

“DigiWork - digital skills for adult learners” - Progetto n.  
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## INSIGHTS

**DigiWork**  
digital skills for adult learners

## FOCUS GROUP



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## DETAILS

April 26th 1pm-4pm

20 adults - leaders, administrators and citizens

Location - Botevgrad

## FOCUS GROUP GOAL

The goal of the focus group was for adults 40+ and 50+ to test how they learn and develop digital skills and to gather insights and feedback on the most effective methods for teaching digital skills to this age group.

Specifically, the focus group explored the following questions:

1. What are the common challenges that adults 40+ and 50+ face when learning and developing digital skills?
2. What are the preferred learning styles of adults 40+ and 50+ when it comes to digital skills training?
3. What types of digital skills training programs are most effective for adults 40+?
4. How can digital skills training programs be tailored to meet the needs of adults 40+?
5. What types of support and resources are needed to help adults 40+ continue to develop their digital skills over time?

The insights and feedback gathered from this focus group can help educators, policy makers, and training providers develop more effective digital skills training programs for adults 40+ and 50+.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Adults aged 45+ to 50 and 60 who still want to be active socially and some of them in the job market. They come from suburban and rural areas and poor communities - Botevgrad in Bulgaria. Most of them are non-digital professions/ executed their professions without or with minimal digital skills. Their educational background varies from high school completion to bachelor university degree. These are adults who have never been through digital learning and thus lack any skills whatsoever in the field of digital learning.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Icebreaker:** To help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable sharing their experiences, the focus group started with an icebreaker activity - presentation of self and work duties.
2. **Small group discussions using the WORLD CAFE FORMAT:** Participants were divided into small groups to discuss specific questions related to digital skills training, the challenges they face and the needs they have in their day to day work.

3. **Brainstorming session:** Participants were asked to brainstorm different ideas for improving their digital skills. Some of the main insights were:
  - Printed guides
  - Easy to follow videos
  - Cases studies
4. **Role-playing exercise:** participants were given various tasks to perform on their phones and other devices - create social media posts, tag people, create canva templates, use Chat GTPm search information online, creta chats and groups, etc.
5. **Insights session:** Finally, the focus group ended with an insights session, summarized below.

## INSIGHTS

As our world becomes increasingly digital, it is imperative that adults 50+ have access to and are proficient in digital skills. From job opportunities to social connections, the digital landscape offers a multitude of benefits, but it can also be overwhelming and intimidating for those who are not familiar with it. Therefore, policy makers and educators need to take steps to ensure that older adults are equipped with the necessary digital skills to fully participate in today's society. The first step is to acknowledge the importance of digital literacy for older adults. Policy makers should prioritize investing in digital literacy programs for older adults and promoting them as a critical component of lifelong learning. Educators need to recognize the unique needs of older adults and create tailored programs that take into account their experience level, learning style, and preferences.

Furthermore, policy makers need to make sure that digital literacy programs are accessible to all older adults, regardless of their economic or social status. This includes providing access to affordable and reliable internet connectivity and making sure that digital literacy programs are available in a variety of settings, including community centers, libraries, and senior centers. In addition, educators need to emphasize the practical applications of digital skills. Many older adults may not see the relevance of learning how to use a computer or navigate social media. Therefore, educators need to demonstrate how digital skills can improve older adults' quality of life, such as enabling them to stay connected with friends and family, access healthcare services, or even start a new career.

Another important consideration is the need to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. Older adults may feel embarrassed or ashamed about their lack of digital skills, and this can be a significant barrier to learning. Therefore, educators need to create a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere that encourages older adults to ask questions, take risks, and make mistakes.

Finally, policy makers and educators need to recognize that digital skills are not a one-time achievement. As technology continues to evolve, digital literacy programs must be updated to reflect these changes. Therefore, ongoing funding and support for digital literacy programs must be a priority.

In conclusion, digital skills are essential for older adults to participate fully in today's society. Policy makers and educators must work together to provide access to digital literacy programs that are tailored to the needs of older adults, foster a positive and supportive learning

environment, and recognize the importance of ongoing learning and evolution. By investing in digital literacy programs for older adults, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the digital age.

When it comes to teaching digital skills to adults 50+, training providers need to consider the unique challenges and learning styles of this age group. Here are some recommendations on how training providers can effectively develop digital skills in older adults:

1. **Start with the basics:** Many older adults may have limited experience with technology, so it is important to start with the basics. This includes understanding how to use a computer or mobile device, navigating the internet, and using email. These foundational skills are essential before moving on to more advanced topics.
2. **Use real-life examples:** Older adults may be more motivated to learn if they can see how digital skills can improve their daily lives. Training providers should use real-life examples that are relevant to older adults, such as online banking, telehealth, or connecting with loved ones through social media.
3. **Tailor the program to the individual:** Older adults have different levels of experience and learning styles, so training providers need to tailor their programs to meet the needs of each individual. This can be done by conducting a needs assessment or survey before the program begins, or by offering one-on-one coaching or support.
4. **Create a supportive learning environment:** Older adults may feel intimidated or embarrassed about their lack of digital skills, so it is important to create a supportive learning environment that is non-judgmental and encouraging. Training providers should create a safe space where older adults feel comfortable asking questions, making mistakes, and learning at their own pace.
5. **Emphasize hands-on learning:** Older adults may learn best through hands-on activities and practical examples, rather than theoretical concepts. Training providers should incorporate hands-on activities, such as guided tutorials or interactive exercises, into their programs to help older adults develop their skills through practice.
6. **Offer ongoing support:** Digital skills require ongoing practice and reinforcement. Training providers should offer ongoing support, such as follow-up coaching or online resources, to help older adults continue to develop and improve their digital skills over time.