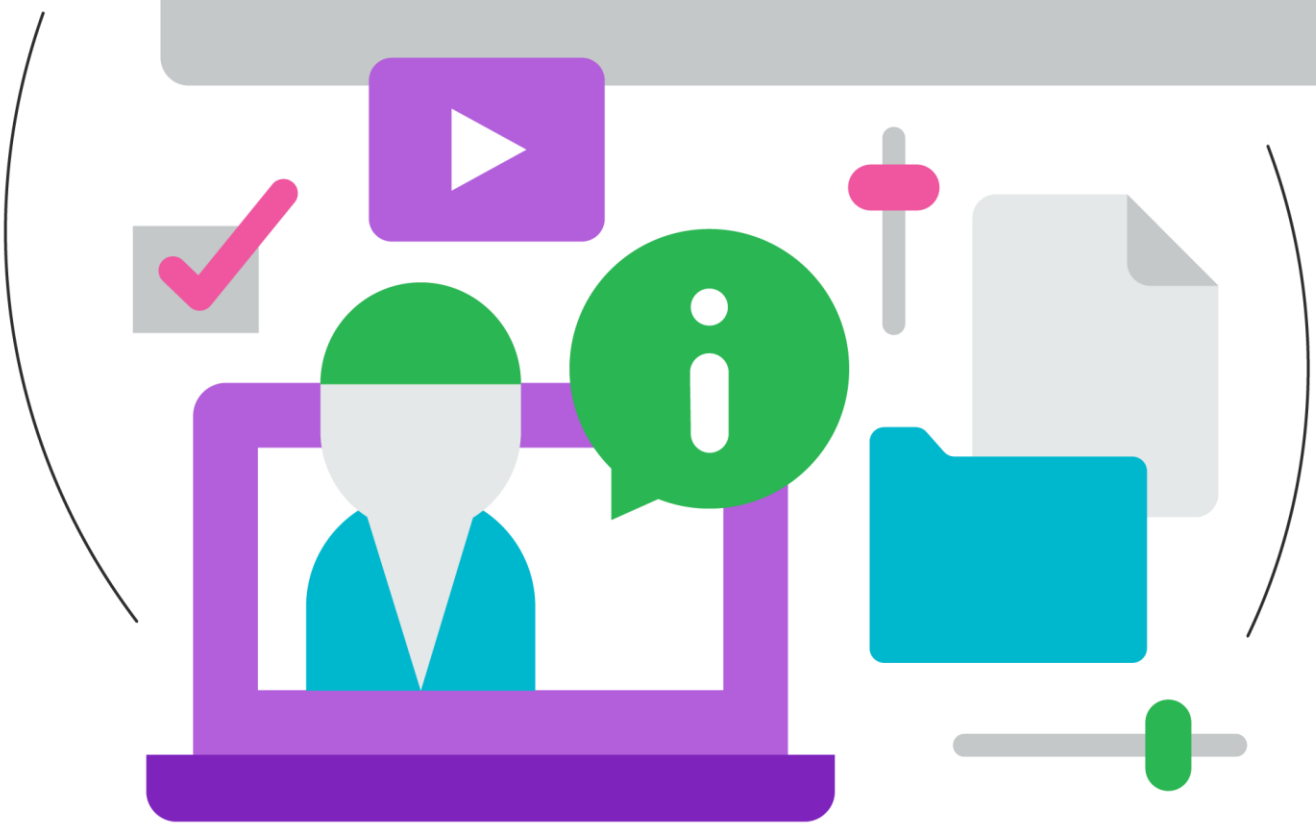
DIGITAL 4ALL

BUILDING A DIGITAL WORLD FOR ALL

WP2. A3. Focus Group National Report

A.1. *Young Migrants Focus Group Analysis Report from Portugal*



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Introduction

Globalization of Internet has made the spreading of knowledge and information free and accessible to almost everyone with access to a computer or smartphone. This offered a great opportunity from most disadvantaged groups to access to relevant information and to facilitate their learning via non-formal environments (Lesher et al., 2022). However, the fast and increased spread of Internet to almost everyone, has also made easy the boost of untruths and misinformation online. In a world where most of us are digitally connected, it is critical the managing of the amount of information we receive daily, and identify the reliable ones, so people can, exercise their social, civic, political and economic choices and decisions with knowledge and free of prejudice, malintention and unconsciousness (Lesher et al., 2022).

As migrants are a group that mostly search for integration information online and using digital sources, the **Digital4All – Building a Digital World for All Erasmus+ project,** aims to capacitate youth workers with knowledge on critical thinking, tiny habits and digital competences, so they can enhance migrant's intentions and abilities to assess information online. As the second step of the project, focus group sessions were developed in each country, by internal workers of each partner in the consortium. The objective was to assess young migrants' digital experiences, habits, preferences and strategies regarding online information search, critical thinking, and media/information/digital literacy. This report highlights the main findings of the **barriers** and **facilitators** of a safe access and a responsible navigation through digital information, as perceived by young migrants living in Portugal.

Methodology

Participants

From 14 young migrants motivated in participating in Digital4All focus group on Portugal, only seven had eligible ages to participate (18-35) (50%). From the seven participants, due to time restrains, only **five** were initially able to attend the focus group. At the last minute, one participant did not show up to the discussion. Therefore, the focus group was held with **four** young migrants (Appendix A.). Mean age was 24. 75% of participants were **Brazilian** and identified as women. Participants revealed that they have been migrants for more than **a year** (M= 4,25).

Recruitment was carried through SM platforms (i.e., Instagram and Facebook) and e-mail channels, with the support of the organisation network and partnerships. An informed consent was first introduced so participants would be aware of the purpose of the focus group, confidentiality of the gathered information and the volunteer nature of their participation (Appendix B.)

Measures and Procedure

Data collection was organized in **two stages**. The **first phase** included the collection of socio-demographic data using a Socio-Demographic Questionnaire. In effort to balance the characteristics of the final sample, it was asked participants the gender they identified with, nationality and the number of years that they have been a migrant. The **second phase** focused on the facilitation of the focus group, where participants were instructed regarding of what could be expected from a focus group and from their performance. The focus group was developed **online**, on the **8th of November of 2023,** to overcome time and spatial barriers and had a duration of one hour. It was asked participants

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to participate in a room with no distractions. With the participants' consent, audio and visual recordings were performed.

Focus Group Moderation

The focus group discussion initiated with a "Break the Ice" activity to make participants more familiar and comfortable with each other. The activity comprehended of a couple of questions regarding socio-demographic information, personal interests, cultural characteristics and personal likings regarding their home and new country.

The activity was followed by the focus group discussion of **key-questions** (Table 1.), imposed by the facilitator, regarding the project's aim (digital competences, motivational and critical thinking needs, strategies to find and identify reliable information online…).

Order	Question
1	*As migrants, what were the main difficulties you expected and encountered in moving to a new country?*
2	*What were the main tools and methods you used to obtain information on how to overcome these obstacles?*
3	[if adequate] *Were any of that information obtained online? What online means did you use?"*
4	*What were the main barriers you found in the online access to these types of information?*
5	*Did it ever happen to you to be deceived or misinformed online during this search for information? In what cases? What type of misinformed or erroneous information was present?*
6	*What strategies do you often use to not be misinformed or deceived online?*
7	*How did you assess the adequacy and efficiency of this strategies accordingly to 'achieved results'; 'time', 'complexity' and 'feasibility'?*
8	*Can you think of any factors that makes it difficult for you to do an evaluation of information online?*
9	[if adequate] *Did you ever feel that motivation was a barrier for you to proceed to an evaluation of information online? What are some possible reasons, in your experience, that may have led to this lack of motivation?*
10	*What are your thoughts on developing a training program on digital literacy, critical thinking and motivation strategies regarding the assessment of information online for migrants?*
11	*What are some barriers that you can find in participation of migrants in this training program? And in another note, what are some advantages in developing and participating in this program?*

Table 1. Key-Questions discussed between participants in the focus group.

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Focus Group Management and Analysis

Audio data from the focus group was first transcribed into a word format. Data management followed Rabbie's (2004) recommendations for the organisation of focus group information, where interactions between participants were allocated to the specific key-question, accordingly to the content of quotes. The analysis of quotes was based on Ritchie and Spencer (1994) framework: familiarization, coding, indexing, charting and mapping and interpretation. **Twelve codes** were created: Bureaucracy (N=2), Accessible Information (N=7), Professional Ethics (N=7), Digitalization (N=1), Outdated information (N=1), Influencers (N=3), Reliable Sources (N=2), Information and Data Literacy (N=2), Digital Security (N=2), Metacognition (N=1), Expectations (N=4) and Interest/Motivation (N=1). The codes originated the following categories: ***Threats to Accessible Information***; ***Opportunities for Accessible Information***; ***Internal Negative Variables towards a Digital Responsible Access***; and ***Internal Positive Variables towards a Digital Responsible Access.***

Results

Three emerging themes were identified within the focus group discussion: **Barriers to a Digital Safe Conduct**; **Facilitators for a Digital Safe Conduct**; and **Facilitators for the Digital4All Training Program**.

Barriers to a Digital Safe Conduct

Threats to Accessible Information

All migrants mentioned their negative experiences in the access of reliable information, using traditional and reliable sources, prior and during the process of their migration. One of the main difficulties young migrants encountered in moving to Portugal was the **time** it took for their document legalization and obtention of tax and social security identification (NIF and NISS).

P3: *"A big difficulty that I felt was…in regard to documentation so I could legalize my visto and obtain a NIF and NISS…"*

The difficulty in obtaining these numbers were mostly a result, from young migrants' point of view, from **unconcise, outdated and uncleared** information in different data sources.

P3: *"I had searched a lot in Internet, since it was my only source, but, still, the websites weren't clear…in a website it was stated something and in another it was stated something else"*

P2: "I think that there is a lot of outdated information. I do really think that there is a lot of outdated information. There is a lot of information in Internet that states that things can be done in a "X" or "Y" manner, but when you follow that information, the person responsible mentions that is no longer operative.

A big emphasis was given to the **inefficient service of external agents and institutions** whose responsibilities are within residence legalization and basic rights assurance.

P3: *"The difficulty in contacting with SEF to schedule a meeting."*

P4: *"(…) it is not only the SEF's website that is not well informed. (…) Sometimes I would schedule a meeting and the attendant would say that it was not possible to do something, but in the following day, with another attendant but in the same local, it was already possible to do."*

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P1: *Yes, because of that (…) a document that I would have accessed in September, I only had it in May…eight months after. (…) I know of other situations, with other people, that some attendants would be flexible and solve the problem in…literally…two hours."*

P3: *"Not rarely I tried to contact college institutions, representants, and international relations representants to see if they would help me. It never did".*

One subtheme that it was also highlighted during the discussion as a barrier for the access to reliable information was the **disinformation shared online by non-official sources**.

P2: *"There is a lot of people that share totally incorrect information. There are people that get a residence authorization and share if "you do this and this you will also be able to also obtain. (…) It is a little bit complicated, especially when the official website does not have 100% updated information or telephone numbers that don't work."*

P3: *"A lot of Brazilians who have come to Portugal develop sensationalistic videos saying "with ten euros I get groceries for two months in Portugal. (…) Maybe it was true a couple of years ago, before the inflation, right? But now it is not true. (…) So those information's also get in the way, right? Because they are not true!"*

P3: [regarding the access to residence and housing] *"It was fake advertising. [my friends] came here and had to stay without a physical place, being dependent on the goodwill of people."*

The lack of **digitalization** from relevant Portuguese structures and institutions regarding the process of documentation was also referred to.

P1: *"I also think that another factor is the lack of process digitalization…things could be more efficient and timelier."*

A participation further mentioned that their parents had to hire someone to support them during the migration process. Another thought about it.

P1: *"(…), it was very complicated, mainly in things who were more specific and bureaucratic. My parents hired a lady that helped us during the process."*

P3: *"I also thought on hiring someone, but I couldn't".*

Internal Negative Variables towards a Digital Responsible Access

Two internal negative factors were mentioned as barriers for a digital responsible access to information online: **lack of interest** and **high expectations**. and only from one participant. Both were seen as contributors for maintaining misinformation and deceived information:

P4: "*In my case, yes, It depends as well on my interest too. Sometimes it is whatever if it is true or false…".*

P3: *"And when you arrive here, sure, it is way better than the situation I had in Brazil, however it is not that easy as people portrait it on the Internet. So, you arrive with a high expectation and it is not really like that".*

P2: "There is a lot of that, so by the continuity of false information, people come with unrealistic expectations".

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Facilitators of a Digital Safe Conduct

Internal Positive Variables towards a Digital Responsible Access

Young migrants, in general, revealed to depend on **their information and data literacy** to evaluate reliability of information online. They rely often on their ability to locate, retrieve and manage digital data and information and on the knowledge of reliable data sources.

P4: *"When I have interest, since I am friends with journalists, what I do is like "Hey, since you are in the center of information collection, is this information true or false?"*

P2: *"If there is information that appear in CMTV (…) I know that is probably true. If it didn't, I search in other websites if the information is consensual with information available in SEF's, or government's website, Instagram or Facebook".*

P3: *"In my experience, I also compare information of different websites and means to understand what is consensual amongst all, or at least, most sources."*

Furthermore, participants revealed **awareness on the risks and threats of digital environments** throughout all focus group discussion, as it can be seen above in the transcripts. In general, participants understood that social media channels are, often, not a reliable source to obtain information. For example:

P2: *"I, at least, agree that the idea of influencers is to gain money by showing that Portugal is amazing, that everything is inexpensive, that houses are for free, that there is place for everyone, that people don't have to be worried about looking for a bedroom because it is easy, right? I think that there are a lot of influencers totally declining in explaining that things are not exactly like this, because it is contradicting (…) the information that they have shared so far."*

One participant even mentioned to avoid certain social media channels due to the spread of disinformation:

P2: *"One thing that I avoid to the max, to the max, is Tik-Tok, since there is a lot, a lot, a lot of disinformation. (…) I personally avoid using social media to get information, unless they are official accounts".*

Opportunities for Accessible Information

All participants revealed the use of **digital sources** and the Internet to obtain information regarding the migration journey and process. Information was mostly obtained from formal websites (i.e., official sources) and non-formal websites (i.e., Blogs) and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube.

P1: *"Initially it was always through the Internet, to try to find official sources and also some websites with recommendations and suggestions (…)"*

P3: In my case I did not know anyone from Portugal, so it was totally online. First, I would search in official websites. When I didn't understood, because there is always language barriers, (…) I would search the information in websites who would give suggestions and in YouTube"

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P4: My parent would stay all day watching youtubers, YouTube channels, websites from Brazilian migrants who would give recommendations. (…) They would sometimes be clearer than the official means"

P3: "I know a lot of friends of my own that looked out for residences in WhatsApp and Facebook groups."

One participant further suggested the pertinence it would be to add a social media/website feature, similarly to the COVID information alert, where posted information regarding migration experience and process would be accompanied by an **alert** directing to links of reliable sources.

P1: "Maybe a notification saying that the information posted is a personal experience, but that it may not correspond to the reality of all".

Facilitators of the Digital4All Training Program

Participants found valuable the development of a **program** directed to digital literacy, critical thinking and motivation strategies regarding the assessment of information online for young migrants.

P3: *"So, information is there, but it needs to be better organized and needs to be filtered on what its true and on what is false."*

One participant perceived that this training would be important to foster **metacognition** of migrants regarding self-monitorization and assessment of expectations regarding living in Portugal. Indeed, high expectations as a result of sensationalistic online information was fairly discussed during focus group time, as abovementioned.

A special focus was given to the involvement of a **2StepFlow communication strategy** within the program and dissemination of program results, with the activation of **reliable influencers** in the process.

P4: *"(…) migrants (…) search for information in YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram…those are the more informal resources, so what needs to be done is making that the information does not stay only in the website and that is spread also in WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube. Maybe talking with influencers and tell them to share, make a video, (…).*

P3: "I think that people who do consulting, yes, and that are also influencers, will give more credibility"

P1: *"I think that companies that do consulting may be the most fitting options, since they are the ones who offer more structure, more credibility."*

P2: "I think that if the name [of the platform] was disseminated, mainly in official sources, I think it would reach to a lot of people"

Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of the focus group was to deepen understanding of partners in the consortium regarding young migrants' main digital needs and perceived facilitators of a responsible conduct in searching for information online. Overall, the focus of the Digital4All project in digital competences revealed to be

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very adequate considering the main tools used by young migrants in Portugal, which are mainly digital and online sources and resources. All of them mentioned to use formal and official websites to obtain information, but also **non-formal sources** that included Blogs, YouTube videos and channels, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. Online tools were perceived as a facilitator for accessing to relevant information regarding the migration journey and process mainly because due to unconcise, difficulty to understand, unorganized and outdated information from official websites. It was also fairly mentioned the lack of professional ethics by the attendants of social and migration services, who did not facilitate the process. In the perception of young migrants, these factors are barriers to that influence the **search for information elsewhere**, normally from non-official sources. The increasing of world's digitalization was also a perceived barrier to young migrants regarding the access to reliable information. The growth of social media users and activity has been increasing the spread of **untruths online** by influencers. **Contextual deception** (i.e., clickbait titles), **propaganda** and **intentional disinformation** were all mentioned by young migrants in Portugal's focus group.

In general, participants placed a great emphasis in their **macrosystem**, as the main system influencing and perpetuating the inaccessibility of reliable information. However, during the discussion and the answer to one key-question, some relevant **internal competences** were highlighted by young migrants as facilitators and barriers to the access to reliable information. Both psychological and cognitive components were mentioned as negative obstacles, namely the **lack of motivation** to evaluate information online as well as **high expectations** regarding the life in a new country, supposed "better". On another note, digital competences, most promptly, **"Information and Data Literacy"** and **"Safety"** components of the DigComp Framework (Vuorikari et al., 2022) were stressed by our young migrants as a set of knowledge and abilities that allowed to navigate more efficiently and more responsibly in a digital world.

Consensual with the abovementioned feedback, young migrants manifested the importance it would be to develop a training aiming at developing skills and knowledge of digital competences, critical thinking and motivational strategies. A special facilitator for our young migrants regarding this training was the **involvement of credible facilitators** in the process and dissemination of training results. If could be, therefore, convenient and interesting the **expansion** of the Digital4All Capacitation Training to credible influencers. Furthermore, **metacognition** was a mentioned cognitive competence that would be interesting to be developed in the Digital4All training program, as a mean for awareness of own expectancies and as a guide to direct intentional behavior (i.e., towards critically assessing information). Therefore, Digital4All training program could also embrace this feedback as to address young migrant's needs more easily.

In forms of conclusion, Digital4All proposal, overall aim and expected to be developed results seem to be **aligned** with some perceptions and needs of young migrants in Portugal. In specific, Digital4All training program, as the main result for the next Work Package, should encompass the **suggestions** and **recommendations** here proposed, so the following results are too directed at young migrant's needs.

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Annexes

Appendix A.

Name	E-mail	Entree Time	Out Time	Duration (in minutes)	Role
Jessica Magalhães - RigthChalleng	artur.pinto@cm-lousada.pt	08/11/2023 11:50	08/11/2023 13:14	84	Moderator
Raju Oliveira		08/11/2023 11:57	08/11/2023 11:58	1	
Raju Oliveira		08/11/2023 11:58	08/11/2023 13:14	76	Participant
Letícia Alberici		08/11/2023 12:01	08/11/2023 12:01	1	
Letícia Alberici		08/11/2023 12:01	08/11/2023 13:14	73	Participant
Luíza Cerri		08/11/2023 12:03	08/11/2023 12:03	1	
Luíza Cerri		08/11/2023 12:03	08/11/2023 13:14	71	Participant
Ana Cardoso		08/11/2023 12:12	08/11/2023 12:12	1	
Ana Cardoso		08/11/2023 12:12	08/11/2023 13:03	51	Participant
Diana (Artur Pinto)	artur.pinto@cm-lousada.pt	08/11/2023 12:55	08/11/2023 13:14	19	RC Project Manager

Figure 1. Proves of implementation of young migrants' Focus Group in Portugal.

Appendix B.

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Focus Group Consent Form for Erasmus Plus KA2 Project

Project: "Buidiling a Digital World for All"

Project No: 2022-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000097932

Research project aim: promoting digital and media literacy in migrants and fostering their competences to critically and efficiently evaluate information online.

Moderator:

Date and Place of the focus group:

Estimated Duration: 2 Hours

Risks: there are no risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop or withdraw from the focus group at any time.

Advantages: your participation is highly valuable for the quality and the impact of our results.

Confidentiality: the focus group is intended to be confidential, and all efforts have been made to ensure confidentiality. For the purpose of producing reliable results, the focus group meeting needs to be audio and video recorded. Any transcripts produced, if disseminated, will be done in a manner where no identifiable characteristics are revealed. Visual images will only be shared in websites or events if you consent to it.

Data Protection: Only the partner's organizations will have access to the transcripts and visual recording of the focus group meeting. This information will be available for the two years of the project, but after that, it will be eliminated.

Voluntary Nature: The participation in this questionnaire is voluntary.

If you have any questions you can contact [insert here the researcher's name] through the following e-mail: [insert the researcher partner's mail here].

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Please check the box, if you agree to be video and audio recorded:

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

Please check the box, if you agree to be quoted with your name in our project material, after the consultation with you and with your agreement for the specific publication or other medium before publishing it:

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

Please check the box, if you agree to share your image in newsarticles, websites, project's social media, spoken presentations, feedback events or others.

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

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