Let me tell you

"Let me tell you ... A call to illusion so that emptied Europeand the seniors feel part of the XXI century through training in digital skills"

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INFORMATION

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Authors	Formative Footprint, Diputación de Valladolid and E-School

CONSORTIUM

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1. PROLOGUE

Europe is facing a harsh reality: it is ageing. Over the period 2019 to 2100, the share of the working-age population is projected to decline, while seniors are likely to increase their share of the total population: people aged 65 and over will account for 31.3% of the EU-27 population in 2100, up from 20.2% in 2019. As a result of population movement between age groups, the EU-27 old-age dependency ratio is projected to almost double from 31.4 % in 2019 to 57.1 % in 2100, and the total dependency ratio is expected to increase from 54.9 % in 2019 to 82.6 % in 2100 (Eurostat).

The Vodafone Foundation indicates that while 79% of people aged 16 to 55 use the internet, the percentage of users decreases significantly with age. Thus, in the 56-70 age group, access levels drop to 29%, and in the 71-80 age group, to 5%.

The digital divide is a fact, technology is advancing, but it is difficult for seniors to advance at the same pace, which makes their lives difficult as they are unable to carry out everyday tasks that are done online; something that is essential as many seniors live far from large centres and without services. By 2021/27 the European Commission has set a target of increasing the number of citizens with basic digital skills to 70% by 2025. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2021, all countries have made progress but the picture is uneven: while Denmark and Sweden have values >60%, Romania has 30%, occupying the last position, Greece 37%, Poland 40% and Spain, although in a better situation, does not reach 60%.   According to these figures and taking into account that life expectancy is increasing, how will these people continue to be included in society?

Our main motivation with this project has always been the target groups themselves: the seniors. Many of the consortium members live in rural areas and are familiar with the challenges that older people in their villages face on a daily basis. These are simple issues for most but very complicated for their generation. This is why we focused on increasing the digital skills of seniors and making them feel an active part of society, as well as improving the tourism offer in these deprived areas while learning to value our rich European heritage (tangible and intangible).

The project consisted of the elders of our villages, which are located in depopulated areas and which have become part of what we all know as an empty Europe (another great challenge we face together with the ageing of the population), creating videos in which they explained the heritage of the place. These videos are hosted on a common open access platform. In addition, a QR code has been placed in the places described in the videos so that both visitors and residents of these municipalities can watch and enjoy them. "Let me tell you" has been conceived as a way of involving all citizens, so that the environment of the "protagonists" would want to be part of it, creating an enormous inner richness for everyone and that is invaluable. The aim was that the degree of satisfaction that this project would bring to all the people who participated in it would be extremely worthwhile and would more than compensate for all the work carried out.

When we set out to carry out a project of this magnitude, we had in mind to implement an innovative, different and attractive idea. After properly identifying the needs, different options were explored by diving into multiple sources of solutions created in this regard, but no alternatives were found that would lead to the fulfilment of our objectives. After this process, we gave shape

to "Let me tell you", an innovative project because learning combines activities in contact with heritage and culture; learning digital competences and developing technology for its use. In this way, participants can learn while they design the contents and at the same time the resources developed are accessible to the public, thus promoting the dissemination of heritage and culture in a different, attractive, motivating and, ultimately, innovative way, with the extra motivation that this entails.

2. SUMMARY

The following guide is a synthesis of the work carried out by the consortium over two years of cooperation, in which we contextualise the analysis of the European situation in relation to depopulation, the ageing of the population and the lack of digital competences of seniors, an analysis from which we started to develop the project in order to understand the objectives we set out to achieve.

It includes all the phases in which the project has been developed, from the origin of the idea to the impact achieved, including an analysis of needs, motivations and results. It details all the phases and each of the activities into which these have been divided, explaining also the people involved in each one of them, offering the necessary guidelines for the implementation of a similar project in any area of Europe, especially in rural environments.

3. INTRODUCTION

Under the title *"Let me tell you... A call to illusion to make empty Europe and seniors feel part of the 21st century through training in digital skills"* we present this idea with the main purpose of increasing the digital skills of senior adults and making them feel an active part of society; in addition to improving the tourist offer of rural areas while at the same time enhancing the value of our rich European heritage. The project consists of seniors in our villages, located in depopulated areas, creating videos in which they explain the heritage of the place. These videos have been hosted on a common open access platform. A QR code has been placed on the places described in the videos so that both visitors and citizens can watch them.

With regard to the framework in which "Let me tell you" is being implemented, we started from a needs analysis in the European context that led us to observe the lack of digital competences of the elderly: the digital divide is a reality, technology is advancing but seniors find difficult to adapt to the same time, which makes their daily lives difficult as they are not able to carry out everyday tasks that are currently done online, such as making a doctor's appointment or carrying out a bank transaction, which is essential as most seniors live in areas far from large centres and their towns have fewer and fewer basic services every day.

Furthermore, there is little access to heritage and culture in an attractive way: there is no clear, well-defined and adapted to the current context offer in terms of knowledge of our heritage and culture. When we visit a village, the information about its touristic resources is scarce and unattractive. In this sense, the creation of explanatory videos by the locals, which can be accessed by means of a simple QR code, is a different, original, and highly innovative way of

attracting the visitor's attention and in turn attracting tourism, which will benefit all the economic sectors of the area.

Therefore, the objectives pursuing were:

1. Increasing digital skills
2. Adapting tourism to the "digital age"
3. Promote culture and heritage

In this way, senior adults can improve their knowledge of new technologies, making them autonomous citizens fully integrated into the reality of 21st century in Europe, where there is no place for digital illiteracy. The videos put empty Europe on the map, since the areas facing the demographic challenge have few resources and those that exist are not attractive enough to draw tourists' attention, which is what this innovative initiative will achieve, while also attracting the inhabitants of these areas, drawn by the curiosity of seeing how their neighbours explain their own tourist resources. The aim has been to highlight the value of our rich and yet unknown heritage to EU citizens, who are often unaware of their own surroundings and who, thanks to this project, can feel part of a diverse society united by a heritage of incalculable value.

The activities carried out focused on the creation of a common open access platform called "THE NEW DIGITAL TOURISM IS POSSIBLE", which includes, among other aspects, the design of the contents for the training in digital competences and tourism that gives rise to the activity that allows the recording of the videos - accessed through a QR code - by the seniors who participate in the training and subsequently the creation of the technological support for its hosting: a web platform. The project culminates with the elaboration of a METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE explaining the process, which can serve as a model

for educators specialised in adult education (and any other stakeholders) so that they can put this project into practice and generate their own materials.

The main expected results to achieve were to increase the digital skills of the elderly, which will help them to feel an active part of a society which often forgets about them, as many of them live in towns that are far from cities, poorly communicated and without basic services. We will give their rightful place to those areas that are part of a hollowed-out Europe, which are witnessing a constant loss of population, and which will see the number of tourists they receive start to increase, with the consequent benefits that this entails. Finally, we will effectively and tangibly enhance the value of our rich cultural heritage, most of which is unknown and which, with the implementation of this project, will become a source of pride for the villages involved. A new tourist resource that will certainly continue to be implemented in all rural areas that have the option of carrying out this initiative and that can be extrapolated to any part of Europe, so that both the scope and the expected impact of this project can mark a before and after in the life, the economy and the cohesion of the regions where our model can be exported.

4. MAIN BODY

We will now turn to the key part of this work, which is to provide an approach to the methodology on which we have based ourselves, detailing the different participants in the process, and then identify the phases developed and analyse each of them in detail.

4.1 Methodological approach

The project has been developed from a methodological approach combining theory and practice, giving greater importance to the latter, especially as a method of testing the assimilation of the contents. In this way, the theoretical classes have been put into practice with the recording and editing of promotional videos on heritage and tourism. Everything has been the result of careful planning on the part of the management team, in which all the interested parties have been involved from start to finish:

● **Senior adults:**
  Their profile is well defined, they are older people from depopulated areas with few tourism resources and lack of ICT use. 20 participants are sought plus 5 reserve persons per group. Within the older age group, we have found that women have even more difficulties in the use of technological tools, so we have intended that at least half of the participants in the training are women.

● **Educators in charge of delivering the training:**
  They are specialised in adult education with training in digital competences, with an equal number of men and women. There are two per participating

group. They will be responsible for accompanying participants throughout the creative process, motivating and supporting them in all aspects of their work.

- **Focus group:**

  Made up of 10 people. Participants are people linked to adult education (school directors, teachers, managers...) and stakeholders from the tourism sector. The aim is to analyse the digital skills needs of the target audience and see how to address them. Once the results of the focus group have been pooled, a decision is made on the index of the training, which will then be provided with content.

- **Pilot test:**

  Consisting of at least 10 people, including participants and tourists, to see *in situ* the functioning, quality and interest of the videos made. How this is done is left to the organiser to decide.

4.2 Identification of the main phases

The "Let me tell you project" is made up of the following activities and tasks which will be detailed below:

- **ACTIVITY 1**: Training "New digital tourism is possible"

  * Focus group with stakeholders

  * Design of the training index.

  * Content design for training in digital skills and tourism.

  * Implementation of the training in each participant country.

- **ACTIVITY 2:** <u>Creation of the content of the videos</u>

* Making of the videos accessed by means of a QR code by the senior adults participating in the training.

* Pilot test: tourist visit to validate the results.

- **ACTIVITY 3**: <u>Creation of technological support for the accommodation of the videos.</u>

4.3 Identification of each phase' activities in sequential order

The different project activities listed above, as well as the tasks into which each is divided, are explained chronologically below:

4.3.a ACTIVITY 1: Training "New digital tourism is possible"

● It is about designing the content for the training in digital skills and tourism.

● It is a single content written in English and translated into the languages of each of the partners to facilitate the work of the trainers.

● It is divided into three tasks:

- <u>Task 1/Focus group:</u> a table of contents has been developed which includes all the areas in which the training has been given to improve the participants' skills in the use of digital tools through the production of a series of informative videos. The content of the training is based on the contributions made by the focus groups to connect the needs to the characteristics of the learning process with the participation of experts in education, and technology and stakeholders in the tourism sector whose contributions facilitate the design of the index and content for the training in digital competences and tourism.

- Task 2/ Design of the training index thanks to the inputs from the focus groups.

- Task 3/ Content design for training in digital skills and tourism: document consisting of a table of contents and series of modules in English and translated into the partners' languages. Each group with which you will be working may have different learning needs and deficiencies, and you will need to pay close attention to these in order to base the training content on them. on which the training will be based.

- Task 4/ Implementation of the training in each participant country by the two educators in charge of guiding the participants. The duration of the

training will depend on a number of factors, such as the hours allocated to the training, the interest or learning capacity of the participants.

4.3.b ACTIVITY 2: Creation of the content of the videos

● After the activities developed in the first phase, we move on to the deliverable destined to the making of the videos by the 20 senior students per country who participate in the training.

● The idea is that these tasks will allow them to acquire fluency in the use of digital tools, they will be the "excuse" for them to get out of their comfort zone and in a playful way acquire knowledge that they can put into practice by solving their daily needs.

● A total of 5 videos by group are made and as many QR codes will be placed in the locations covered by the videos. Subsequently, the videos are subtitled in English and local languages to make them easier to understand for hearing-impaired people.

● It is divided into two tasks:

- Task 1/ Making the videos accessed by means of a QR code by the senior adults participating in the training. After identifying the places and tourist

areas of interest with little tourist visibility, the participants prepare the scripts, make the recordings and edit the videos with the guidance of the educators. Once the videos are finished it is created a channel on YouTube where the videos are uploaded. As we have said before, the videos are subtitled in English and in the local language to facilitate viewing for the hearing impaired.

- Task 2/ Pilot test: tourist visit to validate the results. A QR code is created for each video and plaques are made (where the QR codes to scan and relevant information about the project -title, code, logos, etc.- are inserted). Each group chose the type of support depending on the characteristics of the place where they are located and organise a visit to the places where the QR code plaques are situated to check *in situ* how well the videos are working and to evaluate the reception of the videos in terms of content, quality, and the learning they provide.
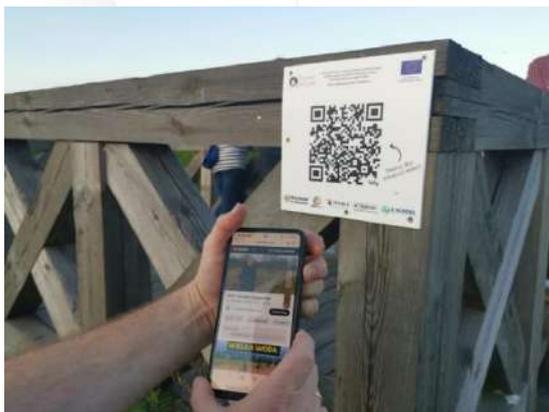
4.3.c ACTIVITY 3: Creation of technological support

- The creation of the technological support to host the videos is the last activity we propose, but it is optional because the videos will already be uploaded on the Youtube Channel created in the previous step.

- It is an open access web platform where the videos are hosted, as well as the rest of the documents generated during the training.

- In this way, the videos are accessible online via the web and from the QR code at the physical location.

This is the website of the "Let me tell you" project:

https://letem.eu/

5. CONCLUSIONS

The balance of the work done so far exceeds our initial expectations both in the number of participants in the different phases of the project, as well as in the quality and impact of the deliverables (attractiveness of the videos and their dissemination) and the satisfaction on the part of the organisations that make up this European consortium.

The participants in the training, in addition to increasing their digital skills by making the videos, have expressed their satisfaction with the development of the training and the appropriateness of the contents, and have also increased their motivation by seeing how well received the videos have been, which so far exceed 5,000 views in total.
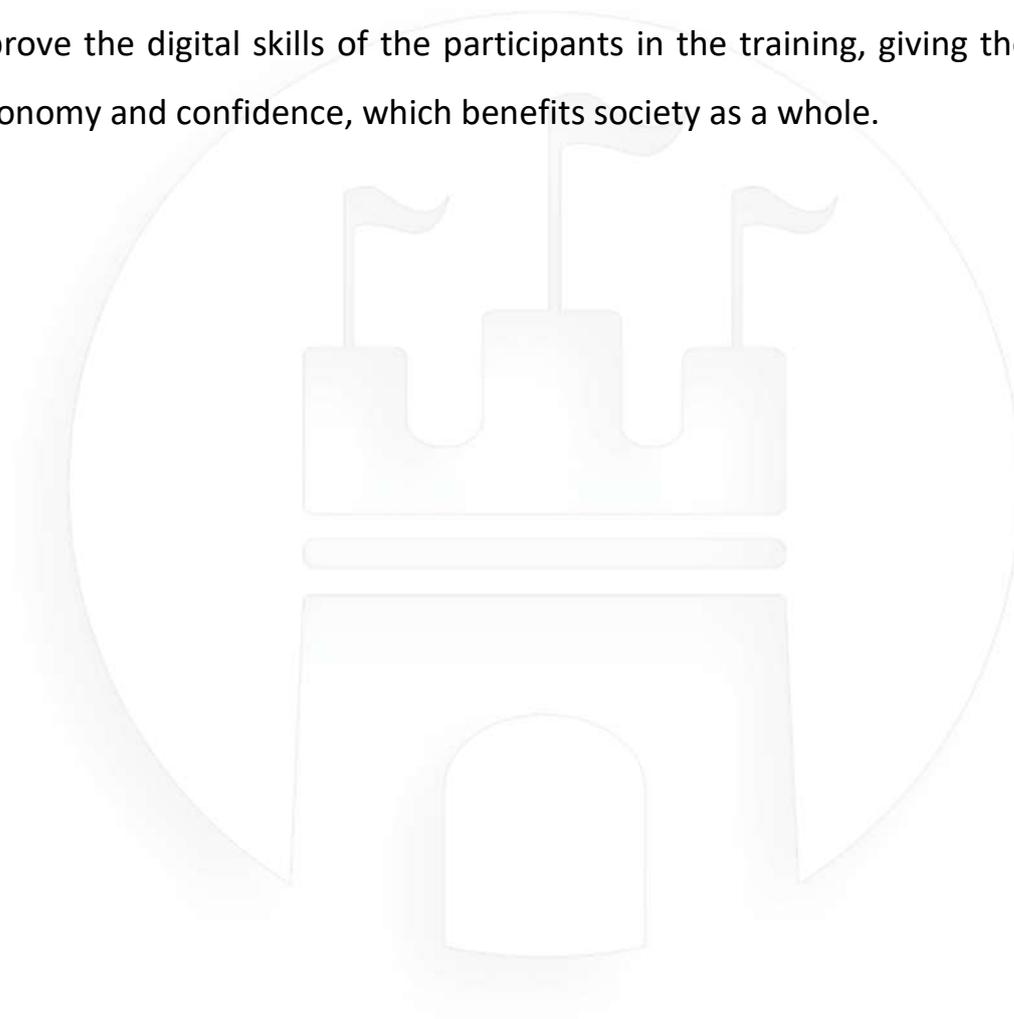
This is a source of pride for both the authors of the videos and the educators in charge of digital skills and tourism training, who will implement the methodology developed in their next training activities as a means to increase the digital skills of their students. The participating organisations have increased their network of contacts and will disseminate the results in the collaborative contexts in which they work.

The representatives of the municipalities where the plaques with QR codes are located can already see the results in terms of the tourist attraction and the impact of this initiative, as they have noticed an increase in tourism in these areas by receiving more visits from people who have travelled to the villages and who, after accessing our resource, have become interested in learning more about the local history and traditions by asking the locals about them, which is a source of pride for them.

In terms of media coverage, "Let me tell you" has aroused the interest of the mass media, which have echoed the results achieved so far by the project, helping to disseminate it in their spheres of influence through the press, radio, television and social networks.

In short, this project has led to the creation of a new tourism resource that not only helps to revitalise these rural areas affected by depopulation, but also to improve the digital skills of the participants in the training, giving them more autonomy and confidence, which benefits society as a whole.

Let me tell you