

# NATIONAL REPORT

**Norway**

**DIGITAL ADVOCACY FOR YOUTH**



# Who we are

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**NorSensus**  
MEDIAFORUM

Norsensus Mediaforum is an ideal organization that offers media and digital services and training, assists the NGO and public sector with capacity building in media and communication, and contributes to increasing media literacy in society. We are a non-profit media organization working in the field of media literacy and communication capacity building.

2

 **HIGGS**  
Higher Incubator Giving Growth & Sustainability

Higher Incubator Giving Growth and Sustainability is a non-profit organization which aims to reinforce CSOs in Greece through educational and supportive programs. It offers capacity building support to small and medium CSOs mainly through training and educational initiatives. Currently it operates three capacity-building programs, the Accelerator, the Incubator and the Recharge designed for the Greek CSO ecosystem assisting them in their growth and development.

3

**symplexis**

Symplexis is a Greek non-for-profit organization that strives to ensure equal opportunities for all through actions and measures that build skills, empower and promote active engagement and participation focusing on the most vulnerable categories of the population and particularly those with fewer opportunities. Its mission is to elevate social cohesion through integrated actions and project-based activities.

# Who we are

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Center for Social  
Innovation

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) is a Research and Development organization, which focuses on fostering social innovation that can bring about positive change to local, national, regional, and global entities. These entities include but are not limited to governments, local administrative agencies, non-for-profit agencies, commercial entities, and educational institutions.

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Celje Youth Center (MCC) is a nonprofit public organisation. Their vision is to successfully respond to the needs of young people and shape the place for socialising, entertainment, creating and gaining new skills and providing international non-formal learning opportunities for young people. Its activities are oriented towards providing information and encouraging participation aiming to gain non-formal competences for youth and foster social engagement and active participation among youth.

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The Future Now Association (TFN) is a Bulgarian youth NGO that works on national and international initiatives, activities, and projects for and with young people and youth workers. TFN supports and promotes democratic values of civil society to protect freedom, dignity, and inclusion of children, young people, and vulnerable groups of society.

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# Executive Summary

This national report for the Digital Advocacy for Youth (D.A.Y.) project summarizes the findings from a survey conducted across Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, Norway and Bulgaria. The D.A.Y. project aims to enhance digital advocacy among youth by identifying current practices, evaluating the use of digital tools, and understanding specific training needs to improve advocacy efforts.

The findings indicate that digital tools play a crucial role in youth advocacy across all surveyed countries, with social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn being widely used to engage and mobilize audiences. However, respondents also highlighted challenges, particularly concerning limited resources, difficulties in reaching target audiences, and the rapid evolution of digital technologies. These challenges underscore a need for more accessible, tailored training and support to enhance digital advocacy effectiveness.

## Key Findings:

1. **Digital Tool Usage:** Respondents generally consider digital tools essential for advocacy, yet the level of tool adoption and specific platforms used vary by country.
2. **Challenges in Advocacy:** Main challenges include resource constraints, low engagement rates, and technical barriers, which

# Demographic Profile

## . Online Survey Participants

The first phase of the research involved an online survey, which was completed by 15 participants. These individuals were affiliated with various youth organizations or organizations that work closely with youth in Norway. The demographic profile of the participants is summarized as follows:

### **Geographical Location:**

All survey participants resided in Norway, ensuring the data captured was reflective of the national context.

### **Gender Representation:**

7 participants identified as female and 8 participants identified themselves as male, offering diverse perspectives on gender-related dynamics within respondents.

### **Educational Background:**

The respondents possessed advanced educational qualifications, including master's and doctoral degrees, highlighting a highly educated cohort.

### **Employment Status:**

All participants were employed, with a significant number working directly within civil society organizations. Their roles included positions such as project leaders, directors, and international affairs coordinators.

## **Engagement with Civil Society:**

The majority of participants were actively involved in civil society, either as employees or regular volunteers, demonstrating a strong connection to youth-focused initiatives.

## **Organizational Representation:**

The organizations represented by the participants varied in their focus areas. These included youth work, municipal youth services, and media-oriented projects, providing a broad spectrum of insights.

## **2. Focus Group Interview Participants**

The second phase of the research comprised two in-depth focus group interviews conducted digitally via Zoom. These sessions provided qualitative insights into digital youth participation and involved a total of six participants.

### **Session Details:**

The first focus group was conducted on October 22, 2024, at 11:00 (GMT +02:00) and included four participants.

The second focus group took place on November 1, 2024, at 17:00 (GMT +02:00) with two participants.

### **Participant Backgrounds:**

The participants came from diverse professional and organizational contexts, bringing a wide range of expertise and experiences to the discussions.

## **Organizational Representation:**

Two participants were from established youth organizations with direct engagement with young people.

One participant represented an EU-funded initiative focusing on youth engagement.

Another participant was from a media-focused non-governmental organization (NGO).

Two participants worked with organizations specializing in youth clubs and municipal youth services.

## **Diverse Perspectives:**

The group collectively represented both grassroots-level youth work and strategic organizational development, providing a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities associated with digital youth participation.

# **Current Use of Digital Tools in Advocacy**

## **Findings from the focus groups**

### **1. Social Media as a Primary Tool for Outreach and Engagement**

Across organizations, social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, were consistently identified as primary tools for outreach and recruitment. These platforms are employed to announce events, share information about opportunities, and engage with youth to solicit participation in programs.

While Facebook is often perceived as a medium for communicating with parents and adult stakeholders, Instagram and Snapchat are considered more effective for reaching and engaging directly with young people.

Furthermore, organizations are leveraging digital tools to create content for these platforms, including some utilizing AI to assist in producing posts and developing visual materials.

### **2. Digital Tools for Enhanced Program Management and Reporting**

Digital tools are not only utilized for outreach but are also playing an increasingly important role in streamlining program management. These tools are leveraged for project proposal drafting, aided by AI platforms such as ChatGPT, and for reporting on project outcomes, saving valuable time for staff and volunteers who often have limited resources.

Registration and data collection for program reporting are also often handled digitally, contributing to operational efficiency. In addition,

In addition, communication among stakeholders is increasingly facilitated through digital meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, especially for cross-border collaborations, a transition driven in part by the need to adapt to post-pandemic conditions.

### **3. The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Youth Work**

The use of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, is an emerging trend in the sector. These tools are utilized for various tasks including drafting communications, generating reports, and formulating project applications. Participants highlight the time-saving potential of AI in administrative tasks. However, it is recognized that AI is not a replacement for human effort but rather an aid and that all AI-generated content needs critical review and fact-checking.

### **4. The Dichotomy Between Digital and In-Person Engagement**

Despite the advantages of digital tools, participants expressed mixed views regarding the effectiveness of digital engagement in comparison to in-person interactions. While digital tools are considered crucial for reaching a broader audience, they are often perceived as potentially distracting and less conducive to creating a deep level of engagement, particularly compared to in-person activities. A prevailing perspective highlighted that in-person engagement remains a superior option for fostering strong connections and active participation. Several participants stressed the importance of face-to-face interactions for both social and mental health.

### **5. Persistent Challenges in Implementing Digital Tools for Advocacy**

While organizations acknowledge the benefits of using digital tools, several challenges persist. A primary challenge is the limited resources for comprehensive digital tool upgrades, forcing many organizations to rely on manual processes. Some organizations struggle with the lack of digital training and adoption of newer technologies. There is also concern that while youth are familiar with digital media, they predominantly use them for content consumption rather than active participation or advocacy.

Concerns around digital literacy, including online risks and privacy, were also highlighted as major barriers. Finally, there is a lack of effective metrics to measure the impact of digital advocacy efforts.

## **6. Future Directions for Digital Advocacy**

Participants anticipated further increases in the use of digital tools for advocacy in the coming years, driven by the increasing prevalence of digital natives among young people. The development of digital social spaces, similar to youth centers, was also considered. In terms of regulation and responsibility, participants indicated a need for enhanced digital literacy training and also suggest a greater need for oversight in terms of responsible usage. This would promote safer and more effective online interactions. Furthermore, digital tools are understood to provide critical accessibility for youth with disabilities or other limitations. The consensus among the participants was that while the trajectory of technological development is hard to predict, digital literacy and effective use of new tools are essential going forward.

## **7. Specific Tool Needs and Recommendations**

Participants expressed a clear need for improved digital systems to manage their memberships in a streamlined manner. Many highlighted the need for integrated systems with payment options. Streamlined digital tools for data collection and reporting were also mentioned as important to reduce time spent on administrative duties. Moreover, there is a recognized need for a balance between digital and physical approaches for programs and engagement. Finally, organizations should strive for continuous learning and be adaptive to new developments and technology.

## Findings from survey:

Most respondents indicated that digital tools play a significant role in their advocacy efforts. They use these tools to enhance their outreach, engagement, and overall effectiveness in advocating for youth-related causes.

### Social Media Platforms Used

The most commonly used social media platforms for advocacy among the respondents are:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- TikTok

### Operational Tools Used

The respondents use various digital tools on an operational level, including:

- Canva
- Microsoft 365
- Google's G Suite
- Trello
- WordPress

# Training Needs and Skill Gaps

Based on the focus group discussions, several key skills gaps and training needs emerged, impacting the ability of youth organizations to effectively utilize digital tools for advocacy and engagement. These needs span both technical proficiencies and broader strategic and awareness-related competencies.

## 1. Technical Skills Gaps:

**Advanced Digital Tool Proficiency:** While participants are generally familiar with basic social media usage, there is a notable gap in their ability to effectively utilize more advanced digital tools and platforms. Specifically, many organizations expressed a need for proficiency in:

**Content Creation and Design:** Participants frequently mentioned the need to effectively create engaging content for various digital platforms, including social media, websites, and other digital channels. This includes skills in graphic design and video editing.

**Data Management and Analysis:** Organizations lack the skills to effectively collect, analyze, and interpret data collected through digital platforms. This limits their ability to measure the impact of their interventions. This includes tools for participant registration, event attendance tracking, and program outcome measurement.

**Project Management Tools:** Beyond basic communication platforms, participants expressed a need for expertise in using more sophisticated project management and collaboration software, such as Notion.

**Specific Software & Platforms:** Participants highlighted a specific need for learning about particular software for streamlining administrative work, such as member management systems and integrated payment tools.

**AI Tool Utilization:** While participants are aware of and have begun experimenting with AI tools, most lack a deeper understanding of how to utilize these tools effectively for various tasks. This includes knowing how to prompt the AI for the best results and ensuring quality control of AI-generated content. There is a clear need for structured training to maximize the benefits of AI tools while avoiding potential pitfalls.

## 2. Strategic and Awareness-Related Skills Gaps:

**Digital Literacy:** There is a significant need to improve digital literacy not only among staff and volunteers but also among the youth they serve. This encompasses:

**Critical Thinking and Online Safety:** Participants noted that both youth and older adults must be able to critically evaluate online information, avoid spreading misinformation, and understand personal data security risks.

**Strategic Use of Social Media:** While organizations use social media, they often lack a comprehensive understanding of how to use these platforms effectively for advocacy and participation. This involves the ability to align digital strategies with organizational goals and create content that promotes action and change.

**Balancing Digital and Physical Engagement:** There is a recognized need for a more nuanced approach to the use of digital tools that combines online engagement with offline, in-person interactions.

**Effective Measurement and Evaluation:** A key skill gap is the lack of knowledge and expertise in measuring the effectiveness of digital interventions and engagement strategies. Organizations need to develop systems to collect relevant data, analyze it, and make informed decisions based on the findings. They also need help moving beyond metrics like "likes" to assess impact on youth engagement.

**Organizational Change Management:** There's an acknowledged gap in organizations' ability to integrate new digital tools and strategies into existing workflows. This requires skills in change management, communication, and team training, to successfully adopt new digital work practices.

### 3. Specific Training Needs:

Based on these skills gaps, several training needs become apparent:

**Comprehensive Digital Literacy Training:** This training should cover a range of topics from basic social media safety and responsible online behavior to advanced techniques for digital content creation, ethical AI usage and data analysis. It should be designed for both youth and adults within the organizations.

#### **Hands-On Training on Specific Tools and Platforms:**

Organizations need practical training on specific digital platforms, including social media management tools, project management software, AI applications, and data collection and analysis tools.

**Strategic Digital Communication Training:** Training should focus on how to use digital tools to support advocacy objectives, connect with target audiences, and create a culture of participation.

**Data Collection and Analysis Training:** Organizations require training on how to set up systems to collect relevant data and effectively interpret and use that data to guide their work.

**Support for Integrated Systems:** There is a need for training and support in adopting integrated systems for membership management, project reporting, and communication.

**AI Literacy Training:** Focused training should enable organizations to utilize the full power of AI, with an emphasis on understanding its limitations and ensuring accountability and quality control in their outputs.

#### 4. Additional Needs:

**Mentorship and Peer Support:** Beyond formal training, organizations would benefit from opportunities to connect with others who have successfully implemented digital strategies. This mentorship can provide practical insights and guidance based on real-world experience.

**Resource Allocation:** Beyond just training, many organizations also lack the funding to implement new platforms and digital workflows, which could be a barrier for proper change.

**Adaptability and Continuous Learning:** Training should emphasize the need for organizations to adapt to new technologies, keep learning, and to have flexible mindsets to embrace new practices.

## **Skills Gap and Training Needs from survey data:**

Based on the data from respondents who have worked with youths or youth workers, the following skills gaps and training needs were identified:

### **Specific Challenges or Limitations**

Respondents face several challenges when using digital tools for advocacy, including:

- Lack of resources
- Low engagement
- Technical challenges
- The generational gap regarding technological matters
- The rapidly and constantly changing digital space
- The uncertainty of which tools to use and how to begin using them

### **Needs Regarding Digital Tool Usage**

Respondents expressed the need for:

- Guidance from an expert or a colleague who knows how to use digital tools
- Efficient prioritization
- Understanding, interpreting, and communicating data
- Reassurance that learning how to use digital tools is worth the effort/cost

### **Digital Skills of Interest**

The digital skills respondents are most interested in learning include:

- Digital design and visual media (e.g., graphic design, photo editing, illustration)
- Cyber security
- Machine learning
- Content management
- Social media management

- Search engine optimization
- Content marketing
- Automation through digital tools

## **Areas Where Digital Tools Knowledge Could Help the Most**

Respondents believe that knowledge of digital tools could be most beneficial in the following areas:

- Communication
- Social outreach
- Facilitation of operational processes
- Marketing
- Research
- 

## **Accommodating Digital Tool Learning Processes**

To best accommodate digital tool learning processes, respondents suggested:

- Allocating time during office hours for skill development
- Hiring experts to assist the learning process
- Providing guidance from colleagues who are knowledgeable about digital tools
- Fostering an environment more welcoming to the usage of digital technology

# Identified Gaps and Challenges in Digital Advocacy

The focus group discussions revealed a complex landscape of opportunities and obstacles in the realm of digital advocacy for youth organizations. While participants recognized the potential of digital tools, they also highlighted several significant gaps and challenges that hinder their effectiveness. These issues span technical skills, strategic understanding, and resource limitations.

## **Technical Skills and Implementation Gaps:**

A primary challenge lies in the lack of proficiency with advanced digital tools. While organizations generally utilize basic social media, they often lack the expertise to fully leverage the potential of platforms for more complex advocacy work. This includes:

- **Sophisticated Content Creation:** Many organizations struggle to develop engaging and high-quality content, including graphic design, video production, and impactful messaging. This limits their ability to capture attention and communicate effectively.
- **Data Analysis and Impact Measurement:** A crucial gap is the inability to effectively collect, analyze, and interpret data gathered

through digital channels. This lack of data literacy makes it difficult to measure the success of digital advocacy efforts or tailor strategies for maximum impact.

- **Specialized Tool Proficiency:** Many participants noted they were not aware of, or had not mastered, tools for project management, streamlined reporting, secure data collection, and other key organizational functions.

- **Artificial Intelligence Integration:** While participants are aware of AI, few have a deep understanding of how to use it effectively and ethically. This leads to challenges in ensuring the quality and accuracy of AI-generated content and hinders the full realization of AI's potential.

## **Strategic and Awareness Gaps:**

Beyond technical skills, organizations also struggle with strategic implementation and a lack of digital awareness:

- **Limited Digital Literacy:** Both staff and youth often lack a complete understanding of online safety, privacy, and the risks associated with misinformation. A core challenge is to help both staff and youth become critical and responsible digital citizens.

- **Insufficient Strategic Planning:** Many organizations lack a coherent strategy for using digital tools, leading to uncoordinated and often ineffective digital efforts. There's a need to tie digital communications to broader organizational goals and target specific audiences.
- **Passive Consumption over Active Engagement:** Even when digital media is used, there is a tendency among youth to use these platforms for passive consumption (scrolling, viewing) rather than active engagement and participation in advocacy. There is a gap in the organization's ability to activate youth through digital tools.
- **Balancing Online and Offline Engagement:** Organizations often struggle to find a balance between digital outreach and the need for in-person interactions to foster deeper engagement. There is a tendency towards digital-only engagement, which can be detrimental.
- **Limited Community Building:** While digital tools can be used to connect with youth, they are not always conducive to building a sense of community and belonging, which is important in youth work.

## Resource and Infrastructure Challenges:

Several resource-related challenges limit organizations' capacity for effective digital advocacy:

- **Insufficient Funding for Technology:** Many organizations lack the resources to invest in the necessary digital infrastructure, such as software, equipment, and training, or for ongoing updates. This results in reliance on outdated and often less effective tools.
- **Lack of Staff Time and Expertise:** Many organizations are staffed by volunteers or have a small staff, with limited time to develop digital strategies. They also often lack the in-house expertise to troubleshoot and maintain digital platforms. This has implications for the sustainability of digital practices.
- **Training Costs and Limited Access to Support:** While training is clearly needed, organizations are faced with limited access to affordable, relevant training programs that can equip their staff with digital competencies.

## Systemic Barriers:

Beyond the aforementioned, the focus group discussions revealed that systemic barriers to fully embracing digital advocacy remain:

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- **Need for Integrated Systems:** Many organizations rely on fragmented, inefficient processes for data management, member registration, and communication. This lack of integration creates unnecessary administrative burdens.
- **Lack of Access to Relevant and Affordable Tools:** Not all digital tools are designed or priced to meet the needs of non-profit youth organizations. This includes platforms for secure payment processing, member registration, or secure data gathering.
- **Lack of Evaluation Frameworks:** A critical barrier is the lack of clear frameworks and methods for organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of their digital advocacy efforts.

In parallel with the interview results, respondents in survey has addressed some of the common issues:

- Lack of Resources
  - Many respondents indicated that limited resources hinder their ability to effectively use digital tools for advocacy. This includes financial constraints, insufficient access to advanced tools, and a lack of dedicated personnel to manage digital advocacy efforts.
- Low Engagement
  - Achieving and maintaining high levels of engagement with target audiences is a significant challenge. Respondents noted difficulties in capturing attention and encouraging active participation in advocacy campaigns.
- Technical Challenges
  - Technical issues, such as difficulties in using certain digital tools and platforms, pose a barrier to effective advocacy. This includes problems with software compatibility, user interface complexities, and the need for technical support.
- Generational Gap
  - The generational gap in technological proficiency affects the adoption and effective use of digital tools. Younger and older generations may have varying levels of comfort and familiarity with digital technologies, impacting the overall effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

- Rapidly Changing Digital Space
  - The fast-paced evolution of digital technologies and platforms creates a challenge for advocacy organizations to stay updated and adapt to new tools and trends. This constant change requires ongoing learning and adaptation.
- Uncertainty in Tool Selection
  - Respondents expressed uncertainty about which digital tools to use and how to begin using them. The overwhelming number of available tools can make it difficult to identify the most suitable ones for specific advocacy needs.
- Training and Skill Development
  - There is a need for more training and skill development opportunities. Respondents highlighted the importance of formal training, guidance from experts, and peer support to enhance their digital tool proficiency.
- Privacy and Security Concerns
  - Ensuring data privacy and security is a critical concern, especially when dealing with sensitive topics and vulnerable populations. Advocacy efforts must prioritize protecting personal information and maintaining secure communication channels.

# Future Digital Skills Needs

Based on the focus group discussions, future digital skills needs for youth organizations center around three key areas:

**Advanced Technical Proficiency:** Organizations need more than basic digital skills. They need expertise in:

**Content Creation:** Producing engaging content (graphics, video) for different digital platforms.

**Data Analysis:** Collecting, interpreting, and using data to measure the impact of their work.

**Specialized Tools:** Mastering specific software for project management, member engagement, and streamlined reporting.

**AI Application:** Utilizing AI tools ethically and effectively for content creation and administrative tasks.

**Strategic and Ethical Understanding:** Beyond technical skills, organizations need to:

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**Digital Literacy:** Understanding online safety, privacy risks, and the spread of misinformation.

**Strategic Planning:** Develop clear strategies for how digital engagement can meet organizational goals.

**Balance Digital and In-person:** Know how and when to use digital tools and face-to-face interactions for engagement.

**Ethical AI Use:** Understand how to use AI tools ethically and check quality.

**Adaptive and Resourceful Practices:** Organizations need to:

**Continuous Learning:** Be able to adapt to new tools and be committed to learning.

**Resource Management:** Access affordable tools and find ways to use limited resources effectively.

**Community Building:** Use digital media in a way that fosters genuine connection and belonging.

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In short, future needs require organizations to move beyond basic digital use to develop a nuanced approach that is both technically proficient, ethically grounded, strategically implemented, and aligned with the core principles of youth work. They also need to prioritize an attitude of adaptability and continuous improvement in the digital landscape.

# **Additional Comments and Suggestions**

Based on the survey data, respondents provided the following additional comments and suggestions regarding the use of digital tools in advocacy:

## **1. Need for More Resources**

- Respondents emphasized the need for more financial and technical resources to effectively utilize digital tools in advocacy efforts.

## **2. Training and Skill Development**

- There is a strong demand for formal training programs and workshops to enhance digital skills. Respondents suggested that organizations should allocate time during office hours for skill development and hire experts to assist in the learning process.

## **3. Guidance and Support**

- Many respondents expressed the need for guidance from colleagues or experts who are knowledgeable about digital tools. Peer support and mentorship can help bridge the skills gap and improve the overall effectiveness of digital advocacy.

## 1. Privacy and Security

- Ensuring data privacy and security is a critical concern. Respondents highlighted the importance of using tools that prioritize privacy and security, especially when dealing with sensitive topics and vulnerable populations.

## 2. Strategic Use of Digital Tools

- Respondents suggested that organizations should develop a consistent and strategic approach to using digital tools. This includes creating clear guidelines and best practices for digital advocacy.

## 3. Engagement Strategies

- To improve engagement, respondents recommended using storytelling, personal narratives, infographics, video messages, and regular updates. Collaborations with influencers and community members can also enhance outreach efforts.

## 4. Addressing the Generational Gap

- Bridging the generational gap in technological proficiency is important. Tailored training programs and resources can help different age groups become more comfortable with digital tools.

## 5. Adapting to Rapid Changes

- Organizations should stay updated with the latest digital trends and tools. Continuous learning and adaptation are

necessary to keep up with the rapidly changing digital landscape.

- Encouraging Innovation

- Respondents encouraged organizations to foster an environment that welcomes the use of digital technology and innovation. This can help in exploring new possibilities and improving advocacy efforts.