SALTO

PARTICIPATION & INFORMATION

Media and Information Literacy in the EU Youth Programmes – Empowering Youth Participation

How do Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects address Media and Information Literacy (MIL)? Which MIL topics are most common? Are any particular topics not covered? Which countries and key actions have more MIL activities? In what way is MIL connected to Youth Participation topics? The answers to these questions and many more insights can be found in the Media and Information Literacy Across EU Youth Programmes: 2021 Review!

MIL in EU Youth Programmes

◗ **MIL in the Erasmus+ Key Actions** is primarily represented through the KA154-YOU: Youth participation activities and KA220-YOU: Cooperation partnerships in youth, in which every 3rd project is focused on MIL.

◗ **'Developing digital youth work'** appears to be the top priority for the KA2 projects (almost 40%) and is also the most popular thematic area among the projects in KA153-YOU: Mobility of youth workers (30%).

◗ **Major gaps in MIL** are present among Key Action 2 in the 'digital safety', 'ICT' and 'media literacy and tackling information' thematic areas. According to the received data, there is a complete absence of projects in digital safety and ICT among the KA210-YOU: Small scale partnerships in youth.

◗ **'Digital skills and competencies'** is the leading thematic area of ESC Solidarity projects (43.5%) and of the projects under Erasmus+ KA152-YOU: Mobility of young people (32.5%). It is also the area that received the most number of all MIL-focused projects across both EU Programmes (23.4%, or 125 of 534 projects).

MIL & Youth Participation

◗ **50% of Youth Participation projects have MIL in focus, and vice versa.** This significant link intersection might have been accentuated as a result of the pandemic; however, at the same time, it seems to be a clear trend that will continue in the future. 'Critical thinking' appears to be the transversal-horizontal competence that is relevant and often present in both kinds of projects.

◗ **MIL is a precondition for effective youth participation.** It is necessary to develop MIL competences among all young people but particularly for those with fewer opportunities, those from minority groups, those living in rural areas or victims of discrimination. In many projects, this promotion of MIL competences among young people with fewer opportunities for participation is combined with its promotion of social inclusion and employability.

◗ **MIL is necessary for e-participation.** MIL competencies are necessary for contributing to the new arena of youth participation: e-participation. Debates, consultations, online decision-making processes, e-campaigns and virtual democratic spaces are some of the activities and formats of e-participation.

◗ **MIL and new expressions of youth participation.** In many instances, the creative use of new means of expression, such as music, arts, video and podcasts, is ideal for groups of young people who are not just socially excluded but are stigmatised and the targets of stereotypes that can be encountered 'online'. In these kinds of projects, the need for MIL to unlock new ways of expression and for youth participation is often linked with the idea of MIL being utilised for Human Rights (e.g., against hate speech and online discrimination).

MIL & SALTO PI

◗ **Advancing MIL in the long term** requires that better guidelines and project ideas are developed by MIL experts and niche organisations in order to be shared further and promoted by National Agencies and field stakeholders. SALTO PI is seen as a nexus for encouraging networking between MIL stakeholders and youth work, as well as mainstreaming MIL through versatile cross-topic campaigns.

◗ **MIL Study Visit 2022:** the event programme is proposed to feature topics that are focused on introducing projects within the Media Landscape thematic area, developing the MIL focus of the ESC Volunteering and Solidarity projects, integrating the 'digital safety', 'ICT' and 'media literacy and tackling information' thematic areas into KA2 projects, and promoting cooperation and peacebuilding to tackle youth radicalisation.

MIL & Youth Work

◗ **The specific needs of age groups** are found to be the most important consideration when defining what makes a quality project. Depending on age, background and experience with digital technology and media, the project's audience is going to require different approaches that the youth worker will take into account before planning his/her activities.

◗ **Explain and show critical thinking!** Closer attention needs to be paid to introducing and practising the skill with subject matter experts and in international contexts, so it is recommended that young people engage in cross-border projects as much as possible to facilitate their learning and use of critical thinking.

◗ **Target specialist organisations to lead MIL projects within the EU Youth Programmes!** KA2 projects strive to include specific niche organisations that deal with MIL-related issues, especially 'digital safety', 'ICT' and 'media literacy and tackling information'.

◗ **Learn from Finland?** ESC Volunteering and Solidarity projects generally require more attention than MIL. In this regard Finland may have more experience, as both Finnish NA representatives mentioned in their survey responses that a focus on MIL comes mostly from the solidarity projects, including those projects related to representation/inclusion.

◗ **Making MIL a EU Youth Priority**, or rather integrating it into other priority topics is necessary to make a broad concept such as MIL work in the context of existing programmes and prompt more emphasis and motivation from relevant stakeholders to plan and engage in long-term MIL activities.

The review has been conducted by SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre (SALTO PI) as part of the TCA project Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Study Visit.