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Training Programme
for Online Courses

Module 10

Media literacy & Civic engagement

Contents

Description for online Lesson

Welcome to the module about Civic Engagement! In this module, you will be introduced to the idea of Civic engagement and the bubbles it created inside a society and/or a community. It will be shown how the concepts related to Civic engagement are linked together and the methods and ways in which all people, especially the seniors, can be active members of it.

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Learning Outcomes

Participants will therefore learn about their own impact on the community they live in, especially in the online one. Also, they can see the methods in which they can influence and be influenced in this topic.

Civic engagement is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community. It also involves developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. These activities enrich the lives of the people and are socially beneficial to the community. Four interrelated constructs have been identified in the research literature as necessary for civic engagement:

» **Civic action:** or participation in activities such as volunteering or service-learning to help better the community.

» **Civic Commitment or duty:** the willingness to make a positive contribution to society.

» **Civic skills:** to be able to be involved in civil society, politics and democracy.

» **Social cohesion:** a sense of reciprocity, trust and bonding to others.

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There are numerous paths for civic engagement:

- Political participation through voting, voter registration, or being an election judge;

- Educating citizens on government and history;

- Volunteering with organisations that build community well-being or participating in community service projects;

- Advocating for legislation and models;

- Representing fellow citizens by appointment or election, such as on a city council or school board.

Online civic engagement

Online civic engagement is not just about collecting feedback, it's also about sharing information. From a citizen perspective, participating in online civic engagement efforts gives you a chance to tap into local government data, such as budgets and performance metrics, that may impact your opinion. A better-informed citizenry benefits all parties involved.

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OpenGov is one of six popular community engagement platforms. Others include ClearGov, Socrata, Bang the Table, mySidewalk, and LiveStories. Cloud-based SaaS platforms like OpenGov offer tools for both internal and external stakeholders that transform raw data into graphs, maps, and other bite-sized, intuitive, and interactive visualizations. Digital general ledgers increase financial transparency. By making data meaningful and available in ways residents understand, governments keep residents informed in a highly transparent way. When leveraged with social media, such information combats noise and informs community members before they participate in online conversations, such as a virtual town hall.

Digital civic engagement platforms can reduce barriers to involvement and voice the ideas and opinions of under-represented demographics at traditional events such as council meetings and town halls. Since only a small portion of the population attends in-person public hearings, governments can supplement these efforts with convenient and easy virtual town halls, online forums, and virtual podiums. Government leaders, from finance directors to city managers, leverage surveys to collect feedback from citizens about upcoming projects. OpenGov's Stories is a way for governments to publish engaging narratives and share information with communities.

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Introduction

In this module, the target group will be introduced to the idea of Civic engagement and the bubbles it created inside a society and/or a community. It will be shown how the concepts related to Civic engagement are linked together and the methods and ways in which all people, especially the seniors, can be active members of it.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will therefore learn about their own impact on the community they live in, especially in the online one. In addition, they can see the methods in which they can influence and be influenced in this topic.

Keywords

Community, society, vote, participation, protest, political processes, public issues, policy makers, volunteering, community building, involvement, citizenship.

Subjects

Understanding how the use of digital media affects our view over the political situation and how we can let our own impact over it.

1. Understand

- Discuss the impact of digital world over a public / politic affair;

- Recognize the potential negative effects of excessive digital engagement in public affairs for a citizen;

- Understand the concept of community engagement, both online and offline;

- Recognize the impact of online and digital in being civic engaged;

- Understand the implication people have in creating social bubbles.

2. Develop strategies to promote offline involvement in the community.

- Create groups and role plays that are in accordance with the real-life situation and get the learning from them.

- Understand the importance of being active inside a community and creating space for others to do so.

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Useful resources

🔗 https://www.thepolicycircle.org/brief/whats-whys-civic-engagement
https://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering

🔗 What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"? Richard P. Adler, Judy Goggin, 2005

🔗 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/civic-engagement

🔗 https://civis.eu/en/civis-courses/civic-engagement-in-europe-a-transdisciplinary-approach

🔗 https://citizens.eurocities.eu

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EAVI Conversations:

[EAVI Conversations with Diletta Bellotti: On- and Offline Activism - YouTube](#)

[EAVI Conversations with Stacey Featherstone & Athina Karatzogianni: Digital Citizenship & Engagement - YouTube](#)

[Aura Salla from Facebook at EAVI Conversations: Digital Citizenship & the Role of Social Media - YouTube](#)

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Activity 1#: Agreement in our community

Learning objectives:

- Participants will get to know the importance of speaking up their voices.

- Participants will learn how to engage within their community.

- Participants will negotiate strategies for creating the most useful Table of rules for their community.

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Settings/materials/duration

- Settings: Any comfortable meeting space with access to a screen for presentations.
- Materials: Papers, markers, or digital devices for marking concepts.
- Duration: Approximately 1 hour 30 min.

Implementation of the activity:

Step 1 - Preparation:

Write on a piece of paper the name of each group (the Policy Makers, the Protestors etc.) and place it randomly (faced down, so it cannot be seen until they will turn it up).

Step 2 - Introduction

(5 minutes)

- Welcome participants and explain the purpose of the activity: to create the Community regulation everyone should approve that.

- Provide a short explanation about the fact that they are a community even in that group, although they will spend some hours/day together but they have things and interests in common and this is enough for creating a community.

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Step 3 – The Game

(45-50 minutes)

- Create several groups, each one having 3-4 participants in it.

- Explain that they need to create The Rules of the community they are now in, each group creating their own rules and then establishing the One for the entire group.

- First, they have 15 minutes to create the rules in each group.

- Each group will have a different role in a community: one group will represent the young people, one group the seniors' one, one group is the Policy makers, one group is the Protesters, one the Press and so on.

- They have 10 rules that they need to approve in the end and to be satisfied about.

- They must vote on each of the rules and for each it should be unanimous acceptance.

- Encourage participants to share personal experiences and insights they could have.

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Step 4 - Debrief

(20 minutes)

- The main point of the activity is to create a community with representatives of many categories of people, not to have/create consensus. Tell them that it is all right if they do not manage to have a consensus.
- Ask participants to share how to create the rules by being in different roles and how this could be applied to their own communities.
- Summarize key takeaways and emphasize the importance of community and engagement.

Recommendations for implementation

- At the end of the debate, you can also discuss the online participation of people in general and especially seniors.
- Pay attention to the non-verbal behaviour of the audience and when you notice that they want to intervene, encourage them to do so.
- You can also change the method by reversing the roles between the participants during the debate.
- So those who for a while have been decision-makers, NGOs and press representatives will have the roles of young people and/or with seniors, and some will become decision-makers, NGOs and press representatives.

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Reflective questions

- How was this experience for you?

- How was it to play the role(s)?

- Did this experience help you better understand how the civic engagement of people can be encouraged at different levels?

- Are you satisfied with the results?

- How can you use the conclusions of this debate in your real life?

- If in real life you plan to participate in a structural dialogue on the same topic what will you use from this simulation?

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Activity 2 : Mirroring for active citizenship

Learning objectives:

The objective of this activity is to develop the civic competences of people and to enhance their ability to identify and recognise forms of civic engagement.

Settings/materials/duration

- Settings: Any comfortable meeting space.

- Materials: None

- Duration: Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

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Implementation of the activity:

Step 1 - Preparation

You can have a mirror in the room for a bigger effect.

Step 2 - Introduction

(5 minutes)

Tell the participants that this activity is for identifying civic engagement but also to see the 'bubbles' it creates within a community, either offline or online.

This method can be very noisy. Tell the participants to select just one sentence to share in the mirror. The participants can ask for help from their teammate if they think they cannot remember the correct answer. You will underline the fact that this is a method that helps them to analyse and reflect their plans and objectives and not a method that aims to identify how much a participant can memorize some sentences.

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Step 3 – The mirroring Game

(45-50 minutes)

- **First,** you will start by discussing active involvement in the community, from desire and willingness to achievement. During the discussions, the participants will receive information about participation, democracy, political life, and how a person can participate at local, regional, national and European level.

- **Second,** divide the group into teams of 2 participants. Each participant will identify how they want to participate in their community and they will discuss their reasons in teams. They will identify the personal goals and some actions to be done in order to reach those goals. They should discuss at least one goal and one action each. Tell the participants they have to actively listen to each other because they will use their discussions to accomplish the next task.

- **Third,** after they finish discussing, tell the participants to return to the big group. The players of each team will face each other, like looking in a mirror. One at a time each team player will start by saying what he or she wants to do in order to become active in the community and will suddenly stop in the middle of the sentence (or at any point that they feel that their teammate can continue his or her sentence). The other team player will continue the sentence with the information they remember from their discussions. He or she needs to remember what they have discussed previously. After the first team player has finished, they will change roles.

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Step 4 - Debrief

(20 minutes)

Remember the participants that this is an exercise and their plans are important regardless of the received response from their teammate. Some people can get emotional because their teammates did not remember what they were talking about. Some participants may forget what their peers were talking about because of the pressure of memorizing things and performing in a certain manner. Make them aware that their reactions are normal and have nothing to do with how important their planned aims and actions are.

Recommendations for implementation

- Keep the atmosphere in the participant's mood, it is ok the way it will be.

- Give them more time if needed and do not interfere too much in the topic.

- Consider including multimedia elements like short videos or infographics to enhance engagement.

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Reflective questions

- How was it to work in a team?

- How did you communicate with your colleague?

- Was it helpful for you to mirror your plans and to hear them out loud from your teammate?

- What have you learned from sharing plans and dreams? Did your teammate's perspective and ideas bring you something new?

- What will you do next in order to pursue your aims and actions? What is your plan? Future tips and consequences.

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Activity 3 : Civic competences development

Learning objectives:

To develop social competences by enhancing the capacity of people to use social skills, attitudes and behaviour to deal with responsibilities, tasks, or challenges which can occur in their daily life.

Settings/materials/duration

- Settings: Any comfortable meeting space with chairs.

- Materials: Papers, markers, flipchart

- Duration: Approximately 1 hour 30 min.

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Implementation of the activity:

Step 1 - Preparation

- Materials: Papers, markers, flipchart

- Before the activity prepare a huge circle resembling a cake with several slices where you will write some of the most important tools/activities people can do for enhancing their civic attitude:

- Voting - both online and offline

- Online Shared Content (related to the topic)

- Policy makers and the General public

- Petition - in online and offline forms

- Surveys - on/offline

- Put the cake over something sturdy, where it can be turned like a roulette/ spinning wheel.

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Step 2 - Introduction

(10 minutes)

- Tell the participants about the topic of the activity.

- Remind them that it is a learning process about being a civic engaged citizen in a digital world.

- Let them choose the order in which they will spin the wheel.

Step 3 – Spin the Digital Wheel

(45-50 minutes)

- One by one, each participant will spin the circle. When the circle stops, the participant will read the word on the cake slice that stopped to his right. Depending on what civic attitude is there on the slice, the participant will need to name one activity, attitude or manifestation related to it. The participants' answers will be written on the designated cake slice. If they wish, they can also ask for help from their peers or turn the wheel again, to change the cake slice.

- After all the participants have had a chance to spin the wheel and answer, divide the big group into several groups with 3-4 participants in each. Each group will take a slice of the cake and think about some tips and tricks to improve the level of identified

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online civic attitudes. In the end, each team will present their ideas to the big group.

- When presenting, they will need to say the ways in which the specific Attitude can be noticed in the online / digital community and If they had ever done it. Ask them to share tips too, if they have or can think of, about the activity for future use.

Step 4 - Debrief

(20 minutes)

- Tell the participants to be honest about their digital civic engagement and that this is the best way to support their own learning and the other participants'.

- Ask them to show on their devices the groups or websites/forums that they usually use (if any) and to tell how this contributed to their digital civic engagement.

Recommendations for implementation

- This method encourages the participants to give different answers. In some cases, the answers can be wrong or other people may feel differently about them. In these cases, certain discussions between participants may occur and they may fight over whether one of them has given a correct example.

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- It is important to stop them when the debate becomes aggressive or when you see they cannot conclude on their own. You will validate the answer by telling them the correct answer coming from the literature overview.

- You can use this method to help them discover the digital attitudes or you can use it to help them to deepen their knowledge.

Reflective questions

- How was this experience for you?

- What have you learned?

- How did you work as a team?

- Why is it important to be aware of these online social attitudes?

- When and why do we need social attitudes? In what environments?

- What individual strategy can we apply to improve our own social attitudes in the digital world?

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Evaluation of the Module

Quiz for Self-Assessment

To be answered by learners at the end of the module. For a printable version, please see the annex. A printable version you can find in the annex.

Questionnaire

To be answered by learners at the end of the module to measure the overall impact of the training program. For a printable version, please see the annex.

Validation of the Module

At the end of the Module, learners will have acquired.

Knowledge:

The learners are able to

- Understand the meaning of a civic society

- To see the differences between online / digital engagement and civic engagement.

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Skills:

The learners are able to

- Recognize the current issues within a community / society

- Understand the concepts that are linked to the civic engagement, such as stakeholders, commitment, community, government.

Competencies:

The learners are able to

- Measure the impact of their involvement in a civic issue

- Create a network of people that are connected to the same goal

- To develop goals and objectives for a community

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ANNEX For Module 10
Media literacy & civic engagement

Entry Level Test - Media literacy & civic engagement

Question 1: Digital media has no impact on our view of political situations.
  a. True
  b. False

Question 2: Which of the following is a potential negative effect of excessive digital engagement in public affairs?
  a. Increased community involvement
  b. Decreased participation in offline activities
  c. Improved understanding of diverse perspectives
  d. Strengthened democratic processes

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Question 3: Online engagement does not contribute to civic engagement.
   a. True
   b. False

Question 4: Social bubbles are created when people?
   a. Engage in online communities that share similar opinions
   b. Actively seek out diverse perspectives
   c. Challenge their own beliefs and biases
   d. Evaluate information critically and objectively

Correct answers:

Question 1: b) False

Question 2: b) Decreased participation in offline activities

Question 3: b) False

Question 4: a) Engage in online communities that share similar opinions

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Quiz for Self-Assessment

To be answered by learners at the end of the module.

1. Please rate your understanding of the following concepts on a scale of **1 (Low)** to **5 (High)**:

Civic participation:

1	2	3	4	5

Voting:

1	2	3	4	5

Community involvement:

1	2	3	4	5

Online Community Engagement:

1	2	3	4	5

Digital bubbles:

1	2	3	4	5

Community Actors/Parties:

1	2	3	4	5

Online sharing and support:

1	2	3	4	5

Local/national/European involvement:

1	2	3	4	5

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2. True or False:

» Voting can be done both online and offline and it has the same impact.
    a. True
    a. False

» Not everyone has the right to protest, to vote or to take part in public manifestations.
    a. True
    a. False

» Digital civic engagement is enough for being considered a citizen.
    a. True
    a. False

» One person can have only one role within a community.
    a. True
    b. False

3. Please provide a brief reflection for 3-4 phrases on one thing you've learned about digital community engagement during this activity:

_____

_____

_____

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Questionnaire

To be answered by learners at the end of the module to measure the overall impact of the training program.

1. Did the training content about media literacy and Civic engagement meet your expectations?

☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Was the mix of presentations/explanations and activities suitable?

☐ Yes
☐ No

3. Did you learn anything new?

☐ Yes
☐ No

4. If yes, please provide more details about your acquainted knowledge skills/competencies.
I am able to…

_____

_____

_____

_____

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5. If no, please provide details about missing knowledge/skills/ competencies:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Was the course practical or easy to apply?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Have you observed any positive impacts of this course on your media usage? Could you specify them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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8. Based on this training, would you be interested in having trained in other skills?

☐ Yes
☐ No

9. Do you have any suggestions to improve this course?

☐ Yes
☐ No

10. If yes/no, please provide more details, why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Exit Level Test - Media literacy & civic engagement

Question 1: How does the digital world impact public and political affairs?

    a. It has no effect

    b. It provides easy access to information and diverse perspectives

    c. It promotes offline community engagement

    d. It hinders civic participation

Question 2: Excessive digital engagement can have negative consequences for citizens' involvement in public affairs.

    a. True

    b. False

Question 3: What is the importance of being active within a community?

    a. It allows individuals to have more free time

    b. It fosters trust, collaboration, and social cohesion

    c. It isolates individuals from others

    d. It reduces access to information and resources

Question 4: Civic competences can be developed through active participation in community activities

    a. True

    b. False

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Correct answers:

Question 1 b) It provides easy access to information and diverse perspectives

Question 2: a) True

Question 3: b) It fosters trust, collaboration, and social cohesion

Question 4: a) True

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