repeatedly emerged during the focus group was the difference between frequent use of technology and the actual level of applied digital skills. Participants observed that most young people, including those from rural areas, have smartphones and use different digital applications. However, this does not automatically mean that they can also use technology for practical purposes, such as drafting a document, working on a computer, or efficiently organizing information.

This observation suggests that young people are mainly familiar with technology used for communication, socializing, or entertainment, and less with its functional uses in education, employment, or entrepreneurship. NGO representatives emphasized that the fact that many young people rely almost exclusively on mobile phones limits the development of more complex digital skills. In addition, access to computers and to practical training activities remains limited, especially in rural areas.

Another issue mentioned was the difficulty young people have in identifying safe and credible platforms for educational and professional opportunities. Participants referred to situations in which young people end up on unsafe websites or on platforms that request personal data without offering real opportunities.

Such experiences create distrust and may discourage young people from seeing the online environment as a space for personal and professional development. In this context, the need to develop digital critical thinking, source verification, and responsible use of online platforms was emphasized.

The discussions also highlighted clear differences between young people in urban and rural areas. Although smartphone access is fairly widespread in both contexts, participants observed that young people in rural areas have fewer opportunities to work on a computer or to develop applied digital skills. In many cases, schools have some technical equipment, but it is not used consistently for the development of students' digital competences.

This situation contributes to maintaining a gap between everyday familiarity with technology and the competences needed to enter the labor market or start entrepreneurial projects. From the participants' perspective, future interventions should focus on practical training, access to equipment, and activities specifically adapted for young people from disadvantaged communities.

NGO representatives also pointed out that young people show interest in social and entrepreneurial initiatives, but face difficulties when they have to turn an idea into a concrete project. The most frequently mentioned obstacles are lack of knowledge related to planning, budgeting, finding funding, and the actual implementation of an idea.

Participants insisted that young people need clear step-by-step guidance, mentoring, and practical examples. Without these, interest exists, but it does not easily translate into action. The need to develop competences such as initiative, teamwork, and project management was also discussed, especially in the area of social entrepreneurship.

The focus group also revealed the difficulties organizations themselves face when trying to implement educational programs for young people. Among the most important were lack of financial resources, limited access to suitable educational materials, difficulties in reaching young people from rural areas, and the absence of sufficiently clear methodologies for digital and entrepreneurial training.

Participants explained that, although organizations carry out many activities, these are often linked to one-off projects and do not necessarily turn into long-term interventions or easily replicable models. In this context, the need for ready-to-use resources, practical guides, and adapted materials for working with young people with fewer opportunities was highlighted.

Another important conclusion was related to the type of training that is needed. Participants spoke about the importance of programs that are strongly practice-oriented and that include applied digital skills, the use of online tools for education and employment, entrepreneurial competences, and the use of technology in social initiatives.

At the same time, it was stressed that learning methods need to be interactive and close to young people's real-life experiences. Practical exercises, teamwork, mentoring, and peer learning were all mentioned as

more effective than purely theoretical training. Based on the organizations' experience, young people respond much better when activities are concrete, experiential, and allow them to quickly see the usefulness of what they are learning.

Focus Group Conclusions – NGOs

Overall, the discussions show that youth organizations perceive young people as having a relatively good level of technology use, but consider their applied digital skills to still be underdeveloped. Young people frequently use smartphones and online platforms, but face difficulties when it comes to using computers, drafting documents, organizing information, or using digital tools for education and work.

The focus group also confirmed the existence of a gap between rural and urban contexts, especially in terms of access to equipment, learning opportunities, and the development of applied digital skills. This supports the need for interventions specifically dedicated to young people with fewer opportunities.

Participants also pointed out that young people are interested in social entrepreneurship and community engagement, but still lack the necessary skills to plan and implement projects. Lack of mentoring, lack of clear guidance, and limited access to funding were identified as the main barriers.

At the same time, organizations spoke about their own limitations, related to resources, tools, and methodologies, which make it difficult to develop well-structured and easily scalable programs. This points to a clear need for practical materials, replicable models, and tools adapted to the real contexts in which organizations work with young people.

Overall, the focus group findings support the idea that integrated programs are needed—programs that combine the development of applied digital competences, social entrepreneurship, experiential learning, and mentoring. Such interventions could play a double role: on the one hand, supporting young people in building the competences needed for social and entrepreneurial initiatives, and on the other hand, strengthening the capacity of organizations to deliver more effective and inclusive educational programs.

National-Level Conclusions and Recommendations

The needs analysis carried out within the CYBER Change project clearly shows that there are several real and interconnected needs, both among young people and among the organizations that work with them. These needs are especially visible in the areas of digital skills, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship. The data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups indicates that, although young people are open, interested, and use technology frequently in their daily lives, this potential is not yet supported by applied skills, equal access to opportunities, and sufficient practical learning contexts.

One of the first important aspects emerging from the research relates to digital skills. Young people manage well in basic activities such as communication, learning, and information search, but when it

comes to using technology to build projects or develop initiatives, things become more difficult. The gap between everyday use and applied use of technology is one of the clearest conclusions of the analysis. In relation to Objective 1, this suggests the need for training programs that go beyond the basic level and include skills such as digital collaboration, content creation for civic or entrepreneurial purposes, project organization, responsible use of artificial intelligence, and solving concrete problems with the help of technology.

As far as entrepreneurship is concerned, the results show a clear interest among young people in social initiatives and community engagement. However, this interest is not matched by the same level of confidence in their ability to carry things through. Young people feel more comfortable in the areas of ideas, communication, and collaboration, but less prepared when they need to plan, manage resources, access funding, or deal with administrative aspects. In relation to Objective 3, this points to the need for training programs that are practical, progressive, and application-oriented. It is important that these include topics such as social entrepreneurship, design thinking, financial education, pitching, fundraising, and project management, and that they are delivered in an accessible way, using real examples and concrete exercises, not only theoretical input.

A conclusion that runs across all research methods is the gap between young people's motivation and their actual capacity to implement ideas. Although there is interest and willingness to get involved, this is often blocked by a lack of clarity regarding the necessary steps, fear of failure, absence of mentoring, and limited access to resources. In some cases, social or economic barriers are also involved. In this context, it becomes important for learning programs not to stop at information delivery, but to also include concrete support in the application process: mentoring, feedback, work in small groups, peer learning, and clear development pathways. This direction is relevant both to Objective 1 and Objective 3.

For young people with fewer opportunities, the research highlights a series of specific barriers: place of origin, limited access to digital equipment and resources, financial difficulties, lack of an adequate learning space, and lack of exposure to relevant role models or examples. In addition, many of these young people have a narrower horizon in terms of educational and professional options. These findings are directly linked to Objective 4 and show that a genuinely inclusive approach is needed. The materials and activities developed should be adapted to the local context, to participants' competence levels, and should be built in accessible language. It is also important that they can be implemented in contexts where infrastructure is limited.

At the level of youth and pro-youth organizations, the results show that there is experience, openness, and a good capacity for participatory work. At the same time, there are limitations related to resources, program continuity, access to ready-to-use materials, and the difficulty of developing scalable interventions. Organizations see themselves as strong in the areas of inclusion, peer learning, advocacy, and non-formal methods, but more vulnerable when it comes to stable funding, access to specialized trainers, connecting young people to real opportunities for funding and mentoring, or turning accumulated experience into replicable models. These aspects are relevant for Objective 2 and indicate

the need for concrete tools: step-by-step guides, mentoring toolkits, ready-to-use sessions, case studies, and adaptable digital resources, including for working with vulnerable young people.

Another important point is the role of peer learning. Both young people and organizations see this approach as more accessible and more motivating than traditional formats. In this sense, developing groups of young people who can become peer trainers or peer mentors appears to be a promising direction. This approach not only supports skills development, but also contributes to increased participation and to shaping young people who can, in turn, become agents of change in their communities. This direction supports both Objective 1 and Objective 4.

Overall, the analysis shows that the CYBER Change project responds to current and clearly identified needs. Among the priorities identified are the development of applied digital skills, support for social entrepreneurship and community initiatives, reducing inequalities between young people with different levels of access to resources, strengthening the capacity of organizations, and creating learning models that are more flexible and closer to real-life needs. Putting these directions into practice can contribute to creating more relevant, accessible, and sustainable learning opportunities for young people in Romania, especially for those with fewer opportunities.

NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT – SERBIA

The national needs assessment report for Serbia outlines the key findings related to digital skills, entrepreneurial readiness and participation of young people, alongside the perspectives and capacities of youth and pro-youth organisations.

Brief summary of the used methodology

This section presents the report on the needs assessment conducted in Serbia, implemented within the framework of the CYBER Change project, which is carried out in partnership with organisations from several countries. The needs assessment was conducted in parallel across all partner countries, with the shared objective of ensuring a comprehensive and comparable understanding of the situation and needs of the target groups in the areas of digital skills, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

In this context, the national research conducted in Serbia contributes to the broader project-level analysis by identifying specific needs, challenges and opportunities within the local context. The research provides an evidence-based understanding of existing competences, key gaps and barriers to participation, as well as opportunities for improving learning approaches and support systems, with particular attention given to young people with fewer opportunities.

In order to obtain a realistic and comprehensive picture of the situation, the research was conducted in line with a common research protocol developed at project level, ensuring consistency and comparability of data at both national and transnational levels. A mixed-methods approach was applied, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach enabled not only the identification of general trends, but also a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions and challenges faced by the target groups.

The research included two main target groups, defined at project level and involved in all research activities. The first group consisted of young people aged 15 to 29, with a particular focus on those with fewer opportunities. The second group included youth and pro-youth organisations working directly with young people.

Efforts were made to reach a diverse range of participants in terms of gender, place of residence (urban and rural), socio-economic background, and access to education and digital tools, in order to ensure representation of different perspectives within the sample.

Within the research, multiple data collection tools were applied in order to capture different aspects of the experiences and needs of the target groups. Quantitative data was collected through online questionnaires addressed to young people and to youth and pro-youth organisations, with the aim of obtaining a broader overview of trends, levels of competences, as well as perceived needs and barriers.

Qualitative data was collected through focus groups with young people and with representatives of youth and pro-youth organisations, in order to further explore their experiences, attitudes and challenges, and to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the identified trends.

In addition, interviews were conducted with young people with fewer opportunities, in order to include perspectives of groups that are more difficult to reach through online tools, and to gain more direct insight into the specific barriers and conditions they face.

The quantitative component included two structured online questionnaires developed at consortium level. In Serbia, the questionnaires were administered through the SurveyMonkey platform and distributed via an open link shared through partner networks, youth organisations, social media, and direct outreach to potential participants. This approach enabled broader participation across different groups.

The youth questionnaire targeted individuals aged 15 to 29 and covered areas such as access to digital tools, everyday use of digital skills (including artificial intelligence), entrepreneurial confidence, perceived barriers, and preferred learning formats. A total of 21 young people participated in the survey, with the majority aged 15–18, followed by 19–24, and with a significant representation of female respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were reached through a combination of convenience and targeted approaches.

The organisational questionnaire targeted youth and pro-youth civil society organisations and focused on their programmes, capacities in the field of digital and entrepreneurial education, perceived gaps among young people, and challenges in delivering inclusive and effective training. A total of 8 organisations participated in the research, exceeding the minimum threshold defined in the protocol. Organisations were reached through partner networks and prior cooperation, ensuring relevant experience in working with young people.

The data indicates a high level of digital connectivity among respondents, with all participants reporting access to the internet and almost all having access to digital devices. This provides an important basis for interpreting the findings and suggests that the main challenges are not related to access, but rather to the depth and quality of digital competences and their practical application.

To complement the quantitative data and provide deeper insight, qualitative methods were applied. Two online focus groups were conducted with young people, involving a total of 12 participants, ensuring diversity in terms of age, gender and background, including young people with fewer opportunities. In addition, one online focus group was organised with representatives of youth and pro-youth organisations, involving 7 participants.

The focus groups were conducted based on structured guiding questions covering topics such as the use of digital tools, perceptions of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, barriers to participation and learning, and expectations from training programmes. These discussions enabled a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and the factors influencing their motivation and engagement.

In order to include perspectives of young people who are not reached through online tools, two face-to-face interviews were conducted with young people from marginalized backgrounds (one female and one male participant). The interviews were based on the structure of the youth questionnaire, adapted for direct communication, and provided additional insight into the specific challenges faced by these groups.

Throughout the data collection process, attention was given to diversity and inclusion, including gender balance, representation of young people with fewer opportunities, and different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The combination of online and in-person methods enabled broader outreach and inclusion of diverse perspectives.

The analysis of the data was based on triangulation of findings from different sources. Quantitative data was used to identify trends and patterns, while qualitative data from focus groups and interviews provided context, explanation and deeper understanding of the reasons behind these trends. The consistency of findings increases the reliability of the results and provides a solid basis for the development of future activities, including training, educational materials and capacity-building actions.

During the implementation of the research, ethical research principles were strictly respected. Participation of all respondents was voluntary, and they were informed about the purpose of the research and the way the data would be used. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses were ensured, and the collected data was used exclusively for research purposes. Particular attention was given when working with young people and participants from vulnerable groups, in order to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for their participation.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire for both target groups

This section presents the key findings from the online questionnaires conducted with young people and youth and pro-youth organisations in Serbia. The analysis focuses exclusively on quantitative data and aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing competences, patterns of digital use, entrepreneurial readiness, as well as the main barriers and learning needs identified by both target groups.

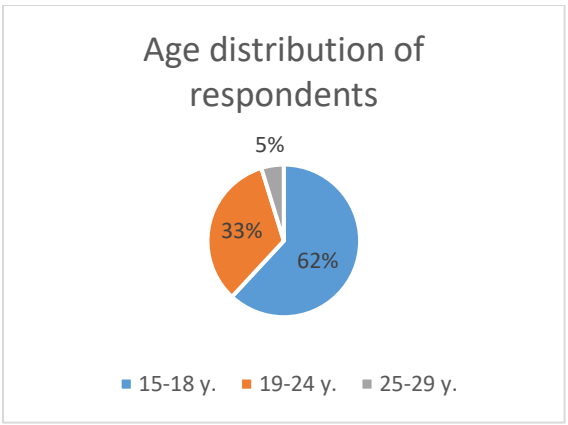
Overall, the findings indicate a consistent gap between access, usage and meaningful application of digital and entrepreneurial skills. While young people demonstrate high levels of digital engagement, their competences remain uneven, particularly in areas that require higher-order thinking, independent application and practical implementation. At the same time, organisations show strong experience in youth work, but face limitations in programme scope, resources and specialised expertise.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire – Youth

Respondent profile

A total of **21 young people** aged between 15 and 29 completed the online questionnaire in Serbia. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the 15–18 age group (61.9%), followed by those aged 19–24 (33.3%), while only a small proportion (4.76%) belong to the 25–29 age group.

Regarding gender, the sample is predominantly made up of girls and young women (80.95%), while boys and young men account for 19.05% of respondents. This gender distribution should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings, particularly in relation to participation patterns, confidence levels and expressed needs.



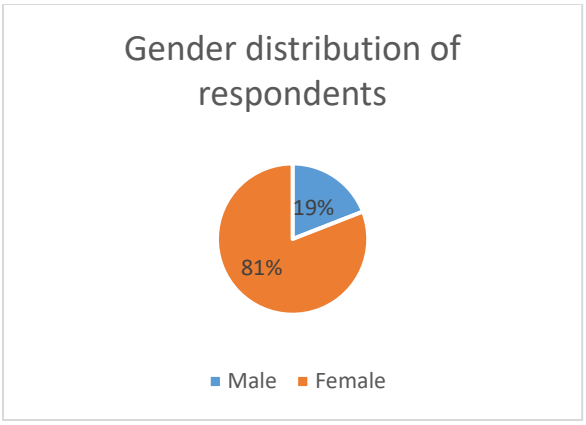


Figure: Age distribution of respondents

FIgure: Gender distribution of respondents

In terms of current status, most respondents are in education, with the majority being secondary school students (57.14%), followed by university students (23.81%). A smaller proportion includes employed young people (9.52%) and primary school students (9.52%). This confirms that the sample largely represents young people who are still developing their skills and exploring future educational and career pathways.

An important finding relates to access to digital infrastructure. All respondents reported having regular access to the internet, while 95.24% have access to a smartphone or computer. This suggests that access to technology is not a significant barrier for this group. Instead, the key challenges are more likely related to the level of digital competences, confidence, and the ability to use these tools in a meaningful and productive way.

In terms of inclusion and vulnerability, more than half of respondents (55%) do not identify as belonging to a vulnerable group. However, a relevant proportion report facing specific challenges, including living in rural or remote areas (20%), experiencing social barriers or lack of support (15%), and facing economic or financial difficulties (10%). A smaller share (5%) identify as belonging to minority communities. This indicates that, although the sample is not dominated by vulnerable groups, there is still a meaningful presence of young people facing structural or social barriers, which may influence their access to opportunities, learning environments and support systems.

Overall, the respondent profile reflects a group of young people who are digitally connected and engaged, but still in the process of developing key competences and confidence needed for education, employment and active participation.

Digital skills, use and perception of artificial intelligence (AI)

The results show that access to digital tools is almost universal, with 100% of respondents reporting internet access and 95.2% access to digital devices, confirming that digital infrastructure is not a primary barrier.

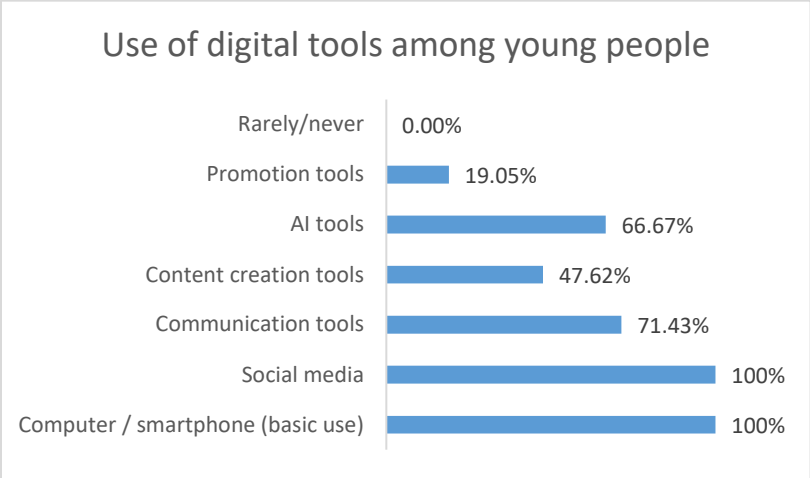


Figure: Use of digital tools among young people

Despite high levels of access, the findings indicate that levels of competence vary significantly among young people. While a portion of respondents demonstrate relatively strong confidence in basic digital skills, such as using productivity tools (e.g. documents, spreadsheets and presentations) and creating digital content (e.g. social media posts, simple graphics or videos), confidence decreases considerably when more advanced competences are considered. Only 14.3% report high confidence in areas such as coding, data analysis and automation, suggesting that young people are primarily positioned as users of digital technologies, rather than as creators or innovators.

At the same time, the data indicates that young people are not a homogeneous group, and that levels of digital readiness differ considerably, from those who are confident in everyday digital use, to those with limited exposure to more advanced tools. Some responses also suggest uncertainty regarding how specific digital skills can be applied in practice, indicating gaps not only in competences, but also in awareness and understanding.

A clear distinction also emerges between frequency of use and depth of engagement. While all respondents report frequent use of smartphones and social media and a large proportion use communication tools, fewer engage in activities such as digital content creation or promotion of ideas and initiatives. This indicates that digital engagement is high in volume, but limited in impact, with most activities focused on communication and content consumption rather than production or active participation.

Artificial intelligence is already widely used, with 66.7% of respondents reporting usage, primarily for schoolwork, problem solving and idea generation. This suggests that AI is integrated into everyday practices, but mainly as a support tool rather than as a driver of innovation or independent development.

An additional concern relates to **digital safety**. Only 19.05% of respondents report high confidence in safe internet use, while 42.86% report moderate confidence, indicating that a large proportion of young people are not fully equipped to manage online risks, including privacy, misinformation and responsible use of digital tools.

Digital skills and employability

The findings indicate certain challenges in the alignment between digital competences and labour market requirements. While young people demonstrate confidence in basic digital skills, their readiness to apply these competences in employment contexts remains uneven.

This finding should also be considered in the context of the sample structure, given that a significant proportion of respondents are secondary school students who are not yet actively engaged in the labour market. However, the data suggests that there is limited exposure to ways in which digital skills can be applied in professional and work-related settings.

Only 14.3% of respondents report high confidence in advanced digital competences, indicating that the majority of young people still lack specialised skills that are increasingly required in the labour market.

At the same time, digital tools are most commonly used for basic forms of digital interaction, with 100% of respondents using smartphones and social media, and 71.4% using communication tools such as messaging applications and email. These activities are primarily related to everyday communication, information exchange and content consumption.

On the other hand, a significantly smaller proportion of respondents engage in activities that have the potential to contribute to the development of employability related skills, such as digital content creation (47.6%) or promotion of ideas and initiatives (19.05%). These activities involve the development of practical competences such as creative expression, digital communication with audiences, basic digital marketing, as well as content planning and management, skills that are increasingly in demand in the labour market.

This suggests that, although young people actively use digital tools, their use remains largely focused on communication and content consumption, and to a lesser extent on activities that contribute to the development of applicable and professional skills. As a result, digital skills are not yet sufficiently translated into employability-related practices.

The use of artificial intelligence further reflects this pattern. While 66.7% of respondents report using AI, this is mainly for school-related purposes (76.2%), such as completing assignments, problem solving and idea generation, rather than for work-related or entrepreneurial activities. This indicates that AI is already integrated into everyday use, but is not yet sufficiently linked to the development of professional competences and employability.

Overall, the findings point to the need for stronger alignment between digital learning and the practical application of skills in the context of future employment. This includes a greater focus on practical experiences, guidance and support that can help young people gradually connect their skills with real labour market requirements.

Participation and engagement

In terms of civic participation, young people show a certain level of engagement, with 66.67% reporting occasional involvement in community activities, but only 14.29% participating regularly. This suggests that engagement is largely opportunity-driven rather than sustained, and that young people lack structured pathways for continuous participation.

Entrepreneurial skills and readiness for entrepreneurship

The findings indicate that young people demonstrate confidence in basic skills such as communication and teamwork (66.7%). However, this confidence is not always accompanied by an equal level of assurance in their practical application in the context of entrepreneurship.

A significant proportion of respondents lack sufficient familiarity with key entrepreneurial processes. A more detailed breakdown shows that the greatest challenges are related to administrative and financial aspects, while relatively higher confidence is observed in communication-related activities such as promoting ideas. This suggests that young people feel more comfortable with creative and communication tasks than with implementation-related processes.

Familiarity with entrepreneurial processes - The lowest levels of familiarity are observed in business registration (38.1% very low familiarity), understanding taxes and regulations (33.3% very low) and accessing funding (30% very low). This indicates that young people have limited knowledge of the procedural and administrative aspects of starting a business.

Perceived barriers - The findings are further reinforced by data on perceived barriers. The most frequently identified obstacles include lack of initial funding (65%), lack of mentorship (55%), administrative complexity (50%), lack of specific skills (40%) and fear of failure (35%). This suggests that barriers are not only financial, but also related to guidance, confidence and understanding of the process.

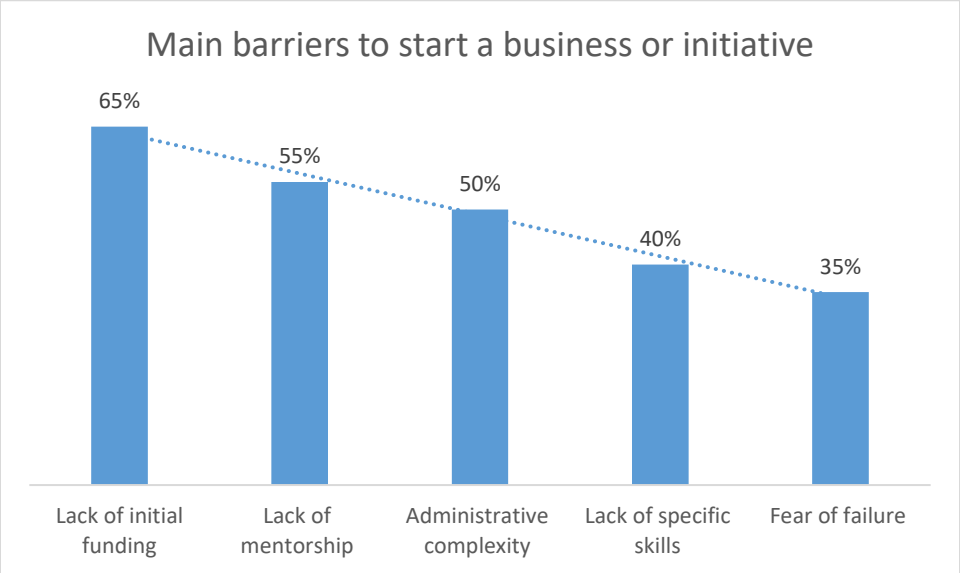


Figure: Main barriers among youth to start a business or initiative

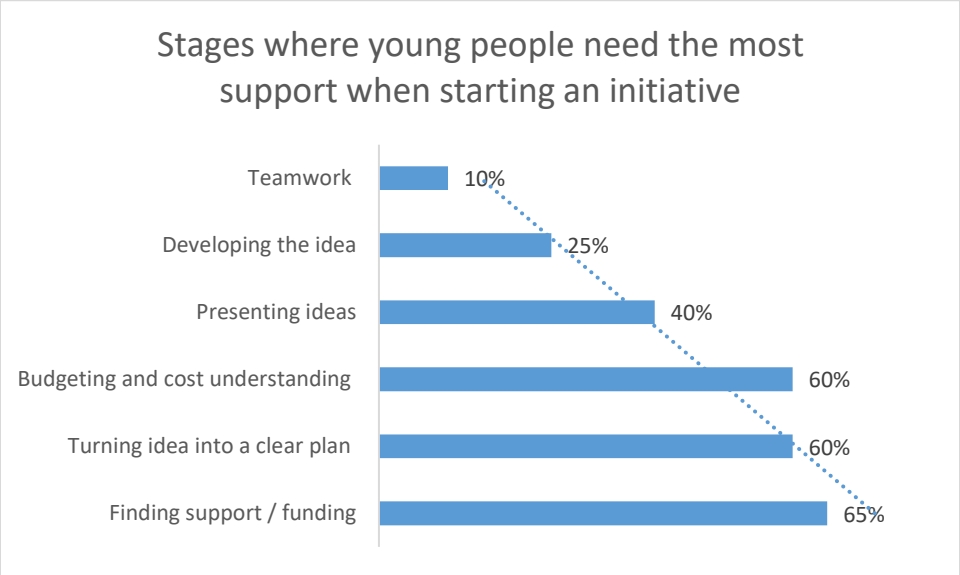


Figure: Stages where young peope, need the most support when starting business or initiatives

Challenges in the implementation phase - An additional insight relates to the specific stages where young people feel the most uncertainty. While generating ideas is perceived as less challenging, difficulties arise in later stages of the process, particularly in turning an idea into a clear plan (60%), budgeting (60%) and finding support or funding (65%). These findings suggest that the main challenge lies not in creativity, but in implementation.

Interest and readiness to engage - Although young people show interest in entrepreneurship, the data indicates a gap between interest and readiness to act. While 55% express willingness to engage in initiatives, the average likelihood of actually starting a project within the next 12 months remains moderate (3.05 out of 5). This suggests that interest exists, but additional support is needed to translate it into concrete action.

Learning needs - At the same time, young people demonstrate clear awareness of their learning needs. The most frequently identified priorities include financial literacy (75%), business planning (70%) and idea development (40%), indicating a strong demand for structured and practically oriented knowledge.

Preferred learning approaches - A particularly important insight relates to how young people prefer to learn. Respondents highlight the importance of clear step-by-step explanations (60%), mentorship support (60%), learning through trial and error (55%) and real-life examples (50%). This suggests that practical and experiential learning approaches are essential for developing entrepreneurial competences.

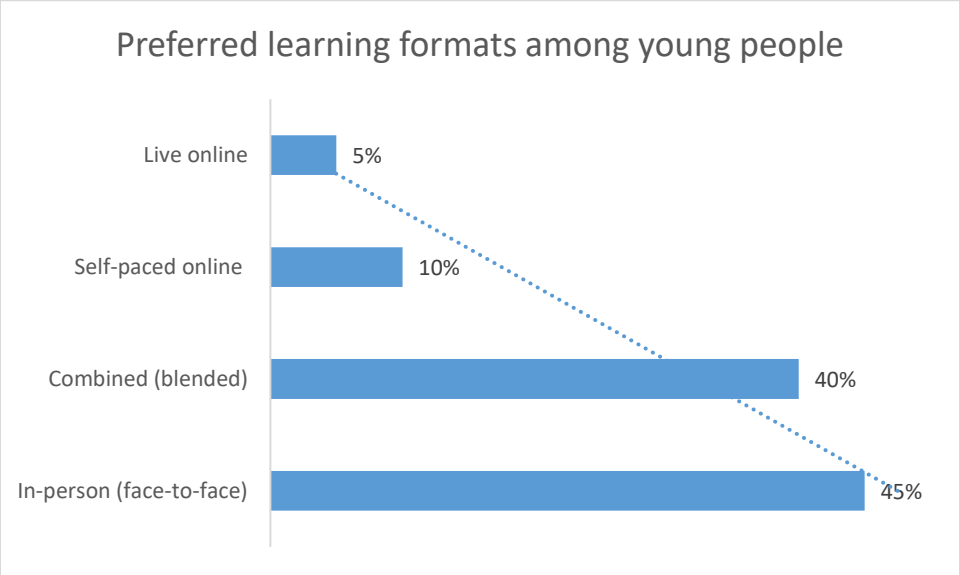


Figure: Preferred learning formats among young people

Overall insight

Overall, the findings point to a clear gap between potential and implementation, indicating that while young people have ideas and basic skills, they require guidance, practical experience and structured support to turn those ideas into viable initiatives.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire – Youth and pro-youth civil society organisations

Profile of responding organisations

The online questionnaire gathered responses from **8 youth and pro-youth organisations in Serbia**, providing insight into their operational capacities, programme focus and perspectives on the needs of young people in the areas of digital skills, entrepreneurship and participation.

The organisations that responded represent a relatively experienced segment of the youth sector, with 75% reporting more than 10 years of experience in working with young people. However, despite this strong experience base, most organisations operate on a relatively small scale, with 50% working with up to 50 young people annually, and 37.5% reaching between 51 and 200, indicating limited outreach and challenges in scaling impact.

At the same time, organisations rely significantly on volunteers, with most of the responding organisations engaging between 0 and 45 volunteers annually, suggesting that youth work is largely sustained through mixed structures of staff and volunteers rather than fully professionalised teams.

A strong orientation towards inclusion is evident, as 87.5% of organisations that responded report working with young people with fewer opportunities, including those from rural areas, economically disadvantaged backgrounds and socially excluded groups. This reflects a high level of awareness of social inequalities, although organisational capacity to fully respond to these needs remains constrained.

Digital skills and employability (organisational perspective)

Organisations report a diverse range of activities, with a stronger presence in digital civic engagement (62.5%) and career guidance or employability support (50%), indicating their active role in supporting youth participation and transition to the labour market.

However, a significant gap emerges in relation to structured digital skills development. Only 12.5% of organisations report implementing digital skills training, suggesting that although organisations recognise the importance of digital competences, they are not yet systematically integrated into programme delivery.

From the perspective of organisations, key gaps in young people's digital competences include safe and responsible use of digital technologies (100%), financial literacy (87.5%), critical thinking and recognition of misinformation (75%), and understanding and ethical use of artificial intelligence (75%).

These findings indicate that, while young people are familiar with basic digital tools, they lack competences for critical, responsible and professional use of technology, reflecting a broader gap between everyday digital use and skills required for employability and active participation.

Entrepreneurial skills and youth readiness (organisational perspective)

From the perspective of the organisations that responded to the questionnaire, important gaps in entrepreneurial competences among young people are identified. The most significant relate to financial literacy (87.5%), business planning (50%), use of digital tools for income generation (50%), and motivation and self-confidence (50%).

In addition, organisations highlight limited understanding of administrative and legal procedures, including business registration and regulatory requirements. This represents a key barrier that prevents young people from moving from ideas to implementation.

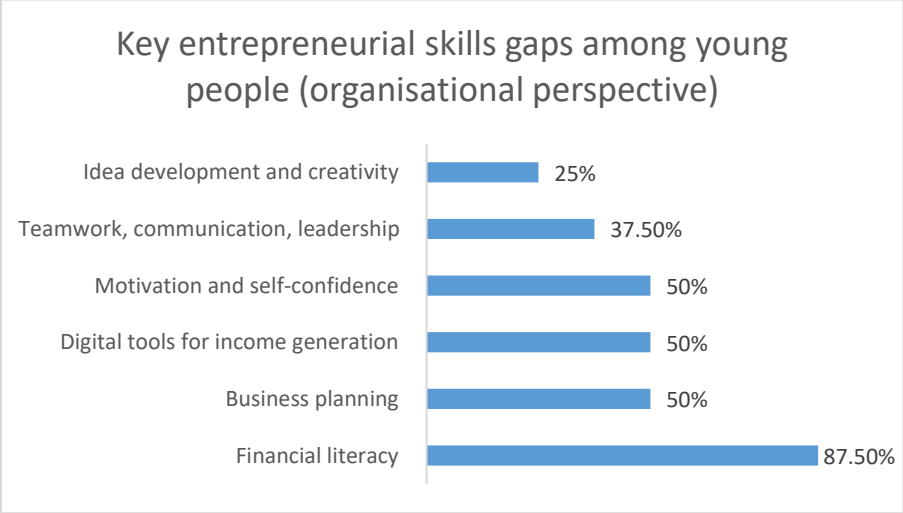


Figure: Key skills gaps among young people (from CSOs perspective)

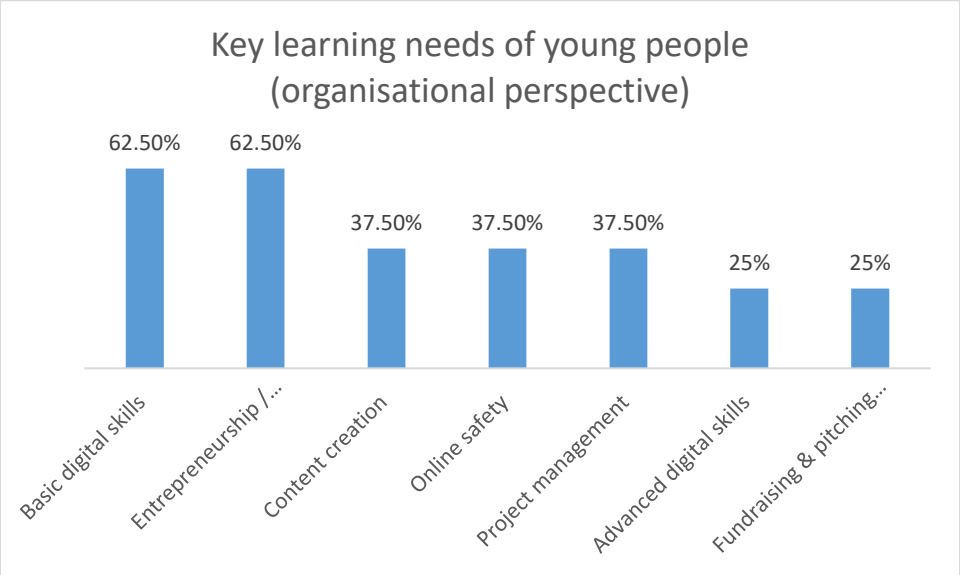


Figure: Key learning needs of young people (from CSOs perspective)

These findings suggest that young people often have ideas and initial interest, but lack the practical knowledge and structured support needed to transform these ideas into sustainable initiatives. The presence of both technical and personal gaps indicates that entrepreneurial readiness requires a more holistic approach.

Inclusion, participation and structural challenges (organisational perspective)

Organisations demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion, with 87.5% working with young people with fewer opportunities. However, at the same time, 50% report difficulties in reaching marginalised youth, indicating a gap between intention and effective outreach.

Groups facing the greatest barriers include young people with social and economic disadvantages, limited access to education, disabilities, and those in NEET situations, highlighting that barriers are strongly structural.

Organisations also face significant operational challenges. The most prominent is lack of funding (87.5%), followed by difficulties in reaching target groups (50%) and low motivation or engagement of young people (37.5%). These findings indicate that challenges are both internal (resources, capacities) and external (systemic barriers and access).

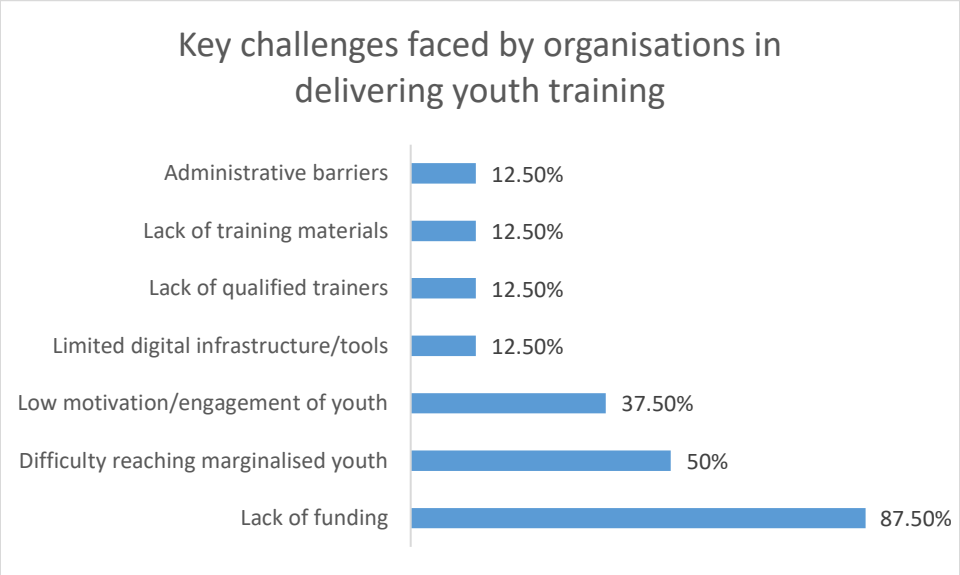


Figure: Key challenges faced by CSOs

At the same time, organisations report strong capacity in non-formal education and participatory approaches, but highlight the need for more practical learning materials, particularly case studies (87.5%), ready-to-use workshops (75%), and tools adapted for vulnerable groups (75%), as well as mentorship and exchange of experience (75%).

Despite these constraints, organisations show openness to innovation and willingness to improve their approaches, indicating strong development potential if adequate support is provided.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups – Youth

Two focus group discussions conducted **online** with young people in Serbia, involving a total of **12 participants (2 males and 10 females)**, provide insight into how young people actually use digital tools, how they learn, and how they perceive entrepreneurship in their everyday lives. The discussions reflect real experiences rather than self-assessment, highlighting both practical uses of technology and the barriers young people face when trying to move from ideas to action.

Use of digital tools in everyday life

Participants described digital tools as an integral part of their daily routines, most often using platforms such as Canva, ChatGPT, digital payment systems and other online tools for school-related tasks, communication and organisation. In several cases, young people explained that they rely on AI tools not only for finding information, but also for structuring assignments, simplifying complex topics and saving time.

Some participants went beyond basic use and described more advanced applications, such as using AI for coding support, generating business ideas or promoting products and services through Instagram. These

examples show that while many young people use digital tools at a functional level, a smaller group is already experimenting with more creative and entrepreneurial uses.

At the same time, participants clearly distinguished between using digital tools for everyday efficiency and using them in a more strategic way. While tools are widely used to complete tasks faster, fewer young people see them as tools for long-term development or income generation. This suggests that the challenge is not access or even basic use, but understanding how to apply digital tools in a more purposeful and strategic way.

A specific issue raised during discussions is the cost of digital tools. Several participants mentioned that in order to access full functionalities, they need to use paid versions, which affects their personal or family budgets. This indicates that access to digital tools is not equally distributed, and that financial capacity influences the level at which young people can engage.

Participants also shared concerns about trust and safety in the digital environment. Some mentioned experiences with scams, including on platforms such as LinkedIn, which made them more cautious when interacting online. Although they are aware of risks, they often lack clear strategies on how to protect themselves, which points to the need for more practical knowledge in this area.

Language was also mentioned as a barrier, particularly for those who are less confident in English. At the same time, participants recognized that AI tools can help overcome this challenge by translating or simplifying content, which opens up possibilities for more inclusive use of digital technologies.

How young people prefer to learn

A very clear message from all discussions is that young people do not respond well to traditional, lecture-based learning. Participants repeatedly emphasized that they lose concentration quickly if they are only listening, and that they engage much more when they are actively involved.

They highlighted group work, discussions and practical tasks as the most effective ways of learning. Several participants stressed that they understand concepts better when they can immediately apply them, rather than just hear about them. Visual elements, examples from real life, and interactive exercises were also mentioned as important.

Another important point raised is the role of the trainer. Participants noted that the same topic can be either interesting or boring depending on how it is delivered. This shows that methodology alone is not enough, and that facilitation skills play a key role in learning outcomes.

Understanding entrepreneurship in practice

When discussing entrepreneurship, participants generally described it as starting something of their own, developing ideas, or creating a business. They associate it with independence and creativity, but also with responsibility and risk.

However, when the discussion moved from definitions to practice, it became clear that many young people do not know what the actual steps are. They are unsure where to start, who to contact, or what procedures are required. This lack of clarity is one of the main differences between having an idea and taking action.

Barriers to taking action

The most frequently mentioned barrier is financial. Participants believe that starting any kind of business requires initial capital and that it is difficult to generate income in the early stages. Some noted that a business may not be profitable for a long time, which makes the idea of entrepreneurship less accessible.

Fear of failure is another strong factor. This is often connected to financial risk, but also to fear of judgment from others. Participants expressed concerns about how their ideas would be perceived, which affects their confidence and willingness to try. In addition to financial and structural barriers, participants highlighted *lack of self-confidence and fear of failure* as significant challenges that influence their willingness to take initiative. This fear is not only related to potential financial loss, but also to how their ideas and actions might be perceived by others in their social environment.

Several participants expressed concern about negative judgment, criticism, or not being taken seriously, which creates hesitation and discourages them from testing their ideas. This indicates that entrepreneurial engagement is influenced not only by external conditions, but also by internal perceptions and social pressure. As a result, building confidence and creating supportive, non-judgmental environments appears to be equally important as providing technical knowledge and financial support.

A particularly important issue raised is the lack of information. Many participants said that they do not know where to look for support, which institutions are responsible, or how to access funding or mentorship. Administrative procedures were described as complicated and unclear, which further discourages young people from taking initiative.

Kind of support which is needed

Participants emphasized that support needs to be practical and continuous. They expressed a strong need for mentorship, particularly from people who have real experience and can explain processes step by step.

Financial support was also seen as important, especially at the beginning. In addition, participants mentioned the need for clear and accessible information, as well as practical tools that they can immediately use. Some specifically suggested having lists of free digital tools, which would be helpful for those who cannot afford paid versions.

Trust also plays a role in support systems. Young people tend to rely on people they know, such as family or friends, but they are also interested in learning from successful individuals who can serve as role models.

Motivation and potential

Despite the challenges, participants showed interest in developing their own ideas, particularly in areas such as small businesses, services or community-based initiatives. Some already use digital tools in this direction, even if on a small scale.

There is a clear sense that young people are willing to engage, but that they need clearer guidance, more accessible support and opportunities to test their ideas in practice.

Overall, the discussions show that young people in Serbia are active users of digital tools and are open to entrepreneurship, but face a combination of practical, informational and psychological barriers. Addressing these challenges requires approaches that are grounded in real-life application, continuous support and accessible resources.

Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups – Youth and pro-youth organisations

In addition, **one focus group discussion** was organised online with representatives **of youth and pro-youth organisations** in Serbia, involving **7 participants**, providing insight into their practical experience in working with young people, particularly in the areas of digital skills, employability and entrepreneurship. The discussion reflects concrete practices from the field, but also highlights systemic challenges that organisations face when trying to respond to the evolving needs of young people.

Successful practices in digital and youth work

Participants shared several examples of activities that proved to be effective in working with young people, particularly those that combine digital tools with practical application. These included workshops on the use of digital tools for environmental awareness (e.g. identifying plants, water sources and safe locations), training on digital tools for mental health support, and programmes focused on digital marketing and online business development.

In addition, organisations highlighted activities aimed at improving employability, such as training on CV writing, job interviews, teamwork and communication skills. In some cases, programmes included both basic digital literacy (e.g. computer use) and more advanced skills (e.g. Python, digital marketing), often supported through partnerships that allowed young people to access equipment and internet.

A common element across these practices is their practical and applied nature. Activities that allow young people to immediately use tools, experiment and see concrete results were perceived as the most effective, particularly when combined with peer learning approaches.

Work with young people with fewer opportunities

Organisations demonstrated strong commitment to inclusion, particularly through targeted support for young people with fewer opportunities. This includes providing devices such as tablets, ensuring internet access, organising online and in-person sessions, and reaching young people through networks of local partners.

However, these efforts also highlight structural limitations. Inclusion often depends on additional resources and external support, which are not always available. This suggests that while organisations actively work to reduce inequalities, their impact is constrained by broader systemic conditions.

Digital skills gaps among young people

Participants consistently emphasized that many young people still lack **basic digital literacy**, including skills such as opening and using email, participating in online meetings, or working with basic office tools. While young people are highly active on social media, this does not translate into functional or professional digital competences.

Another important gap relates to **digital safety and responsible use**. Participants noted that young people often do not pay attention to privacy settings, subscriptions or terms of use when downloading applications, which increases their exposure to risks.

Language was also identified as a barrier, particularly for young people with disabilities or fewer opportunities, as many digital tools are primarily available in English. This further limits their ability to fully benefit from digital learning opportunities.

Challenges in reaching and engaging young people

Participants identified several groups of young people who are particularly difficult to engage. These include young people with disabilities, those living in rural areas and those without access to transport or stable digital infrastructure.

A broader challenge relates to motivation and engagement. Participants noted that young people are exposed to a large amount of fast and easily accessible content, which makes it difficult to keep their attention in longer or more structured programmes. As a result, activities that require sustained engagement are often less attractive unless their benefits are clearly communicated.

This indicates that engagement depends not only on access, but also on relevance, visibility and the perceived value of participation.

Entrepreneurial skills gaps

From the perspective of organisations, the most significant gaps among young people relate to **financial literacy, understanding of institutions and legal frameworks, and knowledge of how systems function in practice**.

Young people often do not know which institutions are responsible for specific processes, how decisions are made, or what legal obligations exist when starting a business. This lack of understanding of administrative and legal procedures represents a major barrier to moving from ideas to implementation.

In addition, participants highlighted the lack of **strategic thinking, critical reflection and communication skills**, which are necessary for developing, presenting and refining ideas. While young people often have ideas, they struggle to present them clearly or adapt them to different audiences.

Barriers to entrepreneurial engagement

Financial constraints are identified as one of the main barriers, particularly in relation to starting a business or implementing an idea. However, participants emphasized that financial barriers are closely linked with other challenges.

A particularly important issue is the **lack of self-confidence**, especially among young people with fewer opportunities. These young people often grow up in environments where they have limited exposure to entrepreneurial practices and lack role models who could demonstrate that success is achievable.

Fear of failure and concern about how others will perceive their ideas further limit their willingness to take initiative. Many young people feel pressure to avoid mistakes, which discourages experimentation and learning through practice.

In addition, the absence of mentorship and guidance makes it difficult for young people to navigate both the initial stages of idea development and the more technical aspects of implementation.

Specific challenges for vulnerable groups

Participants highlighted that young people with fewer opportunities face additional barriers compared to their peers. These include lower levels of self-confidence, lack of exposure to entrepreneurial environments, and absence of role models within their communities.

Many of these young people do not have the opportunity to interact with entrepreneurs or individuals who have successfully developed their own initiatives. As a result, entrepreneurship is often perceived as distant or unattainable.

This suggests that inclusion requires more than access to programmes — it also requires creating environments in which young people can see themselves as capable of success.

Support needs and recommendations

Participants emphasized the importance of long-term and structured support. Career guidance was identified as an important entry point, helping young people better understand their opportunities and pathways.

A strong emphasis was placed on mentorship. Organisations suggested mapping local businesses and entrepreneurs who could provide guidance, share experiences and offer practical insights. Opportunities for volunteering or short-term placements in companies were also highlighted as useful for gaining real-life experience.

Participants also stressed the need for advisory support in areas such as legal and administrative procedures, as well as financial support mechanisms, including regranting schemes that would enable young people to test their ideas in practice.

Finally, organisations emphasized the importance of strengthening their own capacities, including access to stable funding and support for programmes focused on digital skills and entrepreneurship.

Brief summary of the conclusions reached through the interviews with specific target groups

The findings from the individual interviews provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of young people's experiences, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalized groups. In order to complement the data collected through questionnaires and focus groups, **two individual interviews** were conducted with young people with fewer opportunities. One respondent is a **male aged 25–29 who is unemployed**, while the other is a **female aged 19–24, also unemployed**. Both participants identify as belonging to vulnerable groups, including those facing social barriers, financial difficulties, and limited access to opportunities, allowing for a more detailed understanding of the specific challenges they face.

The interviews confirm the overall trends identified in the questionnaire data, while also showing that these challenges are more pronounced among young people with fewer opportunities.

A key pattern emerging from the interviews is a notably lower level of self-confidence and clarity. This is particularly visible in responses to open-ended questions, where participants frequently answer with "I am not sure" or "I don't know," especially when asked about their own skills or possible solutions for their community. This suggests that the challenge is not only a lack of skills, but also limited awareness and self-perception.

In terms of digital skills, both respondents report **basic use of digital tools**, such as smartphones, social media, and communication platforms. However, their confidence in more advanced digital competences remains low. Although they use the internet on a daily basis, their confidence in **content creation, project organisation, and the use of more advanced tools** is limited or inconsistent.

The use of artificial intelligence is also limited. One respondent reports **not using AI tools at all**, while the other uses them only for basic purposes such as searching for information. This indicates that the potential of these tools remains underutilized, particularly in the context of learning, development, and employability.

In addition, although digital tools are used daily, their use for **active participation or initiative development is very limited**. Respondents indicate that they rarely or only occasionally use digital platforms to support social or civic initiatives, suggesting that digital engagement remains largely passive rather than participatory.

A particularly important insight relates to entrepreneurial competences. Both respondents demonstrate a **very low level of familiarity with key processes involved in starting a business**, especially in areas such as business registration, financial planning, accessing funding, and understanding regulations.

This is further confirmed by their responses regarding barriers, where the most significant include **fear of failure**, **lack of initial funding**, and **lack of mentorship or guidance**.

Despite a certain level of interest in engaging in initiatives, their readiness remains limited. When asked whether they would start a project, the responses tend to be “maybe,” indicating the presence of motivation, but also a significant level of uncertainty.

Furthermore, the interviews show that young people feel most insecure in the stages of **idea development, transforming ideas into concrete plans, budgeting, and finding financial support**. This indicates that the main challenge is not generating ideas, but implementing them.

In terms of learning, both respondents clearly highlight that they benefit most from **real-life examples, practical exercises, step-by-step explanations, and support from mentors or trainers**. This confirms that effective approaches for this target group need to be practical, structured, and supported through continuous guidance.

Finally, the interviews show that although young people express some interest in addressing community issues, they face difficulties in translating these ideas into concrete solutions. This further highlights the need for support in the process of idea development and implementation.

Overall, the findings from the interviews indicate that young people with fewer opportunities face a combination of **limited skills, low self-confidence, limited exposure, and structural barriers**. These challenges are interconnected and require an integrated approach that combines skills development, confidence building, practical experience, and mentorship support.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section synthesises the findings and provides recommendations aligned with the research objectives.

Youth

The findings indicate that young people in Serbia have a high level of access to digital tools and actively use them in their daily lives, particularly for communication, learning and access to information. Basic digital competences are relatively well developed; however, there is a clear gap when it comes to more advanced, employment-relevant and strategic skills.

Although digital tools, including artificial intelligence, are widely used, their application remains largely functional. Young people rarely use these tools for creative, professional or entrepreneurial purposes,

pointing to a structural gap between access, usage and meaningful application of digital skills. The key challenge is therefore not access to technology, but the way and purpose of its use.

Entrepreneurial competences are uneven and generally underdeveloped in practical terms. While young people demonstrate interest, ideas and motivation, they lack concrete knowledge in areas such as financial literacy, business planning, administrative and legal procedures, as well as access to funding mechanisms. A particularly significant gap exists between idea generation and actual implementation.

The data suggests that the barriers young people face are predominantly structural, but are further reinforced by individual and psychological factors. Limited financial support, insufficient mentorship opportunities, complex administrative procedures and a lack of clear and accessible information about opportunities and support systems represent key obstacles. Many young people are unsure where to seek support and how to navigate existing mechanisms. These challenges are even more pronounced among young people with fewer opportunities, who face additional barriers related to limited exposure, fewer learning opportunities and broader social constraints.

In this context, psychological barriers further amplify the impact of structural limitations. Lack of self-confidence, fear of failure and concerns about social perception influence young people's willingness to take initiative and make use of available opportunities. Interview findings show that young people often struggle to recognise their own capacities and potential, indicating that skills development must be complemented by confidence-building and empowerment measures.

At the same time, young people clearly express a preference for interactive, practical and experience-based learning approaches. Traditional lecture-based formats are perceived as less effective, while hands-on learning, real-life examples and mentorship significantly increase motivation, engagement and the ability to apply knowledge.

Overall, the findings show that young people are motivated and digitally active, but their potential is not fully utilised. In order to translate their ideas into concrete actions, they require structured support, practically oriented knowledge and continuous systems of mentorship and guidance.

Youth and pro-youth organisations

From the perspective of organisations, youth and pro-youth organisations in Serbia operate within a context of limited financial and human resources, which constrains their ability to plan strategically, expand their activities and ensure long-term sustainability. Despite this, they demonstrate significant experience in working with young people and possess well-developed capacities in participatory and non-formal education approaches.

However, there is a clear gap between organisational capacities and the actual delivery of programmes, particularly in areas such as digital skills, entrepreneurship and employability. While organisations are aware of the evolving needs of young people, existing programmes are often more focused on engagement and participation, while structured development of practical skills remains limited.

In addition, there is a significant mismatch between available educational resources and real needs. Materials are often too theoretical, insufficiently adapted or difficult to apply in practice, which creates a strong demand for practical, ready-to-use tools and methodologies.

Inclusion is recognised as a priority, yet organisations face challenges in reaching and sustaining the engagement of marginalized groups due to limited outreach capacity, lack of tailored approaches and resource constraints. At the same time, the importance of mentorship, long-term support and exposure

to real-life working and entrepreneurial environments is strongly emphasised as a key element for effective youth support.

In this context, there is a clear need to invest in capacity building of youth and pro-youth organisations, particularly in strengthening their ability to deliver practically oriented training in digital and entrepreneurial skills, develop innovative and scalable programmes, and improve access to financial and institutional support.

At the same time, it is essential to create more opportunities for real-life application and engagement, including access to funding mechanisms, support for youth-led initiatives, connections with professionals, and the creation of safe spaces where young people can test and develop their ideas.

Overall, the findings indicate that despite the motivation and engagement of both young people and organisations, there is a need for more systematic, practical and continuous support. Addressing the identified gaps requires coordinated efforts that combine skills development, mentorship, institutional support and inclusive approaches, ensuring the full activation of young people's potential and that no one is left behind.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews, the following recommendations are proposed in order to address the identified gaps and strengthen the capacities of young people and youth and pro-youth organisations.

General recommendations for strengthening support to young people

- Promote integrated approaches that connect digital skills, entrepreneurship and employability, with a strong focus on practical application.
- Strengthen the development of advanced and job-relevant digital competences, including content creation, digital collaboration and the use of artificial intelligence.
- Enhance financial literacy and entrepreneurial education, particularly in areas such as business planning, access to funding, and understanding administrative and legal procedures.
- Provide clearer and more accessible information on opportunities, institutions and support mechanisms.
- Establish sustainable mentorship systems and long-term support that guide young people from idea development to implementation.
- Promote interactive, participatory and experiential learning approaches, moving beyond predominantly theoretical formats.
- Strengthen inclusion through tailored approaches targeting young people with fewer opportunities.

Recommendations for the design of training programmes and learning resources

- Develop and implement short, practice-oriented training modules that combine digital and entrepreneurial skills, based on working on participants' real ideas.
- Include concrete, hands-on tasks within training, such as content creation, use of digital tools and application of AI for idea development and promotion.
- Develop simple and user-friendly tools (templates), such as: a business/project idea template; a basic budget template; a step-by-step implementation guide

- Introduce a mentorship component within programmes (e.g. 1–3 months after the training), providing ongoing support and feedback to participants.
- Organise sessions on financial literacy with a practical focus (budgeting, financial planning, funding opportunities).
- Develop a short and practical guide with information on available opportunities, institutions and resources.
- Include activities that build confidence and motivation (presentations, peer feedback, small group work).
- Use interactive methods (workshops, simulations, group work) instead of traditional lecture-based approaches.
- Ensure the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities through targeted outreach, cost coverage and adapted materials.
- Involve local experts, entrepreneurs and practitioners as guest speakers or mentors to provide real-life insights and relevance.

Recommendations for strengthening support to CSOs

General recommendations

- Provide sustainable financial and institutional support to enable long-term organisational development and programme stability.
- Strengthen capacity-building programmes for youth workers, particularly in digital skills, entrepreneurship and innovative learning methodologies.
- Support organisations in expanding programme areas related to employability, digital competences and entrepreneurship.
- Promote interactive, experiential and applied learning approaches, moving beyond predominantly theoretical formats.
- Strengthen outreach strategies and develop tailored approaches for engaging young people with fewer opportunities.
- Establish and support mentorship systems, including cooperation with local businesses, professionals and entrepreneurs.
- Facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing among organisations to exchange practices, tools and resources.
- Support long-term and holistic approaches that combine training, mentorship and continuous engagement with young people.

Recommendations for the design of training programmes and learning resources

- Develop practical training programmes that strengthen organisations' capacity to deliver digital and entrepreneurial education to young people.
- Create and disseminate practical, ready-to-use tools and learning materials adapted to different target groups and local contexts.
- Design and implement targeted outreach activities to engage marginalized and underrepresented youth.
- Establish small-scale funding opportunities (e.g. micro-grants or regranting schemes) that enable organisations to support youth-led initiatives and practical idea implementation.
- Integrate opportunities for real-life application into programmes, such as internships, volunteering, project-based learning and collaboration with local stakeholders.

- Strengthen mentorship components within programmes by connecting young people with experienced professionals, entrepreneurs and organisations.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, institutions and community actors to enhance programme relevance and sustainability.
- Introduce flexible and inclusive programme formats that respond to the needs and constraints of different groups of young people.
- Support the development of integrated programme models that combine training, mentorship, funding and follow-up support.

Cross-Country Summary, Key Findings and Recommendations

Building on the national needs assessment reports presented in the previous section, this chapter provides a consolidated overview of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations at cross-country level. By bringing together evidence from all partner countries, this section highlights common patterns related to digital skills, entrepreneurial competences, youth participation and organisational capacities of youth and pro-youth civil society organisations.

The purpose of this section is to go beyond individual country contexts and provide a clearer understanding of the key trends and structural gaps that affect young people across the project partner countries, particularly in the transition from basic knowledge and motivation to practical application and active engagement. It also reflects the shared challenges faced by youth and pro-youth organisations in delivering relevant, inclusive and practice-oriented learning opportunities.

The findings presented below are based on data collected through online questionnaires, focus group discussions and individual interviews, allowing for both quantitative comparison and qualitative insight across countries.

This section serves as a basis for the development of joint conclusions and recommendations, aimed at strengthening practical learning approaches, improving access to resources and support, and enabling more effective and sustainable engagement of young people.

Key cross-country findings

Across all data collection methods (online questionnaires, focus groups and interviews), a highly consistent pattern emerges: young people are digitally connected, motivated and aware of opportunities, but their skills and capacities remain uneven, particularly when it comes to practical application.

In the area of digital skills, access to technology is almost universal and everyday use is well established. However, this widespread use does not translate into more advanced or strategic competences. Young people primarily use digital tools for communication, learning and content consumption, while far fewer engage in activities that require creation, critical thinking or problem-solving. The use of artificial intelligence reflects a similar pattern, frequent, but mostly limited to short-term academic support rather than applied or innovative use. This indicates a need for more structured and purposeful integration of AI into learning and professional contexts.

A comparable gap is visible in the field of entrepreneurship. Young people demonstrate interest, creativity and willingness to engage, but face significant challenges when moving from ideas to implementation. Across all reports, the main difficulty lies not in generating ideas, but in navigating the steps that follow: planning, budgeting, accessing funding and understanding administrative procedures. These challenges are further reinforced by barriers such as lack of mentorship, fear of failure and limited access to resources.

Participation and engagement follow a similar dynamic. While young people express openness and interest in contributing to their communities, their involvement is often occasional and dependent on external opportunities. A lack of structured pathways, combined with low confidence and limited support, prevents more sustained and active engagement, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities.

At the same time, learning preferences are strongly aligned across countries. Young people consistently emphasise the importance of practical, interactive and experience-based learning. Traditional, lecture-based approaches are perceived as less effective, while hands-on activities, real-life examples and step-by-step guidance are seen as essential for meaningful learning and skill development.

From the perspective of organisations, a similar duality is observed. Youth and pro-youth organisations demonstrate strong commitment, experience and openness to innovation, particularly in non-formal education and participatory approaches. However, their ability to respond to the identified needs is often constrained by limited funding, insufficient human resources and a lack of practical, ready-to-use tools. A recurring issue across all reports is the mismatch between existing educational materials, which are often too theoretical, and the need for practical, adaptable and user-friendly resources.

Inclusion remains a cross-cutting challenge. Although organisations actively target young people with fewer opportunities, they frequently encounter difficulties in reaching and engaging these groups. Structural barriers, such as socio-economic conditions, geographic isolation and limited access to information—continue to shape unequal access to learning and participation.

Key cross-country conclusions

Taken together, the findings point to a structural gap that is present across all countries and thematic areas. On one side, there is clear motivation, digital connectivity and openness to learning among young people. On the other, there is a lack of structured support, practical competences and enabling environments that would allow this potential to be fully realised.

This gap is particularly visible in the transition from learning to action. Whether in digital skills, entrepreneurship or participation, young people often remain at the level of basic use, initial ideas or occasional engagement, without sufficient support to move further. The same applies to organisations, which have the experience and willingness to support youth development, but lack the resources and tools to do so in a systematic and sustainable way.

Overall, the findings indicate that the main challenge is not access or motivation, but the absence of structured pathways, practical learning approaches and continuous support systems that enable progression from knowledge to action.

Key cross-country recommendations

Based on the findings across all partner countries, a consistent pattern emerges: young people are digitally connected, motivated and interested in engagement, while organisations are experienced and committed. However, both groups face structural gaps related to practical application, access to resources and availability of continuous support.

In this context, the following cross-country recommendations are proposed:

- **Strengthen the transition from skills to practical application –** Across all partner countries, the findings consistently show that the main challenge is the ability of young people to apply their skills in real life contexts. For this reason, it is recommended to develop programmes that move beyond basic learning and focus on the practical application of knowledge, while supporting young people in transforming their ideas into concrete initiatives through clear, step-by-step learning pathways.
- **Develop advanced and applied digital competences -** While digital access and basic use are widespread across all countries, the application of digital tools in meaningful and strategic ways remains limited. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen competences related to digital content creation, communication and collaboration, as well as the use of digital tools for project management and employability. Particular emphasis should be placed on the practical use of artificial intelligence, enabling young people to apply it in idea development, project design, problem-solving and innovation.
- **Strengthen entrepreneurial competences with a practical focus -** Across all contexts, young people demonstrate interest in entrepreneurship but face difficulties when moving towards implementation. For this reason, it is recommended to strengthen practical entrepreneurial skills, including financial literacy, budgeting, understanding funding opportunities, and basic legal and administrative procedures. In addition, programmes should provide concrete guidance on planning, resource identification and implementation processes.
- **Establish structured mentorship and continuous support systems -** A consistent gap identified across all countries is the lack of guidance and support beyond initial training activities. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce mentorship as a core component of programmes, complemented by follow up support and continuous engagement, in order to guide young people throughout the process from idea development to implementation.
- **Promote experiential and interactive learning approaches -** The findings clearly indicate that traditional, lecture-based learning is perceived as less effective, while practical and interactive approaches lead to higher engagement. For this reason, it is recommended to prioritise hands-on learning, project based approaches and real life examples, as well as to integrate peer learning and collaborative work as key elements of the learning process.
- **Strengthen participation through practical opportunities -** Across all countries, youth participation is present but remains largely occasional and dependent on external opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended to create more structured opportunities for engagement, including youth-led initiatives, community based projects and practical assignments within training programmes, supported by small scale funding mechanisms that enable implementation.
- **Improve inclusion through targeted and flexible approaches -** The findings show that young people with fewer opportunities face consistent structural barriers in accessing learning and participation opportunities. For this reason, it is recommended to develop more inclusive and flexible approaches, including the use of simple and accessible content, adaptation to different contexts, and flexible delivery formats, alongside strengthened outreach strategies to reach rural, disadvantaged and marginalised groups.
- **Strengthen capacities of youth and pro-youth organisations -** Across all countries, organisations play a key role in supporting young people, but their work is often limited by insufficient resources and lack of practical tools. Therefore, it is recommended to support organisations in developing

practical and adaptable programmes, strengthening staff capacities, and improving access to funding and resources, as well as providing ready-to-use tools aligned with the real needs of young people.

- **Develop integrated and sustainable support systems -** The findings highlight the need for long-term and structured approaches that go beyond one-time activities. For this reason, it is recommended to develop integrated support systems that combine training, mentorship, practical application and access to resources, in order to ensure sustainable skills development and increased participation of young people.

Recommendations for the development of training manuals and learning materials

Based on the findings of the needs assessment across all partner countries, the development of training manuals and learning materials should be closely aligned with the identified gaps related to practical application of skills, transition from ideas to implementation, and the need for more structured and accessible support.

In this context, the following key thematic areas should be prioritized for digital skills and entrepreneurial skills development.

Digital skills development should prioritise topics such as:

- Development of applied digital competences, such as content creation, digital communication and online promotion of ideas
- Use of digital tools for collaboration, project management and teamwork
- Practical and purposeful use of artificial intelligence, including its application for idea development, research, communication and problem-solving
- Strengthening digital safety, critical thinking and responsible use of online tools, particularly in the context of misinformation and data protection
- Application of digital skills in the context of community engagement and social impact initiatives

Entrepreneurial skills development should prioritise topics such as:

- Idea development with a focus on identifying community needs and developing relevant solutions
- Basic project and business planning, including defining objectives, activities and expected results
- Financial literacy, including budgeting, cost planning and understanding funding opportunities
- Understanding of legal and administrative procedures, presented in a simplified and accessible way
- Development of skills for implementation, problem-solving and decision-making in real-life contexts
- Strengthening communication and presentation skills, including pitching and promoting ideas

In addition to thematic content, training materials should reflect several methodological approaches identified in the research:

  - Inclusion of real-life examples, case studies and practical exercises, in order to ensure applicability of knowledge
- Use of simple, clear and accessible language, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities
- Adaptation of materials to different learning contexts and formats (offline and online)
- Incorporation of elements that strengthen confidence, motivation and active participation
- Promotion of peer learning and collaborative approaches, as effective methods for engagement
- Ensuring that materials are flexible and adaptable, allowing organisations to use them in different local contexts

ANNEX:

Needs Assessment Instruments and Templates

Project:

CYBER-Change

Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change

Contract number: 101247052

Needs Assessment Instruments and Templates

Due date of deliverable: 31/01/2026
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The CYBER Change Consortium

Legal Name	Role	Country
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INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY INNOVATE (IDCSI)	BEN	XK
FORUM MLADI I NEFORMALNA EDUKACIJA (FORUM MNE)	BEN	ME

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INTRODUCTION

This document represents a comprehensive documentation package for conducting a needs assessment within the *CYBER Change* project. It includes a Research Protocol that defines the methodological approach, research design, and ethical principles, and contains as annexes all relevant research instruments and supporting documents. The annexes include: online questionnaires for young people and for youth/pro-youth civil society organisations, guidelines for focus group discussions and interviews, as well as informed consent forms for adults, parents/guardians, and children. Together, these components provide a consistent, ethical, and practical framework for data collection and analysis across all partner countries.

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RESEARCH PROTOCOL

for needs assessment analysis of the target groups within the project "CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change"

CONTENT

Project Summary

CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change is a 24-month Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Youth project implemented by a consortium of experienced youth organisations from Programme and Partner Countries.

The project is coordinated by **ASOCIATIA COPIII IN SANUL FAMILIEI - FoRC (Romania)**, in partnership with:

- **Centre for Youth and Social Development - CYSO (Serbia)**
- **MIOS (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**
- **Forum MNE (Montenegro)**
- ***IDCSI (Kosovo*)***

Overall objective of this project is to introduce and enhance an innovative model of learning based on peer education, exchanges between Program (RO and SRB) and Partner Countries (B&H, ME and KOS), learning mobility and cooperation between youth/pro-youth CSOs, formal and non-formal education providers in order to increase their capacities to work on these issues with young people, especially girls.

Specific objectives are:

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- To design relevant innovative and flexible models of learning aimed at empowering young people, especially girls and youth with fewer opportunities, through peer, digital and entrepreneurial education and skills;
- To raise capacities of youth and pro-youth CSOs and provide them with tools necessary for delivery of a new form of training based on non-formal flexible learning methods, learning mobility, virtual cooperation and OER;
- To launch, test and implement new practical training schemes on the healthy use of digital skills for social entrepreneurship and activism aimed at improving participants' level of competences and fostering their active engagement and participation in society;
- To strengthen the influence of youth/pro-youth CSOs in advocating for equal opportunities and rights of girls and young people with fewer opportunities free from discrimination, traditional prejudice in their local environments and bias towards their social engagement and participation in the society through building of strong teams of youth peer trainers and activists to work with their peers and younger generations.

Over its lifetime, CYBER Change will implement a coherent chain of activities including:

- local research and needs assessment,
- development of training manuals and digital learning tools,
- capacity-building of youth workers through trainings and study visits,
- peer-to-peer education with young people,
- youth-led advocacy and awareness campaigns,
- and impact assessment and policy recommendations.

By combining international cooperation, non-formal education and youth-led action, CYBER Change contributes to building more inclusive, resilient and digitally competent youth communities across participating countries.

1. Aim of the protocol

Within the CYBER Change – *Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change* project, an updated needs assessment will be conducted in all participating countries (Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Montenegro), focusing on young people and youth/pro-youth civil society organisations.

The main aim of this protocol is to define a structured and coherent methodology for assessing the current situation, needs and gaps related to:

- digital literacy and digital skills of young people,
- entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship skills,
- access to learning opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. rural youth, low-income backgrounds, NEET youth, young women and girls),
- capacities of youth and pro-youth organisations to support young people through digital, entrepreneurial and peer-based learning approaches.

The needs assessment will examine:

- existing levels of digital and entrepreneurial competences among young people across different communities,
- barriers that limit youth participation in digital initiatives, social entrepreneurship and civic or community-based actions,
- challenges faced by organisations in delivering effective, inclusive and youth-friendly training,
- opportunities for improving training formats, tools and learning methodologies.

The results of this research will serve as the evidence base for:

- updating the needs assessment of young people, with a strong emphasis on those with fewer opportunities,
- developing tailored training manuals, digital tools and learning materials for:
    1. development of digital skills for social entrepreneurship, and
    2. development of entrepreneurial skills,
- strengthening the capacity-building activities of youth and pro-youth organisations involved in the project.

This protocol outlines the methodological approach, data collection tools, ethical principles, sampling strategy and implementation framework to ensure that the findings are reliable, inclusive and directly applicable to the design of future project activities and learning resources.

2. Research objectives

The research aims to assess the digital, entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship skills of young people, with a particular focus on youth with fewer opportunities, and to identify key gaps and barriers to their active participation. It will also examine the capacities and needs of youth and pro-youth organisations in delivering effective digital and entrepreneurial learning. The findings will inform the development of

tailored training materials and manuals for strengthening digital skills for social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial competencies among young people.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3. Development of Needs Assessment Instruments

Structured research instruments will be developed to assess the needs, skills gaps and learning barriers of young people, especially youth with fewer opportunities, in the areas of digital skills, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. The needs assessment will also examine the capacities of youth and pro-youth organisations to support young people through relevant, practical and inclusive learning programmes.

The instruments will be developed through a collaborative and evidence-based process, combining desk research at national and EU level with partners' practical experience in youth work, non-formal education and peer learning.

The needs assessment will focus on two main target groups and will use online questionnaires and focus group discussions.

3.1. Youth Needs Assessment – Digital Skills & Entrepreneurship Skills

Objective:
To identify the current level of digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills and interest in social entrepreneurship among young people, with particular attention to youth with fewer opportunities.

Key areas covered:

- Access to digital tools and connectivity
- Everyday use of digital skills (including content creation and AI tools)
- Awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurial confidence and readiness
- Barriers to participation, learning and income generation

- Preferred training formats and support needs

Instruments:

- Online questionnaire (20–25 questions). *The questionnaire is available in Annex 1.*
- Focus group discussions (5–6 guiding questions). *The guiding questions for focus group discussion is available in Annex 2.*

3.2. Youth / Pro-Youth NGOs Capacity Assessment

Objective:
To assess the capacity of youth and pro-youth organisations to support young people in developing digital and entrepreneurial skills, including social entrepreneurship.

Key areas covered:

- Existing programmes and activities
- Observed skills gaps among young people
- Challenges in reaching youth with fewer opportunities
- Availability and quality of training materials and tools
- Capacity-building needs of organisations

Instruments:

- Online questionnaire (15–20 questions). *The questionnaire is available in Annex 3.*
- Focus group discussions (4–5 guiding questions). *The guiding questions for focus group discussion is available in Annex 4.*

4. Data collection

Once the research instruments are finalised, data collection will be conducted in all partner countries. The data collection process will combine online tools and qualitative methods in order to ensure inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and to capture diverse national contexts.

Data collection methods

1. Online Questionnaires

Two types of online questionnaires will be used:

a) Youth online questionnaire

- Target group: young people aged 15–29
- Minimum sample:
    - at least 20 youth respondents per country,
    - with specific outreach to young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. rural youth, low-income backgrounds, NEET youth, young women and girls, etc.).
- Purpose: to assess digital skills, use of digital tools (including AI), entrepreneurial readiness, interest in social entrepreneurship, perceived barriers and training needs.

b) Youth / Pro-Youth NGOs online questionnaire

- Target group: youth and pro-youth organisations working directly with young people
- Minimum sample: at least 5 NGOs per country
- Purpose: to assess organisational capacities, observed skills gaps among youth, challenges in delivering digital and entrepreneurial training, and needs for training materials and tools.

2. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions will be used to deepen and contextualise the findings from the online questionnaires and to capture qualitative insights that cannot be collected through surveys alone.

a) Youth focus groups

- Minimum: 1–2 focus groups per country
- Participants: at least 10 young people (5 male and 5 female) including young people with fewer opportunities
- Topics covered:
    - digital skills and access,
    - understanding of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship,
    - barriers to participation and learning,
    - interest in digital advocacy, social initiatives and peer-led activities,

- expectations from training programmes and learning formats.

b) Youth / Pro-Youth NGOs focus groups

- Minimum: 1 focus group per country
- Participants: at least 3 representatives of youth/pro-youth organisations
- Topics covered:
  - preparedness of young people for digital and social entrepreneurship,
  - missing tools, manuals and methodologies,
  - adaptation of materials for youth with fewer opportunities,
  - mentoring, follow-up and sustainability of training.

3. In-person Structured Interviews - *Targeting underrepresented groups*

To ensure inclusiveness and reach young people who are unlikely to participate in online surveys, interviews covering the same questions as in online questionnaires will be conducted in each country.

- Minimum: 2 in-person interviews per country (one male and one female)
- Target group:
  - young people with fewer opportunities who have limited or no access to digital tools,
  - young people from marginalized or hard-to-reach communities (e.g. rural youth, Roma youth, youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth).
- Gender balance will be ensured where possible.
- The interviews will follow the structure of the youth online questionnaire, adapted for face-to-face discussion.
- Interviewees will be identified in cooperation with national project partners.

It is recommended that these interviews take place after the online data collection, in order to specifically target groups that are underrepresented among survey respondents.

Sampling and diversity considerations

A targeted and inclusive approach will be applied to ensure diversity of respondents across countries, with attention to:

- gender balance,

- urban and rural contexts,
- socio-economic background,
- access to education and digital tools,
- youth with fewer opportunities.

Purpose of the data collection

The collected data will be used to:

- update the needs assessment of young people in the field of digital skills, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship;
- identify concrete gaps, barriers and priorities across countries;
- directly inform the development of tailored training manuals, digital learning tools and capacity-building activities within the CYBER Change project.

Data Collection and Report development Plan

Timeline

- Instrument development: up to 30th of January 2026
- Translation of the instruments and inputting into Google form or Survey Monkey: up to mid of February 2026
- Data collection: up to 10-15th of March 2026
- Draft Data Analysis & National Reports Writing: up to mid of April 2026
- Translation into English and draft Summary report preparation: Up to 20th of April 2026
- Final comments on the Report: 24th of April 2026
- Final deliverable: 27th of April 2026

5. Guidelines for focus group discussions

5.1. Main points

Focus groups will be organised in each partner country as follows:

- At least one focus group with young people per country, involving a minimum of 10 participants, with balanced gender representation (5 male and 5 female).

- At least one focus group with youth/pro-youth NGOs per country, involving representatives of a minimum of 3 youth or pro-youth organisations.

The focus groups will be used to explore needs, gaps and challenges related to digital skills development and social/entrepreneurial competencies, with particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

Method: In-person focus groups preferably, if impossible or too difficult then online focus group session using video conferencing tools to facilitate discussion.

Tools: A structured focus group discussion guide covering key topics and questions to be explored during the session.

Length: Minimum 60 minutes, optimum 90-120 minutes

5.2. General advice for facilitators

- Before starting the focus group, read all the questions thoroughly to ensure that you are familiar with the topics and the structure of the discussion.
- Choose a suitable quiet room or online platform for the discussion, ensuring privacy and confidentiality while avoiding interruptions.
- Ask for consent before starting the recording. (*See Annex 5 – Information Sheet and Consent Form for Adults; Annex 6 - Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians; Annex 7 - Information Sheet and Consent Form for Children*). If there is no unanimous consent for recording, use note taking technique.
- Before starting, remind participants to keep the discussion confidential and respect each other's privacy.
- Clearly explain the purpose, structure, and duration of the discussion.
- Stay neutral when listening to responses—avoid showing agreement or disagreement. Encourage open sharing without pressure or judgment.
- If a question is unclear, repeat it for clarity.
- If a participant's response is unclear, politely ask for clarification.
- At the end, thank everyone for their time and contributions.

After the completion of the Focus Groups, the facilitator should do a transcript.

6. Guidelines for the interviews

6.1. Main points

Sample: In each country, should be conducted at least 2 in person, interviews with representatives of specific target groups, ensuring diversity and comprehensive coverage. The interviewees will be identified in collaboration with the national project manager.

It is recommended that these interviews take place after the completion of the online questionnaire, specifically targeting representatives from underrepresented categories among respondents. This may include out-of-school children and youth, Roma communities, children and youth with disabilities, illiterate parents, and other marginalized groups.

Tools: The online questionnaire will be used for the interviews.

Length: 60-65 minutes

6.2. Guidelines for conducting an interview

- Select a secure and appropriate location for the interview to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and minimal interruptions. Participant safety must be maintained both during and after the interview.
- Introduce yourself and your role as the interviewer.
- Obtain the participant's consent before starting any recording. *See Annex 5 – Information Sheet and Consent Form for Adults; Annex 6 - Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians; Annex 7 - Information Sheet and Consent Form for Children*).
- Clearly explain the purpose, structure, and duration of the interview before beginning.
- Remain neutral when receiving responses. Avoid showing agreement or disagreement.
- If a question is unclear to the participant, repeat it using simple words to ensure understanding.
- Pay close attention to responses. If a participant has already addressed a later question within an earlier answer, avoid repeating the same question unnecessarily. Adapt the flow of the interview accordingly.
- If a response is unclear, politely ask the participant to clarify or elaborate on their answer.
- Respect the participant's time by starting and finishing on schedule. This demonstrates appreciation for their willingness to contribute to the research.
- Maintain eye contact and remain neutral by avoiding verbal or non-verbal approval or disapproval of opinions.

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- If a response lacks detail, use probing questions to gather more information. Examples include: *"Could you tell me more about that?"; "Could you explain further?"; "How does that work in practice?"; "Can you give an example?"*
- At the end of the interview, thank the participant for their time and valuable insights.

After the interview - After the completion of the interview, the interviewer should do a transcript.

7. Data analysis & prepare reporting

Each partner should produce its own brief national report presenting the main findings and conclusions in the provided template.

The report should be max 15 pages, Calibri, 11 font, single space, and should be prepared in national language and translated into English.

The report template will consist of questions related to:

- Brief summary of the used methodology (approximately 1,5 pages)
- Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online questionnaire for both target groups separately (approximately 4 pages)
- Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus groups for both target group separately (approximately 4 pages)
- Brief summary of the conclusions reached through the interviews with specific target groups (approximately 4 pages)
- National level conclusions and recommendations that should be linked with the research objectives (approximately 1,5 pages)

8. Ethical Considerations

The research will adhere to the highest ethical standards to ensure the protection of participants and data integrity.

- Voluntary participation - Participants are free to opt in or out of the research at any point in time. All participants are able to withdraw from, or leave, the research process (interview/focus group/fill in questionnaire) at any point without feeling an obligation to continue. They do not need to provide a reason for leaving the study.
- Informed consent - Participants should know (receive and understand) all the information they need to decide whether they want to participate. This includes information about the purpose, benefits, risks, and funding behind the research before they agree or decline to join. Ensure

informed consent is obtained from all participants before the interview and focus group. Consent for minors needed both from children and their responsible adults.

- Anonymity and confidentiality - Maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants. You anonymize personally identifiable data so that it cannot be linked to other data by anyone else. All participants have a right to privacy, therefore their personal data should be protected for as long as they be stored or used. Even when you can't collect data anonymously, you should secure confidentiality whenever you can. To keep the data confidential, researchers take steps to safeguard it and prevent any threats to data privacy. They store all signed consent forms in a locked file drawer, and they password-protect all files with survey data. Data must be collected and stored in line with national and EU GDPR data protection policies.
- Do No Harm principle - Researchers should create a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.
- Child safeguarding compliance - Devotion to national child protection standards should be ensured.
- Culturally sensitive and respectful in all research activities and prevent any type of harm.

If there are additional questions for the ethical principles and the research in general, please contact:

Name of the national project coordinator

ANNEXES

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ANNEX 1 – ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUTH

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Online questionnaire for Needs Assessment of Youth

S U R V E Y

Dear participant,

Within the CYBER Change – "Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change" project (24 months), implemented by youth and pro-youth organisations from Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Montenegro, we are working on creating new, practical and youth-friendly learning opportunities for young people.

The project focuses on digital skills, entrepreneurship and social change, using peer learning, non-formal education and cooperation between young people and youth organisations. Special attention is given to girls and young people with fewer opportunities, ensuring that everyone has a chance to learn, participate and develop ideas that matter.

To make sure that future training, manuals and digital tools are based on real needs, we are conducting this needs assessment survey. Your answers will help us understand:

- what digital and entrepreneurial skills young people already have,
- what is missing or difficult,
- what kind of support and training would be most useful.

Instructions for completing the survey:

Please read each question carefully and choose the answer that best describes your opinion or experience. Your responses are anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes. Please answer honestly and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your experience, opinions and ideas.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking part and helping us shape learning opportunities for and with young people.

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research!

PART I – Demographic Data

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1. **Gender:**
    - Male
    - Female
    - Prefer not to answer

2. **Age:**
    - 15 – 18 years
    - 19 – 24 years
    - 25 – 29 years

3. **What is your current status?**

- Primary school student
- High school student
- University student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Other (please specify)

4. **Do you have regular access to:**
    a. internet (yes / limited / no)
    b. smartphone or computer (yes / shared / no)

5. **Do you identify with any of these groups?** You may select more than one option
    - From a rural or remote area

- From a minority or culturally/linguistically diverse background
- With a disability or chronic condition
- Facing economic or financial difficulties
- Facing barriers in education or training
- Facing social barriers – you lack support or feel excluded from activities or opportunities.
- Currently not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Prefer not to say
- I don't identify with any of the above
- Other (please specify)

Part II: Digital skills and artificial intelligence

6. **Rate how confident you feel (1 = not at all confident → 5 = very confident):**
   - Confidence using productivity tools (docs, spreadsheets, slides) (1–5).
   - Confidence finding trustworthy information online (fact-checking) (1–5).
   - Confidence using online platforms for learning (e.g., virtual courses, OERs, webinars).
   - Confidence in creating digital content (videos, visuals, social media posts) that express your ideas.
   - Confidence using digital tools to organize a project or event with others (planning, sharing tasks).
   - Confidence in advanced digital tasks (data, coding basics, site/app builders, automations) (1–5).
   - Confidence working safely and responsibly online (privacy, consent, healthy screen time).
   - I can teach peers simple digital skills effectively (1–5).

7. **Which digital tools do you use in your everyday life? (You can select more than one)**
   - Using a computer or smartphone (basic use)
   - Social media (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, etc. – posting, stories, messaging)
   - Online communication tools (Zoom, Google Meet, email, chat apps)
   - Creating digital content (photos, videos, reels, short clips, texts)
   - Promoting ideas, events or small projects online (sharing, hashtags, pages)

- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- I rarely or never use digital tools

8. **For what do you mostly use AI tools? (multiple choice)**
    - for learning and school tasks (homework, explanations, summaries)
    - for writing or improving texts (messages, posts, assignments)
    - for creating ideas or inspiration (what to do, what to make, how to start something)
    - for social media (captions, posts, visuals, ideas)
    - for solving problems or finding information faster
    - I don't use AI tools

9. **Do you think AI tools could help young people with fewer opportunities?**
    - yes, a lot
    - yes, to some extent
    - not sure
    - no

10. **Which digital skill(s) do you need most to improve your employment or income opportunities?** *(open)*

11. **Have you ever used digital tools or social media to support a social cause, community initiative or civic action (e.g. campaigns, petitions, awareness actions)?**
    - Yes, regularly
    - Yes, occasionally
    - No, but I would like to
    - No, not interested

12. **If you could build one digital solution for your community, what would it be?**

_____
_____
_____

Part III: Entrepreneurship skills and social entrepreneurship

13. **Rate to what extend you agree with the following statements (1 = not at all confident → 5 = very confident):**

- I can identify problems in my community that could become project or business ideas (1–5).
- I feel confident designing a simple project or business model (1–5).
- I can work with others and communicate ideas clearly (1–5).
- I can test ideas quickly (prototyping/pilots) and learn from feedback (1–5).
- I know basic steps to access support (mentors, grants, incubators) (1–5).

14. **How familiar are you with the process of starting your own business?** (Scale 1–5, 1 – Not familiar at all; 2 – Slightly familiar; 3 – Moderately familiar; 4 – Quite familiar; 5 – Very familiar)

	1	2	3	4	5
choosing a legal form					
registering a business					
writing a business plan					
budgeting and financial planning					
finding funding or investors					
promoting your idea					
understanding basic taxes and regulations					

Other (please add)					

15. **What prevents you the most from starting your own initiative or business?** *(Select up to two answers)*

- Fear of failure
- Lack of initial funding (capital)
- Lack of specific skills (marketing, sales, digital tools)
- Complicated administration and regulations
- I don't have a mentor or someone to guide me
- Other (please specify)

16. Would you be interested in using digital or entrepreneurial skills to start or support a social initiative or small project in your community?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

17. In which part of starting a project or initiative do young people most often feel unsure or need support? (multiple choice)

- Coming up with an idea
- Turning an idea into a clear plan
- Understanding costs and budgeting
- Finding support or funding
- Working in a team
- Explaining the idea to others
- Staying motivated and consistent
- Other (please specify)

18.Have you ever heard of the term "social entrepreneurship" (a type of business that primarily aims to solve community or social problems, not just to make profit)?

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- Yes, I clearly understand what it is.
- I have heard of it, but I am not sure what it exactly means.
- This is the first time I hear about it

19. What topics interest you most? (Select up to 3)

- Digital basics for work/learning
- Content creation & storytelling
- Online safety & well-being
- Idea generation & business models
- Social entrepreneurship
- Project management
- Fundraising & pitching
- Civic tech & advocacy
- Creative Thinking design

20. Which entrepreneurial skills do you currently lack? *(multiple choice)*

- idea development
- business planning
- financial literacy
- digital marketing
- teamwork & leadership
- Other (please add)

21. When learning entrepreneurial skills, what helps you understand and remember things best? *(Select up to 3)*

- Learning from real-life examples

- Practical exercises and trying things out
- Learning together with peers
- Clear step-by-step explanations
- Guidance from a mentor or youth worker
- Learning by making mistakes and improving
- Short explanations combined with practice
- Other (please specify)

22. If you have the resources, which problem in your community would you most like to solve? (Open question)

_____
_____

Part IV Trainings

23. How likely are you to start a project or initiative in the next 12 months if you receive training and support?
(1 – very unlikely … 5 – very likely)

24. Have you ever participated in training on digital or entrepreneurial skills?

- Yes
- No

25. What type of training would be most useful for you?

- In-person;
- Online live;
- Blended;
- Self-paced online.

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ANNEX 2 – GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUTH

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FOCUS GROUP – YOUTH

(minimum 10 participants per country: 5 female, 5 male)

Focus group guiding questions:

Digital skills

- Think about a moment when digital tools really helped you learn, create something, or solve a problem. What happened, and what made that experience work well for you? Supporting questions: What digital tool or platform did you use? What exactly did you do? Did you learn mostly by trying it yourself, or with help from others? What made it easier for you to learn or succeed?
- Imagine a learning activity that would keep you interested from start to finish. What would it look like? (How long, how active, working alone or with others, online or offline?)

Entrepreneurship

- When you hear the word "entrepreneurship," what does it mean to you? Do you see starting your own project, initiative, or business as something realistic for young people like you? Supporting questions: What do you personally associate entrepreneurship with? Do you see it as something realistic for young people like you? Why or why not? What would make it easier for young people to start their own project or business?

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- What are the main things that stop you or your peers from starting a project, social initiative, or small business? Supporting questions: What is the biggest barrier: money, skills, confidence, or support?, At what point do most young people stop or hesitate?, Do young people know where to get help when they need it?
- (*backup/optional question)* What kind of support would help young people most to turn their ideas into real entrepreneurial initiatives? Supporting questions: What kind of support would help you most: mentoring, training, funding, or practical tools?; At which stage would you need support the most?; Who do you trust most to support you?

Final reflection

- If this project is successful, how would young people's lives or opportunities look different in your community in one or two years?

ANNEX 3 - ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE for YOUTH / PRO-YOUTH NGOs

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ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE – YOUTH / PRO-YOUTH NGOs

(minimum 5 NGOs per country)

Dear colleague,

Within the framework of the CYBER Change – "Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change" project, implemented by youth and pro-youth organisations from Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Montenegro, we are conducting a needs assessment among organisations working directly with young people.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to better understand the capacities, needs and challenges of youth and pro-youth organisations in relation to:

- development of digital skills among young people,
- entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship competencies,
- work with young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. rural youth, low-income backgrounds, minorities, NEET youth, young women and girls).

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Your organisation's experience is essential for identifying:

- existing gaps in youth digital and entrepreneurial skills,
- barriers faced by organisations in delivering effective training and support,
- priorities for developing practical, youth-friendly training manuals, tools and capacity-building activities.

The results of this questionnaire will be used exclusively for research and programme development purposes and will directly inform the design of tailored training materials and capacity-building activities for youth and youth organisations across the participating countries.

Instructions for completing the questionnaire

- The questionnaire is anonymous
- Estimated completion time: 15 -20 minutes
- Please answer based on your organisation's real experience and current practice when working with young people

Thank you for your time and for contributing your knowledge and experience to strengthening youth work, digital skills and social entrepreneurship across the region.

Part I: Organisation profile

1. **Country**
2. **Type of organisation**
    - youth organisation
    - pro-youth organisation
    - grassroots / local NGO
    - Social enterprise
    - other (please specify)
3. **Years of experience working with young people**
    - less than 2 years
    - 2–5 years
    - 6–10 years

- more than 10 years

4. **Main target groups you work with (multiple choice)**
    - youth in general
    - youth with fewer opportunities (e.g. rural, low-income, minorities, NEET)
    - young women / girls
    - other (please specify)

5. **Approx. youth reached in the last 12 months**

- 0–50
- 51–200
- 201–500
- 500+

6. **Number of volunteers organization engages in the last 12 months**

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-45
- 46 - 80
- 80-100
- 101 +

7. What type of activities does your organisation most often implement with young people? (open)

_____
_____
_____

Part II: Current capacities and experience

8. Your organization has partnerships with following (multiple choice):

- municipality(ies)
- Ministry for youth
- Schools
- Private companies
- Media
- Similar CSOs
- Other (plese specify)

9. Does your organisation currently provide any of the following? (multiple choice)

- digital skills training
- entrepreneurship training
- social entrepreneurship support
- career guidance or employability support
- digital advocacy / civic engagement activities (online campaigns, awareness actions, participation tools)
- none of the above

10. How would you assess your organisation's current capacity in the following areas?

Please assess your organisation's current capacity in the following areas. Use a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 – Not at all in place, 2 – Very limited, 3 – Partly in place, 4 – Mostly in place, 5 – Fully in place.

When answering, please consider your organisation's actual practice over the last 24 months (e.g. delivery of trainings, existence of curricula, staff involvement, regular implementation), rather than future plans or intentions.

Area	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Our organisation has experience in delivering digital skills training for young people.					

Our organisation has experience in delivering entrepreneurship training for young people.					
Our organisation has experience in delivering social entrepreneurship–related training or activities.					
Our organisation has the capacity to run peer-learning or youth-led training initiatives.					
Our organisation has skills and knowledge to adapt training content to ensure inclusion and gender equality.					
Our organisation has the skills and knowledge to design and deliver non-formal and flexible learning formats (mobility, hybrid, virtual).					
Our organisation has staff and/or volunteers capable of delivering digital skills training.					
Our staff has sufficient competence to support entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship learning.					
Our staff has knowledge of entrepreneurship and social innovation relevant to youth work.					
Our organisation has adequate access to equipment and space (devices, internet, training rooms) to deliver trainings.					
Our organisation has the capacity to deliver advocacy activities (engagement with decision-makers, policy briefs, coalitions).					
Our organisation has stable funding to implement youth programmes on a continuous basis.					

Organisational capacity in digital skills and online learning

11. Please rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly disagree / not at all", 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree, and 5 means "strongly agree / fully in place", based on your organisation's current practice and realistic capacity.

- Our staff and trainers have the digital skills needed to teach young people basic and advanced digital topics. (1–5)
- Our organisation can support young people to use digital tools safely, ethically, and responsibly (privacy, online safety, AI awareness). (1–5)
- We use interactive, non-formal methods (workshops, challenges, project-based learning) to teach digital skills (1–5)
- We have experience or capacity to train and support youth peer trainers in digital skills.(1–5)
- Our organisation can create interactive and engaging online learning experiences for young people.(1–5)
- We are able to organise and manage online or hybrid activities with partners, trainers, or youth from other regions or countries. (1–5)
- We have experience (or strong interest) in using virtual exchanges or blended mobility formats for youth learning. (1–5)
- We use or are able to adapt open educational resources (free learning materials) in our training activities. (1–5)
- We are able to adapt digital training activities for girls and youth with fewer opportunities (access barriers, language level, learning needs). (1–5)
- Our organisation is ready to test new digital learning methods and tools, and improve our training models based on feedback. (1–5)

Organisational capacity in entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship

12. Please rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly disagree / not at all" and 5 means "strongly agree / fully in place", based on your organisation's current practice and realistic capacity.

- Our staff and trainers have the knowledge and skills to support young people in developing entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurship ideas. (1–5)
- Our organisation can guide young people through the basic steps of starting a project, initiative, or small (social) business (idea development, planning, implementation). (1–5)
- We use practical, non-formal learning methods (workshops, simulations, project-based learning) to teach entrepreneurial skills. (1–5)
- We have experience or capacity to mentor young people during the early stages of developing entrepreneurial or social initiatives. (1–5)

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- Our organisation supports young people in developing soft skills relevant to entrepreneurship (teamwork, leadership, communication, problem-solving). (1–5)
- We are able to connect young people with external support opportunities (mentors, funding programmes, incubators, competitions). (1–5)
- We have experience or interest in supporting social entrepreneurship and initiatives that address community or social challenges. (1–5)
- We are able to adapt entrepreneurship training activities for girls and youth with fewer opportunities (economic barriers, limited access, language or learning needs). (1–5)
- We use or are able to adapt open educational resources or practical tools (templates, canvases, guides) for entrepreneurship education. (1–5)
- Our organisation is open to testing new entrepreneurship education approaches and improving our support based on feedback from young people. (1–5)

Section III: Needs and gaps observed among young people

13. **Based on your experience, what are the main digital skills gaps among young people you work with?** *(Select up to 3 answers)*

- Basic digital literacy (using devices, email, basic software)
- Safe and responsible online behaviour (privacy, cybersecurity, digital well-being)
- Critical thinking and identifying misinformation
- Content creation (text, visuals, video, storytelling)
- Digital communication and collaboration tools
- Digital tools for learning and work (online platforms, productivity tools)
- Basic coding / no-code tools / automation
- Use of digital tools for entrepreneurship or income generation
- Use of digital tools for civic engagement or advocacy
- Understanding and ethical use of AI tools
- Other (please specify): _____

14. Which entrepreneurial skills are most lacking among young people? (*(Select up to 3 answers)*

- idea development and creativity
- basic business planning
- financial literacy

- digital tools for income generation
- teamwork, communication, leadership
- motivation and self-confidence
- other (please specify)

15. Which groups of young people face the biggest barriers in accessing digital or entrepreneurial learning opportunities?

- Young people from rural or remote areas
- Young people from minority or culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Young people with disabilities or chronic health conditions
- Young people facing economic or financial difficulties
- Young people facing barriers in education or training
- Young people facing social barriers (lack of support, social exclusion)
- Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Young people with limited access to digital devices or internet
- Other (please specify): _____

16. To what extent are young people you work with engaged in digital civic or advocacy initiatives (e.g. online campaigns, community actions, social causes)?

- High
- Medium
- Low
- not at all

17. Highest demand from your youth (select up to 3):

- Digital basics;
- Advanced digital (coding/no-code/data);
- Content creation;
- Online safety
  Entrepreneurship/SE;

- Project management;
- Fundraising & pitching;
- Civic tech/advocacy/end-user-experience approach to solving social challenges

Section IV: Organisational challenges

18. **What prevents your organisation from delivering more effective or regular training for young people? (multiple choice)**
    - lack of funding
    - lack of qualified trainers
    - lack of appropriate training materials
    - limited digital infrastructure or tools
    - low motivation or engagement of young people
    - Hard to reach marginalized youth
    - administrative or institutional barriers
    - poor equipment/connectivity
    - Safeguadring procedures and principles
    - other (please specify)

19. **What kind of support would most strengthen your organisation's capacity in this field? (open)**

    _____
    _____
    _____

Section V: Training materials and formats

20. **What type of training materials are currently missing or insufficient? (multiple choice)**
    - practical manuals

- step-by-step guides
- ready-to-use workshop activities
- digital/online learning content
- case studies and real-life examples
- tools adapted for youth with fewer opportunities
- tools for digital advocacy and civic participation (campaigning, online engagement)

21. What level of training materials is most needed?

- basic
- intermediate
- advanced
- combination of all levels

22. What type of support do youth workers or trainers most often need when delivering digital or entrepreneurship education to young people? (multiple choice)

- clearer step-by-step guidance
- ready-to-use activities
- real-life examples and case studies
- tools adapted for youth with fewer opportunities
- online resources they can reuse or adapt
- mentoring or peer exchange with other organisations
- other (please specify)

23. **Based on your organisation's current needs and capacities, which type of training material would you most likely adopt first if developed within this project?**
(Select one option)

☐ Practical manuals
☐ Step-by-step guides
☐ Ready-to-run training sessions (workshops, activities)
☐ Templates and practical tools (e.g. canvases, worksheets, planning tools)

☐ Digital / online learning content (online modules, micro-lessons)
☐ Mentoring toolkit for youth workers and peer mentors

23 a) Please briefly explain why this would be your first choice.
You may consider one or more of the following aspects:

☐ Easy to use in everyday work with young people
☐ Suitable for young people with fewer opportunities
☐ Requires fewer resources (time, staff, budget)
☐ Can be quickly adapted to the local context
☐ Responds to urgent needs of young people
☐ Fits well with existing programmes or activities
☐ Other (please specify): _____

24. **Preferred training format for your organisation and beneficiaries:**
    - online
    - in-person
    - hybrid

Section VI: Final remarks

25. **Please share any additional comments, needs, or recommendations related to digital skills or entrepreneurship training for young people. (open)**

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ANNEX 4 – GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUTH / PRO-YOUTH NGOs

FOCUS GROUP – YOUTH / PRO-YOUTH NGOs

(minimum 3 NGOs per country)

Focus group guiding questions:

Digital skills

- Think about a training or activity you delivered that worked really well with young people, including those with fewer opportunities. What made it successful, and what role did digital tools or peer learning play?

- From your experience, which young people are the hardest to reach or keep engaged when it comes to developing digital skills, and why?
- *(backup/optional question)* What digital skills do young people with fewer opportunities most struggle with, and what would make digital learning more accessible and practical for them?

Entrepreneurial skills and social entrepreneurship

- What entrepreneurial skills do you think are most missing among the young people you work with, especially those with fewer opportunities (e.g. idea development, financial literacy, digital marketing, project management)? Supporting questions: Which skills do young people struggle with the most in practice? Are these gaps different for young people with fewer opportunities? How? At what stage do these skill gaps usually become most visible (idea, planning, implementation)?
- When young people want to start a project, social enterprise, or small business, where do they usually get stuck, and how do these challenges differ for youth with fewer opportunities? Supporting questions: At which point do young people most often lose confidence or motivation?, What specific barriers affect young people with fewer opportunities more than others?, What kind of support is usually missing at that stage?
- *(backup/optional question)* What kind of support, mentoring, or tools can NGOs realistically provide to help young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities turn ideas into sustainable entrepreneurial initiatives?

Final reflection

- If this project strengthens youth workers and peer trainers successfully, what should be different in how young people learn, participate, or are heard in your community?

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ANNEX 5 – INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Information sheet &Consent Form

Project: CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change

Information sheet for participants

Dear participant/ interviewee,

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(Name of the partner) is a partner of the project **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change**, which involves the following partners: ASOCIATIA COPIII IN SANUL FAMILIEI - FoRC (Romania), Children and Youth Support Organisation - CYSO (from Serbia), International Association "Interactive Open Schools, MIOS (from Bosnia and Herzegovina), Forum MNE (from Montenegro), and Institute for Development of Civil Society – Innovate (from Kosovo*) and is funded by the European Commission.

Overall objective of this project is to introduce and enhance an innovative model of learning based on peer education, exchanges between Program (RO and SRB) and Partner Countries (B&H, ME and KOS), learning mobility and cooperation between youth/pro-youth CSOs, formal and non-formal education providers in order to increase their capacities to work on these issues with young people, especially girls.

To know more about the specific needs of youth and youth/pro-youth NGOs project partner countries in the field of digital skills and social entrepreneurship, we will do a needs analysis by doing research. An essential part of the research is to conduct tailor-made interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with the target groups.

After receiving all the necessary information, you are kindly invite to take part in this process. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

The interviews and/or focus groups will be audio recorded/taking notes. Interviews and focus groups will be carried out by researcher(s)/person(s) working at/or engaged by < name of your organization>. Each interview will last about 60 minutes and each focus groups will last about 1,5-2 hours. Moreover, you will be asked for some socio-demographic data and information about your educational and professional background.

Privacy and data processing[1]

[1] Privacy and data processing for EU countries
The processing of your data will be carried out in compliance with the GDPR 2016/679. In particular, your personal data will be processed exclusively for scientific research purposes and upon your consent given signing the following "consent form". The base of the data processing is the subject's consent. The data will be jointly controlled by the project partners (as indicated above), their staff, contractors and volunteers; and the European Commission as funder.
<If you use cloud hosting, otherwise delete> Moreover, your data will be processed via online storage on a server operated by: <Add here the name of the host company where you store audio files and consent forms> Your personal data will be stored only for the period necessary for scientific research purposes for which they are collected. All documents containing your personal data will be deleted 6 months after the acceptance of the project's final report by the European Commission.
The information you provide might be used in scientific publications and/or training materials, but only in an anonymized form; all elements which might permit your identification will be removed.
In compliance with Article 13 of GDPR you have:

- the right to request access to and rectification or erasure of your personal data;

The processing of your data will be carried out in compliance with the national law. In particular, your personal data will be processed exclusively for scientific research purposes and upon your consent given signing the following "consent form". The base of the data processing is the subject's consent. The data will be jointly controlled by the project partner < name of your organization>, their staff, contractors and other responsible persons.

Your personal data will be stored only for the period necessary for scientific research purposes for which they are collected. All documents containing your personal data will be deleted 6 months after the acceptance of the project's final report by the donor.

The information you provide might be used in scientific publications and/or training materials, but only in an anonymized form; all elements, which might permit your identification, will be removed.

You have:

- the right to request access to and rectification or erasure of your personal data;
- the right to withdraw consent at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal;
- the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority:<Add here the name of the supervisory authority in your country>.

By signing this document, you certify that you accept to participate freely in this research. You can decide to refuse to answer to any question, without giving any explanation. You can also decide not to answer some questions if you do not want to. This will have no consequence.

In order to exercise the rights granted by the national law, for any further information and/or clarification about the project and/or your data processing please contact <Add here the name, email address and / or phone number of the researcher or project coordinator at your organization>.

- the right to withdraw consent at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal;
- the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority:<Add here the name of the supervisory authority in your country>.

In order to exercise the rights granted by the GDPR, for any further information and/or clarification about the project and/or your data processing please contact <Add here the name, email address and / or phone number of the researcher or project officer at your organization>.

Consent form

Project: **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change**

I, ... (name and surname in capital letters) hereby

DECLARE that

- I have received from <name of researcher(s)> all information about the project with special regard to its purposes and procedures;
- I have had the chance to ask questions and I have got answers that I consider clear and satisfying;
- I have received the Information sheet of the project as well as a copy of this consent form;
- I have received sufficient information about this research and understand my role in it. The purpose of my participation as a participant at interviewee/focus groups/questionnaire in this project and the future processing of my personal data has been explained to me and are is clear.
- My participation as an interviewee/participant at focus group/questionnaire in this project is completely voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
- Participation involves being interviewed by (a) researcher(s) from the name of the organization or participate on focus group discussion. The interview will last approximately [xxx] minutes or the focus group will last approximately [xxx] minutes. I allow the researcher(s) to take notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue by audio/video tape. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview and dialogue to be taped I am fully entitled to withdraw from participation.
- I give (name of the local researcher) permission to take photographs of me during the interview/focus group discussion.

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- I have the right not to answer questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview and ask that the data collected prior to the withdrawal will be deleted.

- I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, that my confidentiality as a participant in this study remains secure. Personal data will be processed in full compliance with the national law.

- I have carefully read and fully understood the points and statements of this form. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

- I obtained a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Therefore

☐I agree to participate in the research conducted by [Name of the local expert] from [name of the partner organization] in …,. [name of the city and/or state] and processing of my personal data. I understand that my participation in the project research is voluntary, that the information I provide is confidential and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature_____ Date _____

ANNEX 6 – INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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Information sheet &Consent Form for parents/guardians

Project: *A* ***CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change***

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Dear parents/guardians,

(Name of the partner) is a partner of the project **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change**, which involves the following partners: ASOCIATIA COPIII IN SANUL FAMILIEI - FoRC (Romania), Children and Youth Support Organisation - CYSO (from Serbia), International Association "Interactive Open Schools, MIOS (from Bosnia and Herzegovina), Forum MNE (from Montenegro), and Institute for Development of Civil Society – Innovate (from Kosovo*) and is funded by the European Commission.

Overall objective of this project is to introduce and enhance an innovative model of learning based on peer education, exchanges between Program (RO and SRB) and Partner Countries (B&H, ME and KOS), learning mobility and cooperation between youth/pro-youth CSOs, formal and non-formal education providers in order to increase their capacities to work on these issues with young people, especially girls.

To know more about the specific needs of youth and youth/pro-youth NGOs project partner countries in the field of digital skills and social entrepreneurship, we will do a needs analysis by doing research. An essential part of the research is to conduct tailor-made interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with the target groups.

We are asking that your child take part in a research study being done by _____ (name of the local expert and the partner organistaion) within the project **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change** as explained above.

Before you make a decision, it is important for you to know why the research is being carried out and what it will involve for you and your child.

If you choose to allow your child to be in the study, your child will complete a survey/take participation in focus group/or be interviewed. The survey/focus group discussion/interview will contain questions about discrimination and gender equality. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete./The focus group will last about 1,5 – 2 hours. Each interview will last about 60 minutes and each focus groups will last about 1,5-2 hours.

The interviews and/or focus groups will be audio recorded/taking notes. Interviews and focus groups will be carried out by researcher(s)/person(s) working at/or engaged by < name of your organization>. With your permission, photos may be taken and will be used exclusively for project and research purposes.

Your child can skip questions that he or she does not want to answer. He/she can also decide not to answer some questions if he/she does not want to, or stop the survey/discussion at any time, without giving any explanation. This will have no consequence.

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The participation in this research study is voluntary. Please tell your child that she/he can quit the research in any time if he/she does not want to participate.

The survey/focus group discission/interview is anonymous, and no one will be able to link your child's answers back to him or her. Please tell him or her not to include his or her name or any other information that could be used to identify him or her in the survey responses.

Privacy and data processing[2]

The processing of your child data will be carried out in compliance with the national law. In particular, your child personal data will be processed exclusively for scientific research purposes and upon your consent given signing the following "consent form". The base of the data processing is the subject's consent. The data will be jointly controlled by the project partner < name of your organization>, their staff, contractors and other responsible persons.

The personal data of your child will be stored only for the period necessary for scientific research purposes for which they are collected. All documents containing personal data of your child will be deleted 6 months after the acceptance of the project's final report by the donor.

The provided information might be used in scientific publications and/or training materials, but only in an anonymized form; all elements, which might permit identification of your child, will be removed.

You have:

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[2] Privacy and data processing for EU countries
The processing of your child data will be carried out in compliance with the GDPR 2016/679. In particular, your child personal data will be processed exclusively for scientific research purposes and upon your consent given signing the following "consent form". The base of the data processing is the subject's consent. The data will be jointly controlled by the project partners (as indicated above), their staff, contractors and volunteers; and the European Commission as funder.
<If you use cloud hosting, otherwise delete> Moreover, your data will be processed via online storage on a server operated by: <Add here the name of the host company where you store audio files and consent forms> Your personal data will be stored only for the period necessary for scientific research purposes for which they are collected. All documents containing your personal data will be deleted 6 months after the acceptance of the project's final report by the European Commission.
The information you provide might be used in scientific publications and/or training materials, but only in an anonymized form; all elements which might permit your identification will be removed.
In compliance with Article 13 of GDPR you have:

- the right to request access to and rectification or erasure of your personal data;
- the right to withdraw consent at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal;
- the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority:<Add here the name of the supervisory authority in your country>.

In order to exercise the rights granted by the GDPR, for any further information and/or clarification about the project and/or your data processing please contact <Add here the name, email address and / or phone number of the researcher or project officer at your organization>.

- the right to request access to and rectification or erasure of personal data of your child;
- the right to withdraw consent at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal;
- the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority:<Add here the name of the supervisory authority in your country>.

The results of the research will be published in the form of a report and will be presented publicly and the name of your child will not be connected to any particular comments or views but that information gathered during the research will be pooled and reported as the views of the group.

By signing this document, you certify that you accept your child to participate freely in this study.

Typing your name and the date below represents your signature affirming that you agree that the above information has been explained to you and all your current questions have been answered. You have also received sufficient information about this research and understand the role of your child in it.

You understand that you may ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of the study and in the future. By signing this form, you agree that your child may participate in this research study.

Typing the name of your child and the date below represents that your child affirming that this research has been explained to him or her, that he/she understands his/her role in it and that he or she agrees to participate.

For any further information and/or clarification about the project and/or for the research please contact _____ (name of the local researcher) at e-mail _____, or at mob _____ or the project coordinator _____ (name of the project coordinator) at e-mail _____ or telephone: _____

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Statement

I, _____ (name and surname of parent/guardian), give permission for my child, _____ (name and surname of a child) to participate in the research study within the project entitled, **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change**. The study has been explained to me and my questions answered to my satisfaction. I

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understand that my child's right to withdraw from participating or refuse to participate will be respected and that his/her responses and identity will be kept confidential. I give this consent voluntarily. I confirm that this research has been explained to my child and he/she agrees to participate. I also confirm that I have carefully read and fully understood the points and statements of this form (information sheet and the consent).

Additionally, I give permission for photos of my child to be taken during the research (focus group discussion/interview), understanding that these images will be used exclusively for research purposes and may be included in reports, academic presentations, and training materials while ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

Name and Surname of Parent/Guardian _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Signature Date _____

ANNEX 7 – INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

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Information sheet & Consent form for children

Project: **CYBER Change - Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change**

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Hello!

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study conducted within the **CYBER Change – Competent Youth Builders: Entrepreneurship, Resilience and Digital Skills for Change** project. The project brings together youth and pro-youth organisations from *Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro**, working together to create more inclusive, practical and youth-friendly learning opportunities.

The project focuses on digital skills, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, with special attention to young people with fewer opportunities. It is supported by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme.

Through this research, we want to better understand young people's experiences, needs and challenges related to digital skills, entrepreneurship and active participation in their communities. Your input will help us design training programmes, manuals and digital tools that are relevant, practical and accessible to young people.

By sharing your views and experiences, you are contributing to the development of learning opportunities that support young people in building skills, confidence and ideas for positive social change.

What will you do?

If you agree to take part, you will answer a few questions in a survey/ join a group discussion/or have a short interview. Here's what that means:

- Survey: A list of questions that takes about 20 minutes to answer.
- Group discussion: A fun and open chat with other young people, lasting 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Interview: A one-on-one conversation with a researcher, lasting about 60 minutes.

A researcher from name of the partner organisation will guide the discussion or interview. We may take notes or record the conversation and take photos (with your permission) so we can remember what you and others have shared.

Your rights and choices

- You don't have to answer any question if you don't want to.
- You can stop at any time if you don't want to continue.
- There is no right or wrong answer! We just want to hear what you think and feel.
- No one will know what you said. Your answers will be anonymous, meaning your name will not be shared with anyone.

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Privacy and safety

We will keep your answers safe and private. The information you share will be used only for this study and to help improve programs for young people. Everything will be stored securely and deleted six months after the project ends. Any reports we create will not include your name or any details that could identify you.

What happens next?

After we talk to many young people like you in above listed countries, we will put together a report about what we learned. This will help organizations and leaders make better decisions for young people. Your name will never be used in the report.

By signing below, you agree that you understand what this study is about and that you are happy to take part. You can ask questions at any time!

For more information, you or your parents can contact:

- Local researcher: name, e-mail, mobile number
- Project manager: name, e-mail, mobile number

Children's Consent Form

- I have read the attached information letter that explains what it means for me to be part of the research (answering questionnaire/participation in focus group discussion/interview).
- I understand that any data or personal information held about me will only be available to the researcher and will be destroyed five years after the project.
- I understand that I am being invited to join the research (answering questionnaire/participation in focus group discussion/interview).
- I understand that everything I say will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential (unless information needs to be passed on as a child protection matter).
- I understand that the focus group will be recorded, notes will be taken, and photos may be captured, with all recordings, notes, and images used solely for research purposes.

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- I understand my name will not be connected to any particular comments or views but only used in the context of the group discussions.
- I understand that I can stop my involvement in the group for any reason and at any time. I also understand that I can take away my consent at any time and for any reason.
- I understand that this work will be published in the form of a report and potentially in academic journals and at seminars, training event and conferences etc.

(Please tick accordingly to indicate whether or not you give your consent):

☐ I AGREE to be part of the research (answering questionnaire/participation in focus group discussion/interview)

☐ I AGREE to the focus group/interview being recorded.

☐ I AGREE to be photographed during the focus group/interview.

Signature: Date:

(Name) Facilitator: