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Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age

Belonging and Finding a Voice with the Disadvantaged

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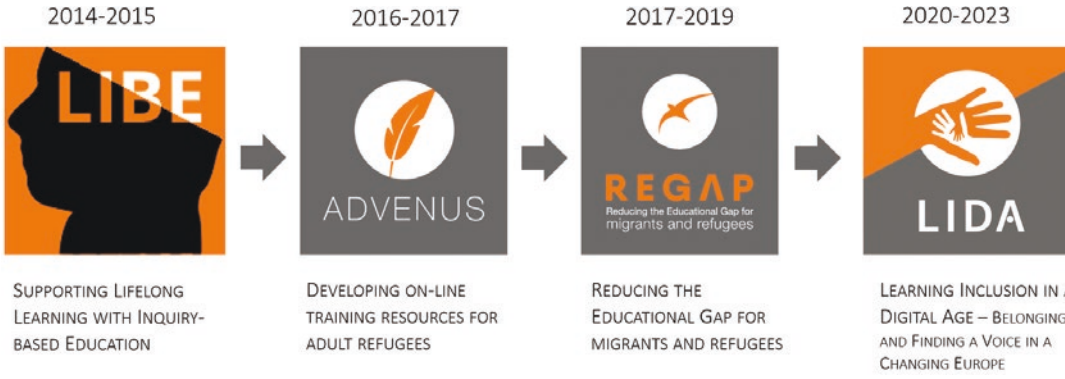
2014-2015
LIBE
Supporting Lifelong Learning with Inquiry-based Education
2016-2017
ADVENUS
Developing on-line training resources for adult refugees
2017-2019
REGAP
Reducing the Educational Gap for migrants and refugees
Reducing the Educational Gap for migrants and refugees
2020-2023
LIDA
Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age – Belonging and Finding a Voice in a Changing Europe

Dedicated to

This book is dedicated to all those who have been willing to engage with digital technologies in order to share their stories of courage and resilience for the benefit of others. In so doing, they have built a sense of community and belonging in the process as much as in the product; in and as much as from story sharing.

Foreword: Perspectives on Inclusion Beyond the School Gates

We will all read *Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age* (*LIDA*) differently and for different reasons. The lens that each of us will use to read this book will be shaped by our lived experience. How we choose to engage with the author's words will be influenced by our own histories and what we intend to take from our reading. I'm reminded of the words of Althusser and Balibar [1] in their introduction to *Reading Capital*, 'There is no such thing as an innocent reading, we must say what reading we are guilty of' (p. 14). Do we read *LIDA* as philosophers, educators, social pedagogues, sociologists, or economists? Each reading will be different.

I've read this book through the lens of an academic wanting to find better ways to teach young people. The school, as an institution for learning, has historically suited some people while marginalising others. Our 'schooling' systems are no longer meeting the learning needs of more and more of our young people. My reading of *LIDA* has been purposeful in trying the find new ways to engage young people in learning through digital technologies both within and beyond the school gates [2, 3].

LIDA provides insight into the barriers to learning that marginalised groups experience and how these learners can be included more effectively. By reflecting on the term learning inclusion and how it represents a binary with learning exclusion, we can begin to question how inclusion only exists if exclusion does as well; neither hold meaning without the other [4]. *LIDA* explores the potential to transcend the symbiotic nature of these binary terms where inclusion leads us to a more equitable future for all who are learning in a digital age.

The following elaborations on this foreword examine *LIDA* from a critical perspective, questioning the key issues that arise in reading this book: (1) the impact marginalisation has on communities; (2) the barriers to learning for those in the margins; and (3) learning versus educating in the digital age. I share with you my reading of *LIDA* and hopefully, in the spirit of Althusser and Balibar [1], provide some insight to what reading I am guilty of.

The Impact of Marginalisation on Communities

In chapter "Promoting Social Inclusion and Mutual Understanding: Intertwined Efforts at Local, National and International Level" Agrusti, Caramelo, and Ciasca Marra explore how communities promote social

inclusion, discussing the impacts of policies for inclusion in how they are translated into practices. The authors have not only examined the social policies designed to promote social inclusion, but they have also presented the views of stakeholders on how these policies have been enacted and thereby providing an emic perspective on how social inclusion works in their communities. This fits neatly within LIDA's aim of smoothing social differences and building a sense of belonging for those who have historically been relegated to the margins of communities.

In my work with educationally marginalised young people in Australia, my colleagues and I have found that to build a sense of belonging, young people require not only an engaging curriculum that they can readily access, but that they need a holistic approach to learning and social support [5]. A comprehensive curriculum delivered by staff that focus on developing supportive relationships led to opportunities for these young people to develop a broad range of social capital. Without both the social support and engagement in learning, their transition from the education centre would most likely lead to further marginalisation and being labelled as Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) [6].

The labelling of people as NEETs burgeons from a neoliberal ideological paradigm, where people are regarded as human capital and social policies aim to ensure that the population are skilled enough to contribute and not be a burden on the economy [7, 8]. This positioning of people as NEETs has the potential for them to be perceived as the 'grit of society' (see *LIDA's* Preface by Dobson and Svoen) or become what Bauman [9] refers to as 'the underclass (not part of the upper, middle or lower-class workers) … those who are not contributing to society and seen as though society would be better off without them' (p. 3). If social policies shift focus to building active citizens, the further marginalisation of people could be addressed from a humanistic perspective.

Social policies that encourage the inclusion of marginalised people to develop their personal and social dispositions to be resilient, mature members of communities align with a humanistic approach to social change. Instead of focusing on marginalised people acquiring relevant vocational skills to contribute economically to society, empowering these people to be active citizens through building a sense of belonging could mean that successful transitions from exclusion to inclusion are more likely to be sustained [10–12]. By developing social policies that create opportunities for marginalised young people to actively participate in society and the labour market by removing barriers to learning, the 'surplus population' ([13], p. 782) or grit of society can be truly included.

Barriers to Learning for Those in the Margins

Barriers to full inclusion for people living in the margins of communities can be diverse and complex. Damiani, Coimbra, and Costa explore in chapter "Fostering Social Inclusion of People in Situations of Vulnerability: Experiences from the Italian and Portuguese Contexts" some challenges

faced by professionals who work with migrants and people in poverty with regard to fostering access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing. These barriers are exacerbated by discrimination based on language and cultural barriers, which Stranger-Johannessen and Damiani refer to in their chapter on approaches to language learning from a resource perspective. Within the Australian context, Lamb et al. [14] found that for young people who are educationally marginalised, low socioeconomic status; being indigenous; low levels of parental education and parental income; and a lack of supportive friendships and family relationships also presented significant barriers to learning inclusion.

Barriers to learning inclusion can also be found in how learning is commodified through education institutions. Costa and Coimbra discuss in their chapter how institutional barriers need to be challenged, particularly those that cause systemic power imbalances. Taking a critical perspective on the curated learning that occurs in education institutions is not new (see Refs. [15–17]), however the way that LIDA projects have forged links between formal and non-formal learning contexts demonstrates how learning can be open, freely accessible, and circumvent some of the barriers inherent within institutionalised learning frameworks.

Another perspective on barriers to inclusion focuses on the barrier of time in transition from exclusion to inclusion. The time that a person spends in the margins of a community, as an outsider caught in the liminal space between one socio-cultural group that they were previously an insider of and the unfamiliar group that they intend to become a part of (see chapter "Towards Wellbeing-ness as an Experience of Inclusion, Belonging and Voice in a Digital (Post-Covid) World of Global Change"). This sphere of liminality, or limenosphere [18], can in itself compound the barriers to inclusion for people experiencing marginalisation. From an anthropological perspective, the concept of liminality can be described as a state of ambiguity or epistemological fog that people experience while transitioning from a familiar sociocultural sphere to an unfamiliar one [19–21]. The length of transition becomes a barrier that can lead to people in the margins resigning themselves to this position [18].

Time spent in the limenosphere could potentially be compounding the barriers to inclusion for people living in the margins. If meaningful connections are not readily made, and a sense of belonging is not cultivated, people can remain as outsiders of communities. Access to education can support successful transitions for those in the margins, but to circumvent the barriers within education institutions, a shift in perspective from curated learning in schools to perceiving learning as multifaceted and occurring in a wide range of contexts is needed.

In my time working and researching with young people who have been educationally marginalised, I have witnessed a range of pedagogies and curricula that align with either a system-focus or student-focus for learning. Some approaches to education attempt to reduce time in transition by investing in resources to keep young people progressing along an institutional production line, what Willis [17] referred to as 'systematic soldiering' (p. 186). Other approaches positioned the formal learning involving the school

curriculum as only one element of the young person's learning experience, where a therapeutic component of the learning experience was highly valued as a supportive means of both expediting and ensuring the ongoing success of the transition process.

Learning Versus Educating in the Digital Age

When reading *LIDA*, I was taken by the notion of formal, non-formal, and informal learning and the blurring of these boundaries in the digital age. The idea that learning can and does occur anywhere at any time and is not restricted to the learning experienced in educational institutions is appealing. This framing of learning, while often overlooked by vocationally focused learning institutions that certify and commodify learning [8, 22], echoes the seminal work of Ivan Illich, particularly his treatise *Deschooling Society* [23]. Illich [23] considered learning as often happening casually rather than solely through programmed instruction. He believed that the 'ritual of schooling' had a direct effect on the inclusion of some members of a society by reinforcing hegemonic prejudices and discrimination ([23], p. 16).

Svoen and Pinto write in chapter "We Belong and Connect When We Have a Voice: Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning" how 'learning, can be organised or unorganised, it can take place in the workplace, in an educational institution, at home or in other activities'. This inclusive framing of learning provides scope for a fresh understanding of how learning, in a discursive sense, is constructed in the digital age. The traditional silos separating formal, non-formal, and informal learning have been broken down by the technological advances in the digital age. The curated curriculum of formal schooling can now be accessed online, through the same smartphone that people experience learning by non-formal and informal interactions, i.e. through social media platforms for sporting and cultural community groups that they are a part of, or news feeds from special interest groups. Learning in the digital age does not need to be a banking model of information consumption [15], but rather a fluid, open space with wide ranging opportunities for knowledge creation. The digital space allows people to consume, create, and interact seamlessly across these different fields of learning on the same digital platform.

Critiquing what learning is in the digital age brings us to the question of equitable access for learning opportunities, particularly in access to the means to engage in digital learning environments. Cost and availability of the hardware and software coupled with the access and reliability of internet remains a contentious issue for equity in education. Inherent within the digital age is the digital divide. While the exponential increase in digital learning opportunities has indeed removed barriers to learning, new ones have also been established [24, 25]. Equity of access to technology and the reliability and cohesiveness of access was globally apparent during the COVID learning from home experience for school-aged young people. Learning in the digital age can empower people who have been marginalised by educational institutions by circumventing some of the entrenched

barriers that exist within institutionalised learning, but the open learning comes with a digital price.

If learning in the digital age is designed to be inclusive of all learners, then people need to be able to find a sense of personal and social belonging within these digital learning spaces [26]. Hardy and Dobson consider the potential of voice in fostering belonging and promoting wellbeing through digital storytelling in chapter "Joining Voices for Social Inclusion: Activism and Resilience of Professionals Working with People in Situations of Vulnerability". In this chapter, they explore how digital storytelling can be emancipatory and democratising. Their storytelling circles afforded people from the margins to come together in small groups to listen to each other's stories and craft their own. This process provided opportunities to learn new digital communication skills and through the storytelling, participants could develop their sense of agency, build connections with the group, as well as their identity as individuals. By agentically engaging people through their active involvement in what and how they learn there is potential for change [27, 28]. Agency and criticality in learning creates opportunities for change in how people see themselves as learners and how they position and value themselves as community members [27, 29]. If learning can be more convivial than curated in the digital age, learner inclusion can be fostered by people having the freedom to learn without the constraints of institutional authority [16, 30, 31].

Conclusion: The Critical Edge

LIDA is a book that will challenge the way you conceptualise learning inclusion. My reading of *LIDA* led me to reflect on how marginalised groups in societies are positioned and how this positioning affects us all. There are many barriers to learning that people who experience marginalisation, but through digital technologies the impact of these barriers can be reduced. If we reconceptualise how learning is experienced in the digital age, we can critically engage in learning opportunities that have the potential to empower and include. My reading of *LIDA* explored the continuation of the counterhegemonic discourses in education [32, 33]. I now invite you to draw on your own lived experience as you engage with the chapters and read *LIDA* from your perspective.

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Preface: Setting the Agenda for Learning Inclusion

How can inclusive learning, wellbeing, and active citizenship be taught, learnt, and supported with and not just for all kinds of vulnerable adult minorities in a participatory, empowering manner? There is a risk that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups will all be regarded as grit in what appears, at least on the surface, to be the smooth functioning of existing society, institutional arrangements, and culture. This can be the case if adult refugees and migrants are unexpected and, to some extent, undesirable arrivals. Those who are born in a country can also be disadvantaged for multiple, overlapping reasons, including social, economic, political, cultural, physical ability, mental ability, age, or gender.

When the mix of the adult population we have in mind is considered the 'surplus population' [1] to be subjugated to dominant, established groups of society, the risk is that well-meaning inclusion can result in the reverse, what has been termed 'inclusive exclusion' [2]. So, on the one hand, we hear the discourse of humanity, peace, and inclusion and, on the other hand, competitive individualism plays out in institutions (education, employment, healthcare, and so on) where refugees and migrants, along with other groups of disadvantaged people might compete, sometimes against each other, for scarce resources and can more easily experience failure and exclusion. There is, in this situation, a disjuncture between the language, the policy, the rhetoric, the communication strategy (the so-called comms and the creation of the right narrative 'spin') of inclusion and the practice, existential experience, and short-, medium-, and longer term consequences of exclusion.

This book is entitled *Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age: Belonging and Finding a Voice with the Disadvantaged.* Not **for** the disadvantaged, which would imply positions and structures of dependence. Rather working ***with*** the disadvantaged. It reflects upon adult learning and teaching based on experiences gained in the years before, during, and after the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the result of a cross-European collaboration, including teams from Italy, England, Portugal, and Norway, and their collective experiences over many years in multiple EU and Erasmus+ projects. Based on a participatory approach, the group has developed and evaluated different learning resources to meet the needs of adult migrants, refugees, and the disadvantaged in a changing Europe. Of course, the learning resources are not one-size-fits-all, as the demographics, cultures, and ways of living are not only diverse, but constantly in flux. Here, the vulnerable adult minorities'

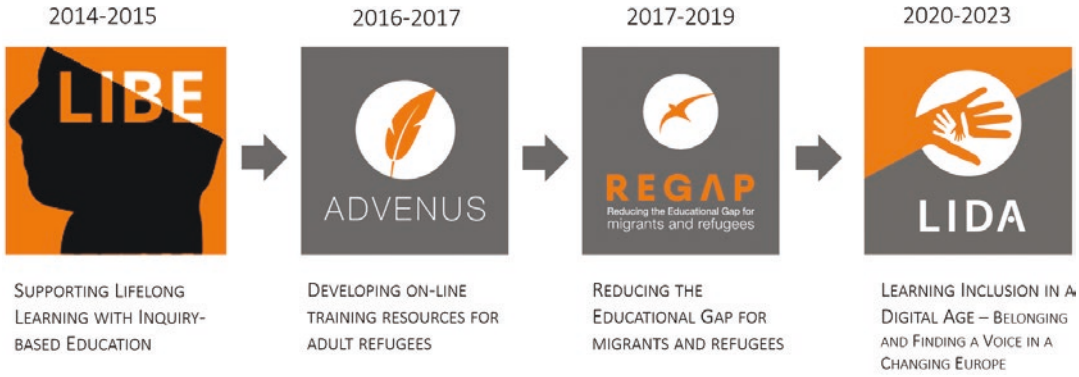

Fig. 1 An overview of key EU projects leading up to this book

experiences and personal stories have formed the foundation and premises of the chapters in the remainder of this book.

This anthology builds upon our current project with a title closely aligned to this book and abbreviated from Learning Inclusion in the Digital Age to the LIDA Project.[1] Figure 1 illustrates the development of the current LIDA Project as part of a longer program of work over several years where the common theme has been explored how life learning can in different ways support the inclusion of disadvantaged adult groups; in such a way, that they move towards full worthy inclusion, participation, and voice in all aspects of society (employment, health, community, education, and so on). Looking back the projects seem to be connected and following a clear trajectory. But, as we undertook them this connected chain did not always seem evident to us. LIBE considered how to support disengaged youth who sought increased skills in literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and digital skills. ADVENUS was focused upon refugees as a group looked at supporting online training in their new countries of abode. REGAP expanded the scope to include migrants and also considered the cultural response of not merely refugees and migrants but also the host countries. LIDA as we will elaborate upon in more detail below considers specifically the 'learning' of inclusion, and the group we have worked with includes all kinds of disadvantaged adults as well as teenagers transitioning to adulthood.

While we have cause to reference some of our findings from these previous projects [3], the contributions from project members in this book seek to answer a broader cluster of questions concerning the topic: what does it mean for adults to learn from and create cultures of learning inclusion, where belonging is understood in terms of (but not limited to) wellbeing and the evidence of a particular kind of voice? This is the voice that speaks to and against the disadvantage experienced by different adult minorities. As we will elaborate further in this introduction, we locate the book in the framework of sustainable development goals [4]; and how to deliver SDG4, in particular, with its focus on inclusion, equitable quality and lifelong learning. A key

[1]Erasmus+ Adult Agreement project no.: 2020-1-NO01-KA204-076518.

point in this book is that SDG3 on health and wellbeing, along with SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities play a key role alongside SDG4, which naturally has a major focus upon education.

A central argument is that understanding disadvantage and exclusion should not lead to merely a deficit view of what it means to be a digital bystander. This view suggests that the excluded cannot, or are less inclined to intervene and find a way out of this experience; moving from the 'digital bystander' to 'digital upstander'. A generation before the internet this would have been famously understood as the *Society of the Spectacle* mediated by images and voyeurism [5].

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed many to stay at home, including many school-age children and adults. Digital learning was suddenly an everyday phenomenon, even in a new domestic environment and in all age groups. The online classroom became the only option to enable many students and teachers to continue to interact, and this led to changes in the way students learnt. When teachers simply moved the traditional classroom into a virtual one, they struggled to gain and retain the attention of students, and it was even more difficult to ensure and ascertain if students had actually been learning. Many teachers were tempted to simply set students weekly assignments as a way of making students learn by themselves. However, just because the horse is taken to the water, it does not mean it will drink.

Warburton et al. [6] observed that students became digital bystanders in their online classrooms. They were present in the digital classroom, but they were not really involved in it. Access to premium IT facilities might have been of little help, especially when the teaching methods and didactics were not designed specifically for online delivery, for example, with shorter periods of teaching interwoven with similarly shorter periods of learning, discussion, and feedback activities. The issue of learning loss became a worldwide problem as the invisible hand of the involuntary digital classroom made itself felt; students were present but did not learn. The question of equity of education, a well-known problem even in face-to-face classrooms, was thus exacerbated still further. Some studies indicated that students were learning less during the pandemic compared with the situation before the pandemic [7].

We are thus concerned with how to transcend the experience of the digital bystander and accompanying disadvantage through learning inclusion and finding a voice. Simply put, talk of inclusion and voice is not enough, we are interested in how inclusion can be learnt and implemented in an engaging, empowering way. Accompanying this is the desire to support and teach inclusion as well and this extends to the period after COVID.

A generation has been inspired by the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Freire [8] and his preference for learning based upon a co-development of skills and knowledge, rather than what he called a 'banking' form of pedagogy (one-directional transmission and collection of knowledge or the stacking of fashionable micro-credentials). We continue to be inspired by his work, seeking to add contemporary ideas of belonging (and wellbeing) and voice to an interest in the role of digital resources and digital skills—what we might think of as 'digital literacy'. Freire was an early forerunner for what today is known as 'appreciative pedagogy' or 'appreciative inquiry': in order to move

from a deficit view of lacking education and seeking to fill the empty vessel of the student, the goal is to regard the student as more than a mere container, where positive, co-produced learning experiences exist and can constitute a firm foundation for future directed learning and reflection [9]. It is about working *with* the student and not *for* or *in spite of* the student to raise their learning and skills.

The chapter in this book entitled "Bridging the Gaps: Promoting Competences for Democratic Culture and the Wellbeing of Girls Through Digital Storytelling" by Elsa Guedes Teixeira and Angélica Monteiro is a good illustration of such an appreciative stance. It presents and analyses work from digital storytelling workshops with teenage girls in Portugal. The authors demonstrate how empowered the teenage girls were as they spoke of hate speech, cyber bullying, sexting, physical violence, health, emotional and family issues, grief, homophobia, and sexuality. Moreover, the girls also talked in appreciative terms of dreams for the future including social acceptance, social/cultural inclusion in a host country and the importance of building resilience.

We are inspired by a number of policy-framing documents as we consider inclusion and forces that might work against it. The first is the Europe 2020 Strategy, published in 2010 in response to the economic and financial crisis of the times. It proposed three mutually reinforcing priorities: smart growth based upon knowledge and innovation, sustainable growth that is more resource efficient and greener and lastly, inclusive growth delivering high employment along with social and territorial cohesion [10]. The second is UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25th September 2015 [4]. Sustainable Development Goal number four (SDG4) refers to the global need to ensure education is inclusive for all, throughout the life course. It is defined as to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. SDG 3 is also relevant, with its focus upon wellbeing, even though it is primarily focused upon health initiatives and indicators and does not mention education. It is defined as: 'ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages'. With the location of learning inclusion across physical space and not simply digitally, SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable) is also of relevance. We will return to this last point when we talk of the connection with the UNESCO Global Learning Cities initiative in the chapter "Promoting Learning Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". Lastly, the EUs *Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030* continues the SDG's core priorities 'ensuring a socially inclusive, just and fair transition' to sustainability in all societal areas including health, education, social, economic, and wellbeing ([11], p. 20).

Wellbeing has become a global term or buzz word used to measure everything from financial wellbeing to health wellbeing and educational wellbeing. In the chapter of this book, entitled "Towards Wellbeing-ness as an Experience of Inclusion, Belonging and Voice in a Digital (Post-Covid) World of Global Change", the authors Stephen Dobson and Pip Hardy explore exactly how the

concept of wellbeing has been taken up in global education debates, such that the prevalence of bullying in schools is now framed in a growing number of jurisdictions as an indicator of wellbeing—or its lack. Bullying is considered to reduce wellbeing and the risk is that it will interrupt and have an impact upon learning for the bullied individual and others implicated in the activity.

Returning to SDG4, this goal is concerned not merely with equity of access and all the resource implications and opportunities this entails across the world [12]. Nor is it simply about equity of outcomes, which also relates back to resources allocated to ensure sustained learning and stipulates that teaching over time should be adapted to the needs and skills of all. It is also concerned with how those participating in learning and teaching possess and use a voice that is listened to and empowered.

We shall consider this in more detail as we talk of transcending the role of the digital bystander. Suffice to say at this point that it concerns human rights and global citizenship not merely positioned in the global and national policy documents of authorities, but realised in educational practices at the institutional level of schools and the micro- and personal level of teachers and students in their actions and interactions. Many of these teachers and students may well experience vulnerability and exclusion in different ways from teaching or learning.

SDG4 talks additionally of lifelong learning. This has been a global movement with modern origins in the growth of labour political parties and the establishment of organisations to offer courses in both work- and non-work-related subjects covering literacy, numeracy, and general knowledge, technical, vocational, and life skills as well as more creative subjects such as philosophy, liberal studies, and history of art.[2]

The pedagogy of lifelong learning typically moves between **formal** (in a planned learning environment with a syllabus and resulting in some kind of assessment and certification), **nonformal** (structured learning that takes place outside of a formal learning environment and does not lead to assessment or certification, such as an amateur choir), and **informal** learning, which accompanies other activities (such as kicking a ball with friends in a street). It is of course important to keep in mind that lifelong learning must be understood with caution. It is inclusive in offering periods in the life course to be educated if you have missed a chance for whatever reason. But it must not mean the opposite that there is an endless push towards *perpetual training* at whatever personal or economic cost; that might in turn result in a falling sense of fulfilment and achievement.

This book is also inspired by a tripartite conceptual distinction (between government policy, institutional strategy and implementation at individual personal or professional level) that highlights the breadth of learning from the formalised to less formalised, intentional learning to less intentional and work-related to leisure-related. It is mirrored in a policy framework called the *Lillehammer Lifelong Learning Road Map for Lifelong Employability*

[2]Examples of such organisations include: The Workers Education Association www.wea.org.uk; The National Extension College www.nec.ac.uk and The University of the Third Age www.u3a.org.uk

(2019).[3] This roadmap comprises a set of recommendations derived from the ICDE Lillehammer Lifelong Learning Summit 2019. It draws attention to the three interrelated levels of lifelong learning. The first is the policy level, concerned with how authorities at local, national, and transnational levels develop policies on lifelong learning that connect with inclusion as specified in SDG4. The second level is the understanding of lifelong learning and inclusion at the institutional level of the education sector and private initiatives, including schools, but not limited to just these kinds of institutions. The third level concerns the educational practice of teachers and related professionals as they work with vulnerable adult minorities who might be refugees, migrants, or others in a society who are disadvantaged minorities based upon gender, socioeconomic standing, or some other characteristic, such as age or ethnicity.

Similarly, the opening chapter of the book entitled "Promoting Social Inclusion and Mutual Understanding: Intertwined Efforts at Local, National and International Level" by Gabriella Agrusti, João Caramelo, and Andrea Ciasca Marra argues that there has been a virtuous collaboration between institutions and the policy makers at national and international government level. But the authors also note that what is equally pertinent is the human, empathetic factor in fostering inclusive education. This occurs at the local level where the impact of policies is experienced by professionals and vulnerable, disadvantaged recipients; teachers and related professionals, along with NGOs, non-profit, and voluntary associations, who are the ones working directly with local communities.

We direct interest towards another aspect of lifelong learning; UNESCO initiated the Global Network of Learning Cities movement in 2013, with different kinds of learning activities encouraged spatially across cities. The Beijing Declaration from the opening event defined learning cities with the following characteristics:

- Inclusive learning in the education system
- Re-vitalised learning in families and communities
- Effective learning for and in the workplace
- Extended the use of modern learning technologies
- Enhanced quality and excellence in learning
- A vibrant culture of learning throughout life

Simply put, learning cities emphasise *lifewide learning* (learning in various environments and situations both inside and outside the formal education system) and not simply lifelong learning.

The fifth international conference that took place in 2021 sought to acknowledge diverse learning city initiatives in a time of COVID where the digital component occupies a central position. The third chapter in this book by Konstantinos Pagkratis and Stephen Dobson entitled "Promoting Learning

[3] https://www.lillehammerlll.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/LLL-Road-Map.pdf

Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" argues in more detail how global policies can provide a foundation for improving learning inclusion in diverse cultural and urban settings, particularly through referencing SDG4 (inclusive education and lifelong learning), SDG 3 (health and wellbeing), and SDG11 (living in sustainable cities and communities).

Digitally mediated communication has increasingly woven itself into every fibre of our existence. The arrival of COVID simply intensified what was already occurring and considered to be, to a large extent, inevitable. Nevertheless, it is still the case that an ever-increasing number of people across the world are impoverished as digital bystanders. They are not unworldly or naïve. On the contrary, they are rich in experiences of other peoples' stories and even their own. Through access to the internet and posting on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or the latest vogue in social media, these stories might be shared and communicated. But the voice of the storyteller, in terms of complexity and empowerment, might risk being limited to what appears at times to be a somewhat superficial sharing of events, with little depth; this type of sharing may be seen by some as a form of narcissistic gratification or a simple electronic transmission.

Educationalists fear that this kind of sharing does not lead to greater or longer term progress in learning and the development of skills, capacities, and a greater sense of both self-determination and inclusion. Educationalists might argue that i*nformation* shared and gained about others and oneself is not the same as *knowledge*. Information comes and goes, but knowledge remains. Or, as Ellen Key[4] once articulated, in a slightly different way at the dawn of the twentieth century, 'the formation of one's identity is what remains after we have forgotten everything we have learnt'. It is that deeper, lingering existential experience of what a life means and what it means to live well (as wellbeing) for oneself and for others. If we seek to measure what we value and refuse to be satisfied with valuing only what we can measure, then we might and to some extent must use ourselves and those we respect as the measuring stick.

Figure 2 represents in visual form the concepts and themes central to this book and constitutes a conceptual roadmap for the reader, what we would for want of a better phrase call the LIDA Model. Level 1 considers primarily national and international organisations driving policy making. Level 2 considers educational institutions and enterprises tasked with implementing those policies. Level 3 focuses upon different kinds of adult minorities and the professions offering them educational support and services.

With these brief introductory comments in mind, we will now offer the reader some more detailed reflection on key concepts and processes. The reader will then have a firm foundation on which to engage with the chapters that follow.

[4]Cited in Steinsholt and Dobson [13].

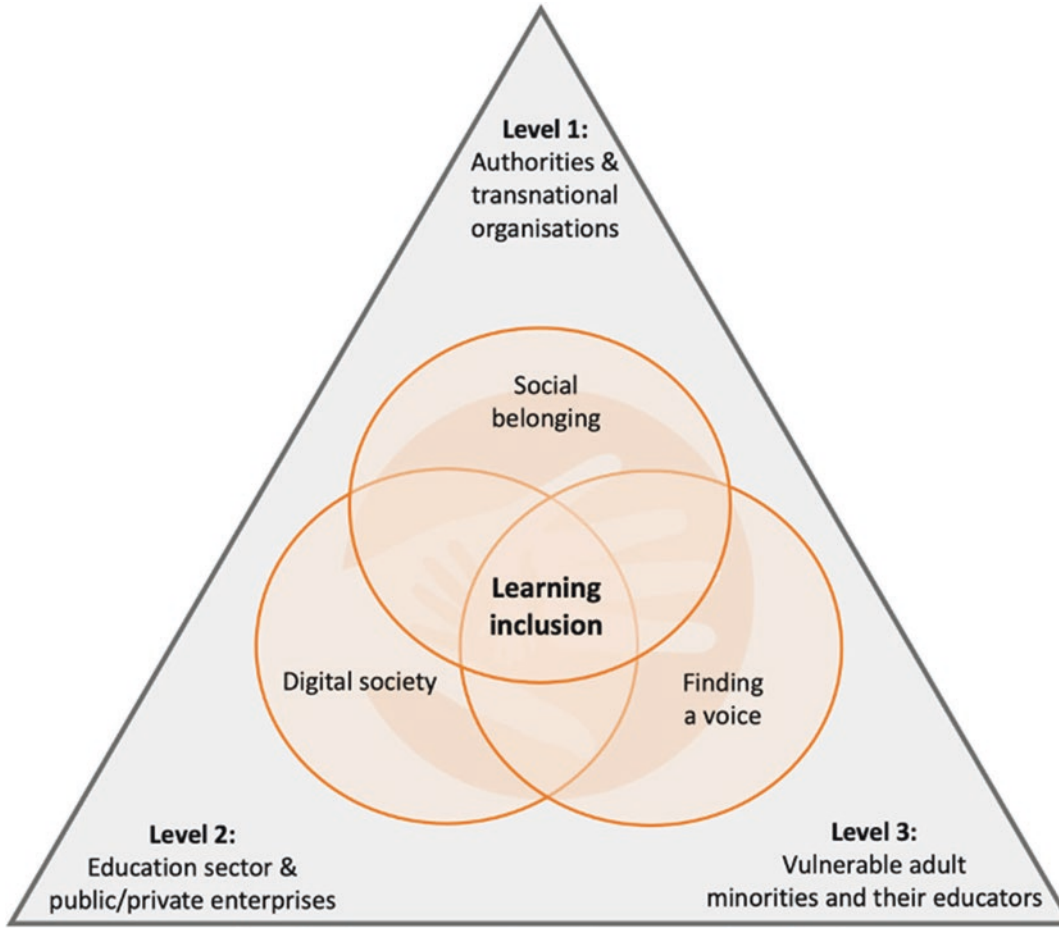

Fig. 2 The LIDA Model illustrating the relationship between central concepts and themes in this book

What Is Inclusion?

We have already talked of those who are not included and who might experience inclusive exclusion. In identifying those at risk we recognised refugees and migrants as well as citizens born in a country who might also be disadvantaged for multiple and overlapping reasons. Inclusion—or exclusion—can be social, economic, and political, but also digital. Inclusion, or exclusion, is often closely related to (in)equity, equality, gender, religion, class, age, geography, ethnicity, income levels, attainment level, second chance, drop-outs, integration of new arrivals or those born in the country in question [14]. In this book, we are particularly engaged in *social* and *digital* inclusion, which we would argue go hand in hand with empowerment and active citizenship. In a report on the World Social Situation published by the United Nations [15], social inclusion is presented as the process whereby the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of

age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, and economic and migration status are improved.

The term disability is further defined to generally include, not exhaustively the following: those with physical or intellectual disabilities, on the autism spectrum, with long-term mental or physical illness (or their parents) and older people with or without dementia who may be isolated/digitally excluded. The barriers are many, and the consequences substantial, both personally for those who are affected, their carers and for society [16]. With ongoing digital transformation and increasing automation in society, the barriers to participation increase further. Some of these barriers to digital inclusion include lack of infrastructure, affordability, capabilities/literacy, and incentives [17].

Slee [18], a key contemporary theorist of inclusion, has commented that what is often obscured in policies, practices, and conceptual debates on inclusion is the importance of experiencing a sense of belonging in a personal, social, and community sense. He has suggested that belonging constitutes an operational value, an organising practice, and a signifier or, quite simply, an indicator of inclusion. With this thought in mind, we might recall the famous Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth [19] who talked of *ethnic groups and boundaries* as the infinite number of markers we use to recognise and manage the boundaries of our social relationships. As an anthropologist, he saw these markers as cultural, linguistic, styles of clothing, tattoos, food and so on. How individuals were woven together in social relationships was paramount to him.

Dobson recalls in the late 1980s how Barth in a public lecture in Lillehammer, Norway recounted the following narrative: Once, while travelling to fieldwork in Balustastan (now known as the Sistan and Baluchestan Province) he had a stopover in Teheran. Here he discovered how social relationships were woven tightly with nature. Precious water was used to grow beautiful roses in public gardens; these provided markers of beauty in an arid world, reflecting and intensifying the social relationships between family members walking together in the gardens on cooler evenings. Each family member would search for and share their favourite scent. Of course, we might anticipate new and different markers in our context, including socially defined and norm-driven behaviour on digital platforms.

In this book, we are particularly interested in the educational aspect of inclusion. This is one aspect of the inclusion debate, asking the question: how is inclusion learnt and what does it mean to learn from and create cultures of inclusion? In our previous projects, we sought to co-design learning resources to support learning needs with those who have been disadvantaged and have experienced inclusive exclusion. This book has been a long time in the making (a point in the journey that summarises and builds upon the learning in our previous projects), where we contend that it is just as important to understand how to learn and bring about inclusion, as it is to locate and identify inclusion and create learning resources and curricula to reduce the impact of exclusion [3, 20].

The chapter by Brit Svoen and Marta Pinto entitled “We Belong When We Have a Voice: Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning”, is a good

example in this respect. This chapter presents an empirically tested three-step methodology for the development of online and face-to-face open access learning resources for immigrants and refugees. A central argument is that there should be no bystanders—everyone needs to be included and everyone needs to have agency as co-designers of learning. As Herbert A. Simon once said in our own words, anyone who is engaged in devising courses of action *changing existing situations into preferred ones*, is a designer.

There is no global template for designing for online learning. Each time we come together—the teacher, student, technologist—we form a new community with a shared discourse. This is a reflective and democratic space that allows us to act with consideration and respect for the skills and knowledge of others [3, 21].

Reducing the Educational Gap for migrants and refugees was an Erasmus+ ReGap project (2017–2019)[5] involving more than 400 participants from the target group in development and testing. It adopted a user-centred design in order to be culturally and gender sensitive and used digital stories to strengthen social inclusion and a sense of belonging. Migrants and refugees shared stories connected with their own personal experiences and were encouraged to use their own voices as part of a learning journey [22].

Participation in the initial design of the online learning environment, and using it, made it possible for the participants to provide valuable feedback on how it could be improved. The three steps followed were: (1) development of the educational model and course template, (2) using this model for developing learning objects and (3) evaluation.

It is worth noting that technology should not become the sole focus as the online learning environment is designed [23]. The focus on learners' needs and empowerment in creating and using a learning journey is crucial and inclusion at all stages improves the wellbeing and life of participants - as they seek to find more about the host country and what it means to live there.

Voice and the Power of Storytelling

The inclusion of the words *the digital age* in the book's title is a deliberate reference to the evident importance of the digital to communication, learning and teaching in a way that was not the case at the beginning of the millennium. While the digital is increasingly making its way into every micro-moment of our existence, both within and outside the formal institutions of learning and teaching, we have chosen to focus upon digital storytelling in this book. The rationale is as follows:

- Storytelling predates the digital and remains part of our cultural existence in the digital age.
- We are able to learn *from* and *in* the process of telling stories, what some have called narrative learning [24].

[5]Erasmus+ Grant agreement Number 2017-1-NO01-KA204-034182.

- The digital can be appropriated to support storytelling, just as printed on paper has fulfilled such a role for hundreds of years.
- Digital storytelling is about drawing upon and combining our experience of storytelling with the technological affordances of digital media.
- Most importantly, digital storytelling can support existential needs to build and express learning, inclusion, the learning of inclusion, social belonging, and offering a voice to those taking part.

We must emphasise that digital storytelling is not, by any means, meant to be a magic bullet able to provide all who adopt it with the opportunity to become included and empowered and experience social belonging. As we know, many are still excluded from full digital inclusion and COVID has further extended the implications of what this might mean. There are many who continue to be digital bystanders. With these caveats in place, we contend that there is much to be gained from a greater understanding of learning inclusion through digital storytelling. It may well provide useful, transferable insights that can be incorporated into other social media areas and diverse learning environments.

The conclusion to this book, authored by Gabriella Agrusti and Pip Hardy, considers among other things the transferability of learning inclusion through digital storytelling to and through other media and contexts. As they note, 'rather than *giving* people a voice, the practice of digital storytelling offers people opportunities to *find* and *create* their own voice. Core digital skills acquired during the digital storytelling workshops, coupled with an emphasis on reflection, empower people to share their existential experiences in ways that amplify their voices and their stories. Common experiences and feelings can be acknowledged and differences can be respectfully honoured'.

They consider what are the drivers and hindrances for this to take place. Paralleling the arrival of the railway, it takes time for our consciousness to catch up and realise the learning implications of new ways of learning and teaching with these resources [25]. As Warburton et al. [6] have put it:

> With historical hindsight, we will do well to reconsider what the railway journey offered: the ability to visually reflect upon and design a personal world without leaving the carriage. With the digital production of teaching and learning, we too are now called upon to reflect upon and design a world of learning without leaving our seat in front of a digital screen.

Another point to raise, with transferability and the digital in mind, is how the uptake of new technologies has typically required a form of remediating previous technology [26]. Take, for example, how in the move to digital teaching during COVID, many teachers initially merely remediated their face-to face classroom practices in a digital environment. It was, of course, not always successful as the teacher could not control the attention of students in the same way as when they were physically present with them in the classroom. Telling stories digitally is not the same as telling them in full physical presence. This distinction is something this book takes to heart and explores.

So, what do we mean by *storytelling* and *digital storytelling* as transferred and remediated into a digital medium? What exactly is its methodology or methodologies?

The Eurocentric attempt to find a universal, timeless definition of *story* dates back to Aristotle [27] in *On the Art of Poetry*, where he proposed that a narrative structure required a beginning, middle, and end organised in a causal direction with events that are joined together to reveal a plot. Ricoeur, the French philosopher, still felt compelled to draw upon Aristotle's perspective to offer a more existential and phenomenological understanding of narrative. He connected it with the experience of time and mimesis. In his words:

> Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence. ([28], p. 3)

Stories, according to this perspective, are therefore regarded as essentially temporal and temporality can be described and recaptured in the kind of stories following the manner in which we experience time and history. This kind of understanding is circular, as life and story mirror each other in an ongoing creative mimesis. It also places an emphasis on the need for the story to reveal the ordering of the events according to a linear temporal 'causal sequence' [28].

We note that in the digital world of today, users can create or access hypertext-inspired conceptions of stories that break with the temporal organisation of the plot in a diachronic beginning-middle-end and disrupt the direction of causality. In research with refugees, Dobson [2] found instances of stories where a single narrative beginning was unclear or authorship could not be traced to a single origin. Instead, the stories were multi-punctual in origin and multi-accented with a polyphonic presence of several voices. Accordingly, he noted that in such cases causality was not necessarily absent, but rather was multi-accented (containing many narrating voices) and/or multi-directional. A multi-directional story can be defined as a narrative that proceeds forward as well as backward in search of an origin. This reversal of the causality suggests that it is not cause to effect, but an effect or several effects in search of a cause and this becomes the focus (point) of the story as it moves backward.

What these views suggest is that the sole owner or sole narrator can be too simplistic when the story is (re)told digitally or in face-to-face mode. The narrator might be the voice of multiple people and the accompanying content can be derived from multiple sources, some lived and some not personally experienced.

In this book, digital storytelling is explored in a number of settings and in examples by different authors. It exemplifies precisely, the manner in which individuals are encouraged to develop individual and shared voices. We are reminded of Geertz [29] who talked of the need to develop 'thick descriptions'. He did not consider storytelling *per se*, as we are, but there is a shared understanding that capturing rich accounts (thick descriptions) is a central task if experience is to be understood and interrogated from multiple perspectives. Storytelling is about experience and those making digital stories are able to decide what *thickness* looks like from their own perspectives [30]. In other words those creating the stories are able to decide upon the level of detail required and the markers of flow, pause, surprise and so on.

The chapter by Pip Hardy and Stephen Dobson is relevant in this context and entitled "Voice, Belonging, Storytelling and Transformation in Digital Storytelling Workshop Setting: Philosophical Considerations in Institutional Settings". They present the voice of patients as the example and argue that digital storytelling amplifies, and is aligned to, a kind of knowledge identified by Aristotle [31] in his other works, namely *phronesis* (i.e. wisdom). This is where 'ordinary' voices are central and draw upon 'vernacular literacies', a combination of learned and unlearned skills and also, different ways of knowing in addition to technical knowing such as what constitutes an ethical standpoint, the self, and aesthetic knowledge [32] that expresses, represents and, through a process of distillation that is not unlike a phenomenological reduction, creates a connection between storyteller and viewer that can cross the boundaries of time and space.

Here is an example a story offered by a science teacher with 40 years of experience, as she passes on wisdom to students in higher education who are training to become teachers:

> One Monday when I walked into the school, the deputy principal called me in his office and asked, 'Azra, have you lost anything?' I was sure that I had not and said so. At this point he pulled out my gold chain from his drawer. My hand went to my neck and sure enough, the chain was missing. I had not been at the school since the previous Wednesday and had not noticed that it was missing. Mr. Hill said that Simon had found it on the field and brought it to him. He had said it was Mrs. Moeed's and that it was 22 carat gold, and could I look after it until she came to school again. Mr. Hill had asked Simon how did he know that it was mine and that it was precious. He said, we were learning about conductors in electricity and Mrs. Moeed gave it to us to test if gold was a conductor or insulator. He also told Mr. Hill that she took us out on the field after science and maybe did not put it back on properly.
>
> *I learnt, the value of trust. Never have I been let down by a precious jewel that I have trusted* ([33], pp. 6–7. Author's emphasis in italics).

We are interested in how using storytelling, and digital storytelling in particular, as a didactic device can give participants a sense of empowerment and voice. It is the voice that supports interacting with and through others, so it can become a social voice [34]. It empowers and also emplores participants/storytellers to take part in shared expression and discussion. Put differently, it facilitates and supports social inclusion [35].

Theoretically, Freire [8] in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* identified the need to move from passively learning a one-size-fits-all collection of knowledge and skills to actively co-developing them and making shared adjustments and responses to the context at hand. This sense of co-developing is a central motif in this book. It seeks to break down the view that experts sit with a universal, single, and eternally true understanding of what is a story and how to acquire the skills to make (digital) stories [36]. There are no ivory towers.

In this book, we are interested in adult lifelong learning and the transition to adulthood. This means we are not concentrating on the age of mandatory of schooling. However, this does not mean that the arguments we are making about storytelling, voice, social inclusion, and the digital have no relevance to the practice of traditional schooling in primary and secondary school classrooms. On the contrary, in the local context in which digital storytelling is

practiced and where the learning component is central to progressing social inclusion, belonging and voice is paramount. As we just noted, learning inclusion has to be able to adjust to the context at hand, wherever (and whenever) learning might be taking place.

If, theoretically, there is a precedent for understanding the empowerment of voice, we must also acknowledge the discourse on citizenship and the significant efforts made to consider how empowerment, understood as a right of citizens, has been formalised and globally embedded in different forms of citizenship and global competence curriculum for school-aged children [37, 38]. We mention this to draw attention to how digital storytelling and voice can also usefully be combined with activities related to citizenship studies and as an example of citizenship empowerment in different social media platforms [39].

Measuring Inclusion

How we measure learning inclusion in a digital environment, as well as voice and belonging has implications for how we understand them and their impact upon individuals, professionals, communities, and not the least policy makers. Another way of phrasing this is to ask: do we measure what we value or value only what we can measure [40]? In answering this question, we are forced to consider the impact of the measuring tools (do they define and create the entities?) or is it the reverse (do the definitions and conceptualisations of the entities create the need for certain measuring tools)? In the section that follows, we will unpack and elaborate on some of these issues.

At the outset, we might identify a difference (and connection) between measuring learning inclusion in terms of its final outputs and more formatively as it progresses towards some end goal. A challenge immediately arises: will indicators of inclusion, belonging and voice most usefully be captured by performance rubrics with an air of scientific objectivity (involving often some sense of numerical values) or some other assessment tool, such as an understanding of the assessor as a connoisseur, where the subjective, more qualitative experience of the disadvantaged and the assessor is given more weight? As an example of qualitative experience of social inclusion the reader is reminded of Barth's stopover in Teheran and the families and friends who participated in a shared culture of identifying beautiful treasured roses in an arid climate.

The traditional policy approach has looked to identify a number of topics and thereafter develop from them indicators and accompanying rubrics. Following this approach, the already cited UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities lists six characteristics of learning cities; which we might even consider to be indicators from which rubrics might be developed [4]. The first three identify types of learning (inclusive, re-vitalised, or effective); each is allocated respectively to one of the following places (education system, families and communities or, lastly, the workplace). However, it is notable in our context that *inclusive learning* will occur across all of the places and is not found only in the education system. The same applies to *re-vital-*

ised learning that does not exist solely in families and communities, and *effective learning* is not only of relevance in the workplace. If we did not seek to capture a more flexible set of learning types across different contexts, the result would be a rigid, limited understanding of impact and practices.

In this book, we are interested in indicators and performance rubrics to capture inclusive learning as a process and as an outcome. While we are primarily interested in the adult education system, we would not wish to discount the importance of education for pre-school or school-aged children or learning that takes place formally, informally, or non-formally in other contexts, such as families, communities, and in the workplace. Similarly, we cannot immediately discount re-vitalised learning (as old forms of learning are given a new re-fit for contemporary contexts) or effective learning which immediately suggests consideration of learning for different groups (disadvantaged or privileged).

The last three characteristics of learning cities identified in UNESCO's Beijing Declaration suggest additional performance indicators that might in turn give rise to rubrics:

- Extending the use of modern learning technologies. In in our terminology, this refers to the use of digital learning resources and the skills and knowledge required by professionals, target groups, and those creating them.
- Enhancing learning quality and excellence. This suggests that not every form of quality is acceptable in itself, but one that strives towards excellence and provides indicators of progress and improvement.
- Creating lifelong learning and a culture for this. This is a central goal in this book, namely, to develop an understanding of knowledge and practice and how it creates a sustainable inclusive culture of learning over the life course. Rubrics and indicators point towards cultures that are empowering and sustainable over time with some organisational structure, either formal or informal, that are capable of handing over to new members of the culture, able to recalibrate or plan for contextual changes, involving and considering the voice of participants and offering a valued sense of social belonging.

In sum the topics, rubrics, and indicators we are proposing for our context can usefully draw upon those suggested by the UNESCO Learning Cities initiative. In our reformulaiton they include:

- Learning inclusion in the adult learning system, families, communities, and the workplace. There may also be some evidence of re-vitalised or inclusive effective learning.
- Use and creation of digital learning resources for disadvantaged adult minorities (refugees, migrants, and others who might be disadvantaged socially, economically, culturally, physically, politically, by age or gender).
- Learning that is not only inclusive but that increases the learning quality of participants in the direction of excellence.

- Creating inclusive cultures of learning that are sustainable across the life course, empower the voice of all participants and result in a valued sense of social belonging.

We are not seeking, in this introduction, to present in depth the rubrics and indicators of inclusive learning in the digital age and their connection with voice and belonging. Nearly all of the chapters in this edited collection are marked by the manner in which the authors consider, more or less explicitly, some of these measurement challenges and also different rubric and indicator approaches to measurement.

The form of assessment can discipline and control participants, even though they are, at the same time, learning something from the experience of assessment itself. The advocacy of clearly stated assessment indicators and performance rubrics can be considered to be one such mechanism of discipline and control, defining what is in scope and out of scope of assessment. In our case, how might we define what is in and out of scope for digital inclusion, belonging and voice in a personal, community, policy, and professional sense? Or more provocatively as suggested earlier, do we measure what we value, or merely value what we can measure?

Assessing with indicators through rubrics is only one side of the practice of assessment. Let us consider the relationship between assessment and connoisseurship [40]. Using experience as a measurement and assessment resource suggests that the assessor, who can be a professional or a disadvantaged adult minority member, can also decide to be a connoisseur who draws upon a wide set of reference points and information, including their personal experiences, to value, judge, and assess digitally mediated learning of inclusion, belonging, and voice.

Where the supporter of rubric-guided assessment is clear about what can and cannot earn recognition and grading points, the assessor-as-connoisseur has always to be ready to consider how to assess something they might not have anticipated. They might learn something from the act of assessing how things are progressing, so that it becomes a memorable act-in-itself and not a routine and potentially burdensome pile of assignments to mark (e.g. if you happen to be assessing the work of adult learners as they complete a predesigned program of study).

We might be accused of proposing a simple dichotomy between the assessor-as-connoisseur and those who represent the other side, including those who routinise and quality assure the assessment by controlling those who wish to exceed the parameters of what is expressed as worthy of assessment in a clearly defined rubric. Such a person might seek to include far too many personal experiences or refuse to acknowledge the value of something specified in the prescribed rubric and its indicator. Such a position would be an over-simplification, as we will always need both kinds of assessment.

If as a consequence, assessment is only used to enforce and reinforce the behaviour of those assessing and those undertaking the assessment according to the existing rules, we miss the richness of what assessment can and always will be as it transforms itself when confronted with unexpected situ-

ations and addresses the needs and diversity of participants and community backgrounds.

To take a simple example, those who come from strong oral backgrounds might express themselves well when compared with those who are used to written submissions and reports for inclusion in annual policy reports or briefing documents. This suggests that multiple ways of assessing the same constructs (e.g. knowledge and the practice of learning inclusion, belonging and voice in a digital environment) are permitted. In the parlance of currently fashionable language games of assessment [40], we are talking of the need to ensure accessible assessment that captures the voice of all, whatever their background.

Moreover, assessment practices are embodied in the *habitus* of individuals and institutions. *Habitus* is in this sense is the *habitual* carried in our bones and automatised in muscle memory and, as such, is not always easily verbalised. It is tacitly known and can be mobilised when relevant to make assessments. As the old adage suggests: *we are not always able to say or describe what characterises quality, but we know it when we see it.* The example of assessing professionals such as teachers comes to mind, such as when they have been teaching vulnerable adult students for many years.

In this book, digital storytelling is explored in a number of settings and examples by different authors, precisely exemplifying the manner in which individuals are encouraged to develop individual and shared voices. We are reminded and have already drawn attention to Geertz [29] the well-known anthropologist and ethnographer, who talked of the need to develop thick descriptions. He did not consider storytelling *per se*, as we are, but there is a shared understanding that capturing rich accounts is a central task if experience is to be understood and interrogated from multiple perspectives. Storytelling is about experience and those making digital stories utilising images as well as words are able to decide what *thickness* looks like. This experience can as noted above be measured in performance rubrics echoing a quantitative approach or more qualitatively in terms of an experience that evokes emotions or a feeling or a hunch.

In sum, what becomes important in assessing the process experienced and outputs of learning inclusion initiatives is to acknowledge a continual ebb and flow between assessment governed by practicing the rules and using the prescribed indicators and performance rubrics, and something more. Something more could look like assessment seeking to respond sensitively and creatively to the diversity of the experiential backgrounds of participants, whether they are disadvantaged individuals, minorities, or professionals, and ensuring that they are all given equal opportunity to demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge, skills, and values as cultures of learning inclusion are created and sustained.

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About the Book

This book considers how inclusive learning, wellbeing, and active citizenship can be encouraged, taught, learnt, and supported in a digital world. The book poses three questions: How can governments and intergovernmental organisations support learning inclusion and active citizenship? How can the education sector and public/private enterprises support learning inclusion and active citizenship? How can professionals and communities work with vulnerable adults who are disadvantaged in a participatory, empowering manner? Examples discussed in the book draw on the experiences of adult refugees and migrants, as well as people who may experience disadvantage and/or discrimination as a result of their social, economic, political, cultural, religious, physical, mental, age, or gender-related status. A methodological pillar in our work is development of skills in digital storytelling and digital story creation for personal, community, and professional purposes.

Contents

Part III How Is the Methodology of Digital Storytelling Used and Experienced by Different 'User' Groups?

Introduction: The Changing World of Pedagogy in Diverse Cultural Contexts

Stephen Dobson and Brit Svoen

In this book we are interested in how learning inclusion in a digital age can lead to an enhanced voice and sense of belonging for all participants. We are also interested in how this entails the establishment of what we would call cultures of learning inclusion. The emphasis is upon culture; we mentioned the Norwegian anthropologist Frederik Barth in the Preface who highlighted the importance of the weave of individuals in social relationships as a foundation for inclusion. This weave gives rise to different forms of community, digital or otherwise and, by extension, accompanying cultures with different markers that offer ways of expressing and understanding others, setting expectations and making possible a sense of belonging and voice for participants. Cultures of inclusion are shared ways of being together through the weave of activities taking place. But what might culture mean in an educational sense for cultures of learning inclusion? Let us consider some examples.

Pedagogy in modern times has sought to define itself as underpinned by a culture of science seeking truth through refutable inquiry. It has formed a body of evidence-based knowledge approved by universities, academics and professionally accredited associations. The last mentioned would also include national teacher accrediting bodies. The seminal work of Hattie, and especially his well-received *Visible Learning* [1] evidencing 800 meta-syntheses of effective teaching and learning and the follow-up *Visible Learning: The Sequel* [2] (considering a synthesis of 2100 meta-analyses of achievement) are excellent examples. This, however, must be regarded as only part of the story. Pedagogy is central in all cultures, and it is not always founded, or historically reliant, upon the stamp of so-called Western scientific based teaching in a classroom or equivalent modern institutionalised setting. Take for example, First Nations pedagogy in Australia which is 60,000 years old and predates the formalised pedagogy and training of teachers outlined at the beginning of this paragraph (i.e. national teacher accrediting bodies).

It is the longest unbroken living culture in the world and is actually not a single culture, but many interrelated cultures and peoples across an immense continent. At the beginning of colonisation there were 250 living languages; now there are 120.[1]

First Nations pedagogy is founded upon knowledge and practices that are community- and place-based, where direct questioning and

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[1] https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/indigenous-languages-avoiding-a-silent-future

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verbal transmission pedagogy driven in a classroom setting is downplayed. Assessment is driven by the student reflecting, trialling in practice and demonstrating independence on the basis of the lessons learnt [3]. The student is called upon and is also self-motivated to show resilience and demonstrate that they can survive in what some might regard as harsh conditions. They undertake significant self-assessment alongside the supportive eye of the teacher, who might be a respected elder in the community.

Dobson's colleague and good friend, Professor Lester Irabinna Rigney, a descendant of the Narungga, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri Peoples of South Australia and employed in the University of South Australia, has related how, in the pedagogy of his people there is always a teacher, a learner and a third person who checks something has or is been learnt. Thus understood, knowledge, learning and assessment is an intensely collaborative activity, where the student is less an individual and is, from the very first moment, immersed and woven into shared acts of learning and assessment. Rigney [4] also explains that, once something is taught to you, you are, in turn, obligated to teach it to the next generation when it is your turn. All are thus learners, and all are teachers. This bears some likeness to a revelatory pedagogy, as formulated by Guthrie ([5], p. 18), 'knowledge is based on revealed truths from gods and previous generations so that important knowledge comes from deities and the ancestors rather than human inquiry.' There are also many kinds of knowledge and skills learnt outside of the classroom through apprenticeship. We are of course thinking of the vocational education sector where there is similarly a shared educational space or weave between the notice and the expert mentor [6]. Assessment is in many senses continuous and feedback likewise in applied settings.

This culture of learning inclusion where all are learners echoes the often-voiced proverb 'It takes a village to raise a child.' This motto was popularised by Hilary Clinton's [7] book *It takes a village*. The title has actually been attributed to African proverbs in the sense of 'if you are not taught by your mother, you will be taught by the world'. We might consider this to be of less relevance in cities. However, just as we might find examples in rural communities, so too in cities where neighbourhood and community bonds exist, such as examples shared in the annual international meetings of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities [8]. In both the rural and city areas, the upbringing of the child, including offering them feedback, is not limited to teachers or the immediate parents. The extended group of relatives and the wider community have a key role to play. With this in mind, learning inclusion is distributed across the generations and spatially across the community and not reserved to particular professions, such as teachers or associated professionals like child welfare officers or youth workers.

Accordingly, there are different ontological (ways of being) and epistemological (knowledge) worldviews at stake. On the one hand, there is a world view that prioritises scientific evidence supported by hypotheses and falsification [9] to justify what is sound educational practice. On the other hand, there is a pedagogy based upon alternative worldviews, developed over long periods of time with accumulated and trialled practices. In the latter, the local historical context, its accompanying culture and location in a specific place are given priority. These alternative practices emphasise a place-based pedagogy. This is not to mean that scientific and evidence-based pedagogies have little interest in place; they talk in turn of local curricula that draw upon local historical examples. But while these are integrated in the curriculum, this is based upon the evidence that they support modern views of 'what works' educational practices.

A word of caution is required. Placed-based knowledge can also be regarded as scientific in that its based upon trial and error, detailed observation, experimenting and innovating over many generations through what might be called intelligent reasoning to engage with a changing environment and ensure survival. Modern science would assert differentness in the sense that it leans towards to universalism and is based upon a quicker time trajectory. With this is predicated upon a shorter timeline from idea to fruition, it is less inclined to consider a local limiting origin and attentiveness to the context of application that is so important for place-based knowledge.

Consequently, in placed-based pedagogies the local historical context is the first principle and the more universally founded science of pedagogy is relegated to a lesser position. In this book we

acknowledge both a scientific understanding of pedagogy and a place-based, historically accumulated practice of pedagogy (as a different kind of science). Both approaches have relevance and a case for validity can be made for each, one based upon evidence from a more universal understanding of good teaching and learning across time and place and one based upon tried and tested local practice in a delimited time and place. In other words, the culture of learning inclusion can be justified and based upon either science or a place-based knowledge base. As Nietzsche [10] said in his genealogical view, and here paraphrased in our own words, 'it is not a question of what is truth, but more a question of how it is made, under what conditions and in whose interests.'

It might be charged that cultures of learning inclusion in First Nations pedagogy are a long way from the kinds of pedagogy experienced in European countries and the LIDA (Learning in a Digital Age) project[2] that inspires this book. We would argue that this is not the case on two counts. Firstly, new migrants and refugees or other disadvantaged groups in Europe identify with diverse cultural backgrounds and would acknowledge pedagogies that might mirror those connected with accumulated historical educational practices in their homelands, where so-called scientific practices of education are not necessarily the first priority. Secondly, some of the digital practices connected with learning inclusion, which we will discuss in the next section under the heading of the pedagogy of connectivity, do not necessarily have the same scientific standing as other forms of pedagogy. However, they might give rise in themselves to different and diverse cultures of practice where inclusion can be (but is not always) a leitmotif as all are invited to join, have voice and experience a sense of belonging. The threshold of membership might be simply access to the internet and accompanying electronic device such as a computer or mobile.

We would now like to add another dimension to our understanding of the educational culture of learning inclusion, namely that not only is there the opportunity for participants to be learners and acquire not merely *funds of knowledge* to draw upon, but we would also like to propose that they acquire and learn what we would term *funds of identity*, where knowledge strengthens a sense of a person's belonging and voice. Together they constitute a foundation upon which cultures of learning inclusion grow and give rise to markers—let us call them *cultural markers* in the spirit of Fredrik Barth [11]—that make it possible to understand the ways of others, set expectations and offer a sense of belonging and voice for participants.

Fry in his important research on successful schooling in remote Indigenous communities in the far north of Australia identifies the importance of education and schooling where students feel they belong in an existential, identity reinforcing sense:

> Aboriginal cultural inclusion in remote school services contains many forms. These include representation of community voices and perspectives, governance and capacity to shape the important components of service provision, the overlaying of Indigenous perspectives across curriculum and teaching practices, relevant socialisation and cultural approaches to working across kinships systems and relationship protocols, cultural reinforcers, symbols and artefacts … Central to this overlay is Aboriginal employment at all levels of school services ([12], p. 206).

Indigenous staff employed in respected (teaching) roles, along with the acknowledgement of indigenous language, curriculum content and voice are essential. I (Dobson) have heard Gary Fry talk of this in terms of 'Belonging Education'. By this meaning education as teaching and learning that confirms the sense of indigenous student, teacher and community belonging in educational settings characterised by familiar *cultural markers* of identity and recognition in a mutually reinforcing manner.

A key premise in LIDA is that the accumulated knowledge possessed by different experts, policy makers, education and related professionals, vulnerable adult minorities and disadvantaged groups, is distributed across and in multiple networks that are not always connected or shared. This accumulated knowledge can remain invisible, resulting in intended or unintended (structural) discrimination for those involved, or it can be a shared *fund of knowledge* based upon skills and experiences, in diverse contexts and across

[2] https://www.lidalearn.net/

different national and international borders and contexts that can be policy, professional, family and community based. The term 'fund of knowledge' has been defined as follows (and we would extend this definition beyond the household and individual functioning to encompass policy, professional and community contexts):

> These historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being ([13], p. 113).

Funds of knowledge, as a concept seeks to acknowledge in an appreciative manner, what has at times been considered in a deficit manner in the conversations about and with those disadvantaged and not included.

Some have also proposed that a more fruitful concept is *funds of identity*, which references how 'funds of knowledge' become 'funds of identity' when participants (in our context, all the groups mentioned in the previous paragraphs) appropriate them to define, consider and express themselves [14]. The definition of funds of identity highlights this identity component:

> Historically accumulated, culturally developed and socially distributed resources that are essential for a person's self-definition, self-expression and self-understanding ([15], p. 31).

Another key point to note is that funds of identity are captured and developed not merely through ethnographic and work-intensive observational methods, which were the predominant methodologies used by funds of knowledge researchers in the 1990s. We have since witnessed a digital revolution and the embracing of a culture based upon self-made videos and photographs, written digital diaries and bilingual texts, blogs and other forms of multimodal self-expression. In this book we explore digital storytelling as one such fund of identity-supporting resource used by those wishing to inculcate cultures of learning and understanding of what it means to include socially, belong and find a voice.

The chapter entitled "Joining Voices for Social Inclusion: Activism and Resilience of Professionals Working with People in Situations of Vulnerability", by Ana Costa and Susana Coimbra, is a good illustration of the role played by professionals learning activism and promoting inclusion as a core task for their members and those with whom they work. This engagement promotes professional resilience and supports them in overcoming identified obstacles. Developing social and political consciousness and humility are considered assets rather than liabilities. Above all, professionals are seen to be able to convert *know-that* funds of knowledge into *know-how* funds of professional and community identity that lead to action and enhanced communication, connection with the disadvantaged. Dobson [16] has gone even further, suggesting that there is a third component in such a conceptual framework, namely the *know-how-it-feels* of increased professional empathy, affection and cultural sensitivity.

This book also explores the manner in which funds of knowledge have become more openly available. In the chapter co-authored by Espen Stranger-Johannessen and Valeria Damiani entitled "Multilingual Stories for Immigrants and Refugees: A Language-as-Resource Approach", the focus is upon Open Educational Resources (OER) and the changing nature of knowledge that makes them possible. OER are another iteration of open knowledge where pay walls are eliminated to make the knowledge more inclusive. Of course, the assumption is that, if the resource is circulated digitally, the reader has free or cheap digital access. This may of course may not always be the case in reality.

Open knowledge has a long history, that predates the internet with public libraries and labour union organisations as cultural markers and precursors. The Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI)[3] is a good example of how higher education institutions are investing in what some have called the re-invention of universities. One of the outputs from COKI is an open-source book published by MIT. It can be read as a manifesto for open knowledge and a common, shared pool of resources. Mongomery et al. ([17], p. 2) identify the traditional binary between sanctioned and precious knowledge, often protected by a pay wall, and the craft knowledge of communities. The former is sometimes considered *know that*

[3] https://openknowledge.community/about-coki/

and the latter *know how*, or what Aristotle [18] considered respectively as *episteme* and *techne*.

Occasionally, some forms of knowledge will be accorded the status of wisdom, termed *phronesis* by Aristotle [18]. More often, wisdom is considered to be implicit or incorporated into the "craft" knowledge of communities. Education deals with knowledge that exists and the sharing of it. Research institutions value and seek new knowledge and distinguish formal, certified forms of knowledge—sanctioned by journals, publishing houses, libraries, or national institutions—from informal, unsanctioned forms of knowledge, the most ubiquitous evidence of which is sometimes found on contemporary social media platforms.

The interesting development in our context is the manner in which the binary difference between the two might be dissolved on occasions. Again, there is a precedence that teachers might be encouraged to become researchers of their own professional practice or the citizen who is empowered to write and publish reviews on social media about research knowledge produced by universities [19].

We would, in summary, contend that digital stories and digital storytelling can be cultural markers of inclusion that are learnt and offer both voice and experiences of social belonging. We have identified, in this section, two aspects giving rise to these cultural markers that enable participants to understand the ways of others, set expectations and offer a sense of belonging and voice for participants: firstly, universal science-based evidence vs. historically embedded and space-based contextualised knowledge and practices, and secondly, funds of knowledge that hold the potential to become funds of identity.

1 The Pedagogy of Connectivity in a Digital Environment

There was a time—it seems so long ago, and it isn't—when education was largely measured by the quality of classroom experiences, where teacher and student were exposed to the voice, expression and corporeality of each other. We named and regarded this as a rich learning and teaching experience. It was a form of *chiasm* to recall Merleau-Ponty's famous use of the term denoting the shared inter-corporeal space of bodies, signifier (e.g. words) and history, where the result is the corporeal experience of touched-touching, seen-seeing, speaking-spoken and so on (cited in [20]).

Theories of pedagogy have prioritised communities of learning and co-constructing (constructivism) the learning experience and have shared this underlying premise, namely the importance of physical presence in time and place [21]. This approach is aptly summarised as 'cooperative learning' as defined by two colleagues in personal conversation (Kaja Halland and Kathinka Blichfeldt, 3.2.21):

> Cooperative learning is based on the principle of constructivism, with attention to the contribution that social interaction can make. Constructivism rests on the idea that individuals learn through building their own knowledge, connecting new ideas and experiences to existing knowledge and experiences to form new or enhanced understanding [22]. Also, it rests on sociocultural theory of development which argues that learning takes place when learners solve problem beyond their current developmental level, supported by teacher or peers [23].

We only have to consider courses on general pedagogy attended by initial teacher education students for decades in universities and teacher training colleges where they have been exposed to Dewey (democracy and education), Vygotsky (zone of proximal development), Skinner (behaviourism) and Piaget (cognitive assimilation of knowledge through experience), along with specialists on the importance of motivation, such as Bandura (on self-efficacy) and Dweck (on growth mindset).[4]

[4] Dewey J (2009) Democracy and education: an introduction to the philosophy of education. WLC Books, New York; Dweck C (2000) Self-theories: their role in motivation, personality, and development. Psychology Press, Philadelphia; Skinner BF (1938) The behavior of organisms. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York; Bandura A (1977) Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychol Rev 84:191–215; Wadsworth BJ (1996) Piaget's theory of cognitive and affective development: foundations of constructivism. Longman Publishers, White Plains, NY; Vygotsky LS (1978) Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

With the Covid pandemic we became acutely aware of the role of online teaching and learning. While many sought to simply transpose their classroom bound understanding and practice of education to the digital arena using traditional theories of cooperative learning, it has been contended for some time that learning and teaching in what we might call a purely online space is fundamentally different [24]. We have in mind the work of Siemens [25] as a pioneer in this respect. Since the early 2000s, he has, along with colleagues in the learning analytics community of the Society of Learning Analytics (SoLar)[5] theorised this as a pedagogy of connectivism.

What is a pedagogy of connectivism? If knowledge is distributed widely in different networks, some conceptual (carried in our heads) and some external in books or on the internet, how might it best be taught or acquired?

> The pipe is more important than the content within the pipe…Our ability to learn what we need for tomorrow is more important than what we know today. A real challenge for any learning theory is to actuate known knowledge at the point of application. When knowledge, however, is needed, but not known, the ability to plug into sources to meet the requirements becomes a vital skill. As knowledge continues to grow and evolve, access to what is needed is more important than what the learner currently possesses. (Siemens, op.cit)

For Siemens teaching and learning is now about being able to connect different sources and networks of knowledge, residing in particular places and repositories, many of which are distributed across the internet. We circle back to our earlier point: we will still need knowledge as funds of knowledge in order to spur us into action. Critical thinking is still vital, but of the character required to select and evaluate the pipe and the contents of the pipe.

The roles of the teacher and the assessor change. As knowledge is increasingly based upon connecting with networks, the physically or virtually present teacher is now only one possible—although undoubtedly valuable—connection and source of judgement and valuation. We are thinking of Google and Siri as both supporting and competing entities. Even ChatGPT artificial intelligence falls into this category [26]. We must also consider the issues of inclusion and equity. What of those who are less able to join networks, lack suitable equipment, skills or a quiet place? During the Covid-19 pandemic, many commented on those who lacked access to one or all of these. We know that, while the digital can connect, it can also intensify divisions as noted by UNESCO's *Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* [27]. In general terms this has been highlighted with reference to adult learning education (ALE):

> Deep and persistent inequalities still exist in ALE participation and key target groups are not being reached. (…) Globally, between and within countries, there remain deep and persistent inequalities in ALE participation, with many vulnerable groups excluded and seemingly off the radar of policymakers. Migrants and refugees, older adults, adults with disabilities, those living in rural areas, and adults with low prior educational attainment are among the groups facing the greatest barriers to participation in ALE. ([28], p. 22)

UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities,[6] launched with the Beijing Declaration in 2013, is an example of an initiative that attempts to bridge the digital divide by supporting and showcasing community sourced learning opportunities across cities, many of which encompass a digital learning component. The fifth international conference on Learning Cities took place in 2021 and explicitly acknowledged this in the wake of Covid-19's impact. Community provision enables individuals to overcome their own personal limitations in terms of skills or access to digital platforms [29–31]. It is important to note that lifelong learning is not simply lifelong along the life course but includes spatial distribution across cities and in this sense is *life-wide learning* [32].

We should also note that Learning Cities, connectivism and the pedagogy with which they are associated are not neutral. We are reminded of Habermas's [33] well-known understanding that knowledge is not neutral, it can represent different interests and in so doing is value-laden to support these different interests. He proposed a typology of knowledge interests as technical

[5] https://www.solaresearch.org/

[6] https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities

(means-ends), cultural (acknowledging and understanding different cultural influences) and emancipatory (empowering participants and voice). In our context, Learning Cities and connectivism might be considered to further the means-ends project imperative of goal-directed technical knowledge, without paying due attention to the cultural or emancipatory interests of the creators or users of this knowledge. To believe that connectivism is able to ignore these different interests would be tantamount to believing and acting under the assumption that knowledge is value-free and indifferent to such considerations.

Students and teachers might have individual and social preferences for traditional corporeal experiences of learning and teaching respectively. But a dominant imperative for the future skills needed to learn and teach in an online world will be judged by a new imperative, that of anytime, any-place learning. It is will also include more flexible submission of whatever has been learnt for assessment and evaluation [34]. This might well be more inclusive if afforded to all, this kind of learning extends beyond the walls of the traditional place-based classroom and involves bringing together the disciplines of learning and teaching with the discipline of online technology and computers. A glimpse of this is already seen in the emerging science of learning analytics where teachers are increasingly asked, at the very least, to interact continuously with, and analyse, assessment and evaluation data captured on digital platforms.

Put differently, the skills of connectivism to be developed and acquired by adults, children and the professionals, such as teachers can also be understood by what we would call 'digital literacy'. Some might suggest that this is a new form of computer skill or at the very least a screen-based skill; and this would be close to our understanding. We would however warn that it is not the kind of computer skills associated with computer programming or writing code, even though children in many countries might now learn these skills at a very basic level in late primary school as part of their national curriculum.

A second example is provided by Tony Sumner in his chapter "Including the Marginalised: Engaging People with Dementia and the Elderly in Technology-Based Participatory Citizen Storytelling". Digital storytelling becomes a way of connecting elderly people living with dementia with each other, their partners and carers and others. In the development and delivery of health and social care services, digital storytelling and digital stories become part of an empowering process as these marginalised groups can reframe their own experience and expertise to influence provision of services.

At the end of this book, we include a glossary of the main terms we have introduced and used. One of these terms is *people in situations of vulnerability and it includes resilience*. Some of the other terms presented in the glossary are:

- *Learning inclusion* (how cultures of inclusion are taught, learnt and hence experienced).
- *Emancipation and finding a voice* (as empowerment and active citizenship).
- *Belonging* (as social inclusion and wellbeing).
- *Connectivism* (as the skills to source and connect knowledge when required to solve problems and meet learning, teaching or other purposes).
- *Lifelong learning* (as more than learning along the life course, it also includes life-wide learning across cities, such as those evidenced in the Global Network of Learning Cities).
- *Professional activism* as professionals are ethically and politically engaged in educational, social and community contexts.
- *Learning* in the spirit of Freire [35] empowers participants and is not motivated by deficit understandings of the learners; on the contrary, it is a form of appreciative pedagogy guided by the resources of those involved towards their growth and emancipation.
- *Funds of knowledge* and *funds of identity* (both requiring the other and thus reinforcing each other in the pursuit of belonging).

It is timely to acknowledge that the term *inclusion* has been around for a long time with specific words added in front or behind it, such as special

inclusion or inclusion for all. Learning inclusion is also known by other terms such as *empowerment* or offering *equality of opportunity* to mention a couple of terms. What is new in this book is that we make 'learning inclusion' and the accompanying phrase 'the creation of cultures of learning inclusion' central *leitmotifs* and goals. The emphasis is upon how, why and what the *learning* of inclusion is and might mean both in theory and in practice.

We strongly advocate for the terms learning inclusion and cultures of learning inclusion, in which different kinds of disadvantaged minorities and the groups and communities to which they belong take control over the shaping and telling of their stories and their life opportunities. As Rifaie Tammas [36], a refugee from Syria, put it:

> While … (most) … organisations are well-meaning and do not directly coerce refugees to share their stories, there is often an expectation that refugees *owe* the wider public their stories. Thus, the expectation of sharing one's story can transform into an obligation. I realised this when I politely declined an invitation to share my story from an institution that supported me in the past. Instead of the usual understanding response, a senior staff member at the institution said he was "very disappointed" that I could not save a few minutes of my time to help with their outreach work given what they have done for me.

There is an important lesson in the Māori understanding of the pepeha, meaning your self-introduction story you share with another on meeting them for the first time; identifying your connection to place and people over time, sometimes over generations if it is known. As Dobson's colleague Pine Southon (Hautohu Matua)[7] put it, 'it is customary to share as much or as little as you feel comfortable with sharing and this will vary according to the occasion.'

A related point is that the disadvantaged already have a voice, it is not something others give them. Others, including professionals can actively co-facilitate the sharing of this voice. The goal is not necessarily the disadvantaged being left to themselves to 'pull themselves up by their own hair' so to speak.[8] It is not about putting the burden solely upon them to find the platform and medium. Professionals have an important role in walking alongside the disadvantaged, not in front or behind them but rather accompanying them [38]. As Serres [39] put it in his well-received book the *Troubadour of Knowledge*, the pedagogue in the time of the early Greeks had the function of patiently accompanying and tutoring the learner on the journey to the unknown and not yet learnt. This is also true of those desiring to co-create and implement participatory policies of learning inclusion in our digital age. Thus, it is not the pedagogue or others for them but with them.

2 The Three Parts of the Book

The first part of this book (chapters "Promoting Social Inclusion and Mutual Understanding: Intertwined Efforts at Local, National and International Level", "Towards Wellbeing-ness as an Experience of Inclusion, Belonging and Voice in a Digital (Post-Covid) World of Global Change", and "Promoting Learning Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)") uses the lens of authorities and transnational organisations (level 1 in the triangular figure introduced in the Preface) to consider learning inclusion understood in relation to how social belonging, digital society and finding a voice is played out in the world of policy. It is exemplified through analyses of (a) EU funded projects on inclusion, (b) wellbeing policies in a country such as NZ and, (c) UNESCO's Global Networks of Learning Cities (GNLC). It is organised around a question framed broadly in the following way: How can governments and intergovernmental organisations support learning inclusion and active citizenship?

The second part of the book (chapters "Fostering Social Inclusion of People in Situations of Vulnerability: Experiences from the Italian and Portuguese contexts", "Joining Voices for Social Inclusion: Activism and Resilience of

[7] A Māori position of importance meaning a principal adviser.

[8] Some reference this phrase to, *The Surprising Adventure of Baron Munchausen* [31].

Professionals Working with People in Situations of Vulnerability", and "Voice, Belonging, Storytelling and Transformation in Digital Storytelling Workshop Settings: Some Philosophical Considerations") uses a different lens, namely that of the education sector and its public/private enterprises. Specifically, the second corner of the triangle (level 2 of the triangle) is considered where the unit of conceptual analysis is that of institutions and how is learning inclusion, along with social belonging, digital society and finding a voice actioned. The chapters explore (a) the different cultural institutional contexts in which inclusion is played out in the case of Portugal and Italy, (b) the practice and origin of storytelling from the late twentieth Century to the current day in the institutionalised form of storytelling circles, (c) the struggle and advances of professional groups advocating for inclusion of disadvantaged groups and (d) how might educators design for inclusive learning. The organising question for this part is: How can the education sector and public/private enterprises support learning inclusion and active citizenship?

The final part of the book (chapters "We Belong and Connect When We Have a Voice: Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning", "Bridging the Gaps: Promoting Competences for Democratic Culture and the Wellbeing of Girls Through Digital Storytelling", "Multilingual Stories for Immigrants and Refugees: A Language-as-Resource Approach", "Including the Marginalised: Engaging People with Dementia and the Elderly in Technology-Based Participatory Citizen Storytelling", and "The Critique of Learning Inclusion in a Digital World: A Conversation") considers the remaining part of the triangle (level 3) and adopts the lens of vulnerable adults and their educators to focus on the lived experience of learning inclusion, social belonging, digital society and finding a voice. This part of the book continues the theme of digital storytelling and asks: How is the methodology of digital storytelling used and experienced by different 'user' groups? The chapters are self-contained case studies of (a) teenage girls learning how to create and use digital stories, (b) experiences of developing multilingual story resources for immigrants and refugees and lastly, an important study of the challenges and successes of engaging people with dementia and the elderly in technology-based participatory citizen storytelling.

Chapter "The Critique of Learning Inclusion in a Digital World: A Conversation" is worth a special mention. It acknowledges Arjen Wals, SDG4 subseries advisor of the Springer SDG series who raises a number of important questions in his reading of the book manuscript before final publication. He asks if a more critical approach to digital inclusion and learning inclusion as we put it, would be more desirable in the book we offer to the reader and the world at large. In the form of an imagined conversation, the editors of this book consider and respond to his questions in this final chapter. The theme of critique is also taken up in the Afterword by Agrusti and Hardy. They raise the importance of the vulnerable and disadvantaged developing critical awareness of their social reality by developing a consciousness, what Freire called a conscientization process [35]. This leads to a questioning of social myths and forms of established traditions. Simply put, the 'is' is questioned and a new 'ought' is en-visioned - gaining words, images, sounds and a form open to multiple forms and cultures of experience.

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Part I

How Can Governments and Intergovernmental Organisations Support Learning Inclusion and Active Citizenship?

Promoting Social Inclusion and Mutual Understanding: Intertwined Efforts at Local, National and International Level

Gabriella Agrusti, João Caramelo, and Andrea Ciasca Marra

Abstract

This chapter considers the European framework of policies for inclusion, illustrating how those are translated into practices a national and local level. It offers a rich and yet necessarily partial appreciation of some of the most highly respect projects funded by the Erasmus+ programme. They read as success stories and a possible path for further developments. Finally, the point of view of local administrators and educators on the possible impact of the policy and resulting project initiatives is presented, proposing a snapshot of lessons learned in the eyes of stakeholders.

Keywords

Europe · Inclusion · Erasmus+ · Policy · Best practices · Administrators · Impact · Vulnerable adults

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1 A Framework for EU Policies of Inclusion

At its dawn, in the period after WWII, and within the framework of the European Economic Community (EEC), scarce reference in the official documents and a lack of institutional means contributed to a situation in which social issues were addressed as a single way to the ultimate end of economic integration of the Member States.

Only during the 1980's, in the aftermath of the oil crisis and a profound economic recession, and the 1990's, with the definition of a European Social Model did these issues became central in the European political agenda i.e. there was an interest in considering the spill over effects between the economic and social issues. In this subject, the European Single Act, in 1986, represented a turning point, promoting the need of common European policy and objectives concerning social and economic cohesion and the diminution of regional asymmetries, and the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992, was a milestone of the then recently created European Union, addressing the political and economic integration within the promotion of a social Europe model.

But, mostly, it's with the Amsterdam Treaty, in 1999, and later the Nice Treaty, that European Union defines as a central goal for its social policies the eradication of social exclusion, to be

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assumed either by European institutions or at the national level by the Member States.[1]

The new century begins with the Lisbon Strategy (2000) asserting that during the next decade Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy of the world, aiming either at a sustainable economic growth and an increasing social cohesion.

Within this framework, benefiting from social dialogue and a wider and stronger participation of civil society through the Open Method of Coordination, it is stressed that employment, social protection, fight against social exclusion, health care and the access to higher levels of qualifications in education and training should constitute a beacon for all European policies, updating what became known as the European Social Model. The inclusion of economic growth and employment within the scope of a knowledge economy has contributed to put education and learning, specifically lifelong learning, in the spotlight of European policies and programs.

In the context of a new global economic recession, the end of the decade sees the emergence of the new European Strategy 2020 with the purpose of boosting a "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" with a particular focus in employment, poverty reduction and social inclusion, to be achieved through "activation policies" namely involving lifelong education and training processes. The Strategy represented a shift in the way social inclusion (now, an "active inclusion") policies were addressed by the European institutions, and the citizens' responsibility and accountability for their "social fate" became a new mantra, while the State role, of each Member State, as a provider and guarantee of social rights faded way.

2 Translating Policies into Action

A specific attention in the EU policies has been devoted to young and young adults. This confirms the primary goal of the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027,[2] devoted to create opportunities for participation to young people in the society and labour market. Even if tackling poverty and exclusion deriving from it seems to be the main target of strategies applied at national and local level with specific national youth policies, it is worth considering also the lines of funding in Erasmus+ Key Actions that offer a lively overview of the best experiences at international level. With a budget of EUR 14.7 billion for the period 2014–2020, it provides opportunities for over four million people through formal and non-formal learning, transnational mobility, exchange of good practices, volunteering, and solidarity.[3] The actions carried out thanks to E+ funding address issues related to or derived from unemployment, economic and forced migrations, digital divide, climate change consequences, and many more. Specifically, priorities are inclusion and diversity (ranging from disabilities to cultural differences), digital transformation (devoted to the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem across Europe), the environment and the fight against climate change (promoting the European Green Deal growth strategy) and the participation to democratic life of all its citizens.[4]

Project formats are not limited to mobility, which was in the very original nature of E+, and they include European Voluntary Service, and transnational Youth initiatives, the format of Strategic partnerships, that supports directly the implementation of policies, joining together stakeholders, i.e. experts in the field considered, educational institutions and marginalised target groups. Even if, across European countries, it is frequently the use of combined funding opportunities that can make a difference (e.g. European Social Fund, Regional Operational Programme of the European Regional Development Fund),

[1] See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/pt/sheet/60/

[2] Official Journal of the European Union, C 456, 18 December 2018, available at: EUR-Lex—C:2018:456:FULL—EN—EUR-Lex (europa.eu).

[3] For a complete list, see: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/priorities_2019-2024_en

[4] See: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme

Erasmus+ programme has gained a prominent position in promoting social inclusion programmes for young people. Thus, it is worth considering which is the impact of E+ project focused on inclusion of those who are socially or economically marginalised on the general topics.

The following paragraph offers an overview of the E+ Strategic Partnership programme (KA2) funded from 2014 to 2020. Following this general framework, few relevant examples of projects undertaken to address issues of social inclusion for vulnerable youth, migrants, women will be analysed in depth in order to consider the quality, the impact and the sustainability of educational interventions, both at informal and non-formal level, on adults and young adults. Finally, reflections on best practices and gaps still to be addressed will be explored.

3 Analysis of the Best Practices from E+ KA2 Projects (Years 2014–2020)

In the general framework of the Erasmus+ programme there are three actions: KA1—Learning mobility, KA2, Cooperation (divided into Partnerships for innovation and Partnerships for exchange of good practices), and KA3—Support for policy reform. Specifically, KA2 has two different approaches: a sectorial one, oriented to specific sectors only, and another cross-sectorial, aimed at fostering cooperation among different kind of institutions and organizations working in the field of education.

Strategic partnerships for exchange of good practices are "dedicated to creating or consolidating networks, to compare ideas, practices and methods" of existing outputs [1], whereas in Strategic partnership for innovation, a specific grant is provided for the realisation of innovative intellectual outputs.

Among the priorities of E+ there the youth policy priority of Social inclusion, promoted both by EU and CoE strategies for sustainable and inclusive growth and the promotion of human rights. Both organizations base their strategies on an appreciation of the multifaceted and complex nature of young people's social integration, as well as the significant threats that the economic crisis continues to present. Using the capacities of youth research, policy, practice, and young people's own agency, evidence-based policy can be developed to remove barriers.

From 2014 to 2020 were funded 24,814 projects in KA2 all over Europe and among these, 3645 encompass the word "inclusion" into the topic keywords.[5] For these projects, EU Grant awarded was on average of 160,300 Euros[6] and up to a maximum of approximately 450,000 Euros. Among projects on inclusion the predominant coordinating organization countries were Spain, France, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany (Fig. 1).

Data available on projects offered also a double indexing: the "good practices production" and the "success stories". Figure 2 shows the distribution of the projects that led to the production of good practices per typology of coordinating organization. Non-governmental organisation/association/social enterprise was the predominant typology of Coordinating organization, followed by higher education institutions (tertiary level).

Table 1 offers an overview of the projects funded from 2014 to 2019 filtered for the word "inclusion" in the keywords, detailing how many per year were labelled as "success stories". A total of 24 success stories projects were found.

Among these 24 projects, listed in detail in Table 2, 5 were related to a multicultural perspective and particularly relevant for the objectives pursued and the outcome produced. These five projects will be briefly presented and discussed.

[5] Data retrieved on May 23, 2022 from https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-projects-compendium_en

[6] The amounts represent the grant awarded after the selection stage and are indicative. Please note that any changes made during or after the project's lifetime are not reflected here.

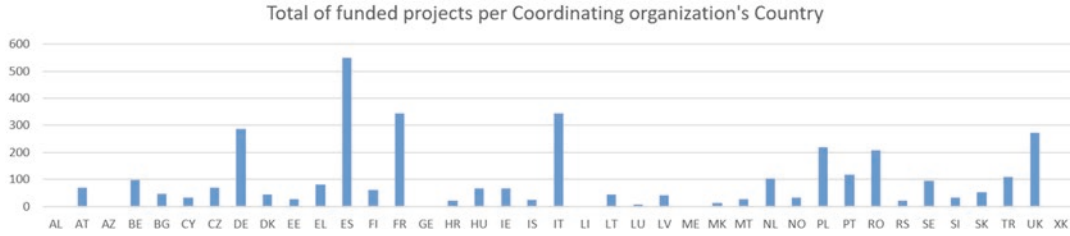

Fig. 1 E+ KA3 projects on inclusion per coordinating organization's country. $N = 3645$ projects

Fig. 2 E+ KA3 projects on inclusion per coordinating organization's typology. $N = 3645$ projects

Table 1 Number of funded projects with results available/success stories that have "inclusion" in the keywords per year

Call year	Results available	Results available + success stories	Total
2014	100	16	116
2015	155	5	160
2016	275	3	278
2017	436	–	436
2018	211	–	211
2019	10	–	10
Total	1187	24	1211

Table 2 Success stories among projects with results available that have "inclusion" in the keywords

Project identifier	Project title	Topics	Coordinator's country
2014–1-NO01-KA203–000426	Universal Design in Higher Education—Licence to learn	Access for disadvantaged; inclusion—equity; disabilities—special needs	NO
2014–1-IT02-KA204–003515	Valorize high skilled migrants	Overcoming skills mismatches (basic/transversal); inclusion—equity; labour market issues incl. Career guidance/youth unemployment	IT
2014–1-RO01-KA204–002910	European network of social economy initiatives for adults with disabilities-NO LIMIT	Inclusion—equity; gender equality/equal opportunities; disabilities—special needs	RO
2015–1-FR01-KA204–014905	L'ENCYCLOPEDIE DES MIGRANTS—Une grande entreprise pédagogique collective de partage d'expériences et de savoirs Sur le thème des migrations en Europe	Inclusion—equity; intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong) learning; new innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses	FR
2015–1-LT01-KA204–013404	Developing adult educators' competences to promote learners' life style entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial learning—entrepreneurship education; new innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses; inclusion—equity	LT
2014–1-AT01-KA202–000975	New didactical models for initial VET training of young disadvantaged persons to reduce drop out	Early school leaving/combating failure in education; inclusion—equity; pedagogy and didactics	AT
2014–1-NL01-KA200–001265	WelComm: Communication skills for integration of migrants	Access for disadvantaged; inclusion—equity; intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong) learning	NL
2014–1-RO01-KA201–002899	Wellbeing and inclusion for new educational resources	Health and wellbeing; inclusion—equity; regional dimension and cooperation	RO

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Project identifier	Project title	Topics	Coordinator's country
2014–1-CZ01-KA201–001988	Supporting social and emotional competences of pre-school children from disadvantaged or culturally different environments	Early school leaving/ combating failure in education; inclusion—equity; new innovative curricula/ educational methods/ development of training courses	CZ
2014–1-BG01-KA201–001555	Visual impairment social inclusion ON	Creativity and culture; disabilities—special needs; inclusion—equity	BG
2014–1-SK01-KA204–000437	Educational senior network	New innovative curricula/ educational methods/ development of training courses; international cooperation, international relations, development cooperation; inclusion—equity	SK
2014–1-DE02-KA204–001579	On the move—best practice in outreach educational counselling and low-threshold learning opportunities	Labour market issues incl. Career guidance/youth unemployment; inclusion—equity; key competences (incl. Mathematics and literacy)—basic skills	DE
2014–1-EL01-KA202–001576	Train intercultural mediators for a multicultural Europe	Inclusion—equity; new innovative curricula/ educational methods/ development of training courses; recognition, transparency, certification	EL
2016–1-AT01-KA202–016778	Improving assistance in inclusive educational settings	Quality improvement institutions and/or methods (incl. School development); disabilities—special needs; inclusion—equity	AT
2015–1-ES01-KA202–016010	CO-GAME collaborative cultural heritage video game creation	Creativity and culture; inclusion—equity; ICT—new technologies—digital competences	ES
2016–1-CZ01-KA202–024034	Teacher's training to the inclusion of the children of foreigners	Inclusion–equity; integration of refugees	CZ
2014–2-ES02-KA205–005484	"Educación en derechos Humanos, Circo social, Teatro Participativo: Un Modelo de Intercambio social"	Creativity and culture; inclusion—equity; new innovative curricula/ educational methods/ development of training courses	ES
2014–1-ES01-KA204–004808	Recycled & re-used clothing design through peer learning and social media	Disabilities–special needs; new innovative curricula/ educational methods/ development of training courses; inclusion—equity	ES
2014–1-AT01-KA204–000981	Active 80+: Valueing and valorizing the knowledge and skills of people 80+	Access for disadvantaged; health and wellbeing; inclusion—equity	AT

Table 2 (continued)

Project identifier	Project title	Topics	Coordinator's country
2014–1-PL01-KA204–002858	Key competencies for lifelong learning in education of seniors	ICT—new technologies—digital competences; inclusion—equity; intercultural/intergenerational education and (lifelong) learning	PL
2014–2-FR02-KA205–009246	MentorPower: Empowerment and social integration of migrant youth via integration into labor market using engagement mentoring	New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses; labour market issues incl. Career guidance/youth unemployment; inclusion—equity	FR
2015–1-ES01-KA204–015532	Lights on rights! A reflection focus to promote active citizenship of people with intellectual disabilities	Disabilities—special needs; inclusion—equity; access for disadvantaged	ES
2015–1-DK01-KA201–004340	Inclusion in Europe through knowledge and technology	Disabilities—special needs; inclusion—equity; pedagogy and didactics	DK
2016–1-RO01-KA201–024566	Nonformal activities for inclusive groups of students	Inclusion—equity; new innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses; early school leaving/combating failure in education	RO

4 Fives Success Stories and a 'Legacy'

The following five projects were flagged as "success stories" in the data repository offered by EACEA on the Erasmus+ funded projects from 2014–2020 among those that have already results available. They have different target groups: from adult migrants to their children, to low skilled adults educationally remote to those at risk of unemployment and are briefly presented here.

The Valorize project (2014–1-IT02-KA204–003515) focused on adult migrants with medium-high professional skills that were for various reasons prevented to participate to the Labour Market of a hosting country, or only marginally included in it with low positions and under skilled employments if compared to their qualifications. The project had a double strand of actions: on the one hand, improving the soft skills of migrants in presenting themselves by video CV and e-Portfolios, and on the other hand, assisting professionals, companies and employment agencies in enhancing migrant employability and inclusion. Furthermore, the project provides a guide to assess migrants' soft skills, i.e.: motivation, time management, managing responsibility, adaptability & flexibility, teamworking, service skills, communication skills, conflict management, problem solving, creativity & innovation, critical & structured thinking, and decision making.

The Encyclopaedia of migrants (2015–1-FR01-KA204–014905) gave birth to a transnational European cooperation project between nearby countries (Portugal, Spain, France and the British overseas territory Gibraltar) which aimed to combat social exclusion of migrants to the joint aid of skills and experiences of citizens, researchers, educators, artists and local public decision-makers. The idea of producing an encyclopaedia stems from the footsteps of the well-known Diderot and d'Alembert's one, and it represents an emblematic and political object,

intended to promote knowledge and fight obscurantism. However, the contents of this encyclopaedia are a collection of migrants' stories, sometimes handwritten, other times collected thanks to the art of photography and filming, or by other artistic means and documents that can provide a different narrative and perception in the collective imagination, producing a kaleidoscopic vision of migration. Too often the representations of migrants across Europe suffer from the simplification and repetition of the discourses, and do not allow recipients of these message to consider thoroughly "otherness". Thus, the Encyclopaedia of migrants is an artistic experimentation project initiated by Paloma Fernández Sobrino which produced an encyclopaedia containing approximately 400 testimonies of the life narratives of migrants based on a network of eight cities of the Atlantic side of Europe.

The WelComm: Communication Skills for Integration of Migrants (2014–1-NL01-KA200–001265) project was aimed at raising awareness of the importance of education for social inclusion of migrants from early age and promoting opportunities for equal start in education for migrant children in pre-primary and primary school age. At the same time, the project intended to raise awareness of the importance of education for social inclusion among migrant parents, reinforcing with innovative tools for non-formal language learning the capacities of migrant organisations and language educators to work with migrants. The project had a follow-up initiative oriented towards young students from 6 to 12 years of age. In this second phase board games and comic books were produced in order to help students to learn more about the history, nature and culture of their new homeland.

The On the move. Best Practice in Outreach Educational Counselling and low-threshold learning opportunities (2014–1-DE02-KA204–001579) project stems from the European Agenda for Adult learning (EAAL) and the comparative research on adult literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills (OECD PIAAC). Its aim was to enhance low skilled adults' participation to education opportunities, thanks to educational counselling devoted to reach those educationally remote. The project produced best practice examples, video interviews with staff and experts, oriented toward the implementation of alternative approaches to create a bridge between the educational offer and those in need of it.

The MentorPower: Empowerment and Social Integration of Migrant Youth via Integration into Labor Market Using Engagement Mentoring (2014–2-FR02-KA205–009246) project was aimed to developing a mentoring strategy specifically devoted to target young migrant's needs. The model of 'Engagement Mentoring' offers a 9-month program for migrant youth aged 16–25 to help their integration on the labour market. The mentoring strategy brought mentors from business, local authorities, and the education system, together with migrant youth in an interactive approach that can be transferred to a large number of scenarios and individuals.

Even if from different perspectives and with sensible different outcomes, the projects presented offer a coherent set of tools to support social inclusion at different levels and with various outputs. In this direction it is worth mentioning here also the experience, based on three different funded European projects, that brought to the LIDA project experience: LIBE, ADVENUS and REGAP projects.

The LIBE project (Supporting Lifelong Learning with Inquiry Based Education) was funded within the Lifelong Learning Programme by the European Commission in 2014–2015. The project aimed at designing, developing and trying out, in three different countries in Europe (Italy, Portugal, Norway), an innovative e-learning management system devoted to improving key information processing skills for ICT (literacy, numeracy and problem solving), with an inquiry-based approach to learning. The target group were low educational achievers aged 16–24. Six courses were developed, composed of 32 Multimedia Presentations and 125 Learning Objects.

The Advenus project (Developing On-line Training Resources for Adult Refugees) expanded on the LIBE results by including refugees in its target group and was funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The main goal was to improve and

expand the availability of high-quality, culturally sensitive open access e-learning resources to adult refugees, trainers, and teachers in EU countries. The resources were tested and validated to ensure that they were culturally sensitive to the needs of various refugee groups as well as the cultures of the new home countries. As a result, five courses were created and translated into five different languages.

The ReGap project (Reducing the Educational Gap for migrants and refugees in EU countries with highly relevant e-learning resources offering strong social belonging) aims to provide adult migrants and refugees of both genders in EU countries with high-quality, culturally sensitive open access e-learning resources. Based on findings from the United States and previous projects, it was clear that closing the education gap for migrants and refugees in European countries will increase their chances of finding work and social inclusion. The access to opportunities of education has be proven particularly challenging for the specific target group, that is highly heterogeneous and needed a clear change in teaching perspective and methods. This requires culturally and gender sensitive online learning activities that support in-person learning activities in the context of each European country.

With slightly different research groups, but based on a real 'legacy' of experienced core partner organizations, these projects have a common fil rouge that consist in the production of best practices realized through the systematic consultation of experts, stakeholders, and significant individuals that guided the construction of the outcomes and the pivotal decisions in the development of the activities. These consultations represent a core activity for LIDA project too and in the following paragraphs the voice of the privileged witnesses and leading figures on realizing the inclusion policies at different levels.

5 LIDA's Multiplier Events

The LIDA project participates in the European challenge to build an inclusive pedagogy that can address our diverse multicultural societies. An education focused on the need to smooth social differences, foster dialogue between cultures and integrate vulnerable minorities in Europe. The LIDA project addresses such a complex purpose from different angles. Its main interlocutors are the "vulnerable adult minorities"—including, but not limited to, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers—but also realities of the third sector—NGOs, Non-Profit, volunteer associations—and the institutions, both at central and local level.

As stated in the Activity Report: "A key premise in LIDA and the participants of IO1 multiplier events is that the accumulated knowledge possessed by different experts, policy makers, education and associated professionals and vulnerable adult minorities is distributed in multiple networks that are not always connected or shared—it can remain invisible and result in intended or unintended (structural) discrimination for those involved. In sum, they constitute a potentially shared fund of knowledge based upon skills and experiences in diverse contexts across different national and international borders and contexts that can be policy, professional, family and community based". Whereby funds of knowledge is implied: "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge" ([2]: 113) that are essential for individual and social wellbeing. Funds of knowledge imply funds of identity, another closely related working concept, describing how funds of knowledge are appropriated by individuals and communities who use them to "define, consider and express themselves" (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries. A report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022).

LIDA's first effort has been to build a frame of reference through a number of international Focus Groups. These multiplier events were designed to bring together professionals and institutions operating in the field of intercultural education to engage in an open dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of learning inclusion. The task of the events was to disseminate the LIDA project and stimulate a debate on the main axes of the project's intervention: vulnerable adult minorities education; active citizenship;

digital resources for learning inclusion; digital storytelling.

The focus groups helped to test the objectives of the LIDA Project—until then formulated in general terms—on the concrete national and local contexts, allowing the partners to understand which actions and outputs are primarily useful to the recipients of the project itself, but also to the schools, centres and organizations where they study, live or work. The chance to listen to the experience of those who work in the field was in this sense crucial. An opportunity to share knowledge and gather information that will serve as an operational base on which to structure the actions of the LIDA project, to identify good practices and to develop quality indicators.

6 The Main Questions in the Multiplier Events

The preliminary actions to set up these transnational focus groups started in the kick-off meeting of the project, held online on 18 March 2021. Each partner had the opportunity to choose how to organise the event, if digitally or face-to-face, depending on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. One common element, the participants were to be selected from three levels: governments and intergovernmental organisations; the education sector and public/private enterprises; educators and students belonging to the vulnerable adult minorities group.

Constituting the first target group of the project, institutional guests and policy makers were selected from the partner's professional and social networks and through an evaluation of the relevance of professional expertise, trying to ensure the characteristics required. Once invited to the focus group, the guests had to debate a number of core questions designed by the LIDA team as a basis for the data sets.

The first of these questions asked how do intergovernmental organizations and institutions at a local, national and European level support processes of inclusive teaching, intercultural education and active citizenship. Participants were invited to reflect on what kinds of policy debates and issues are the drivers of opportunities in the Partner's country, and on how is the wellbeing of cultural adult minorities considered in policies. Lastly, they were asked what are important resources to support learning inclusion and citizenship policies.

The overall task of such questions was to understand and assess how education policies changed over time, following the rapid evolution of our societies; what are the concrete supports to lifelong learning for those who live at the margins of society, including the available funds and incentives destined to their education. And, most of all, how effective all these policies are proving themselves to be, and if there is any special advice or any recommendation for the future based on experience.

Based upon these multiplier events, four reports were produced in each of the partner countries, presenting the findings of the transnational focus groups. An overall Report for the Activity summarized those findings through comparing and contrasting. The reflections of the participants and of the LIDA members are highlighted throughout the report and offer the basis to these pages.

7 The First Level Multiplier Events

Italy organized its Focus Groups in three sessions, one per each level. The institutional level meeting was held digitally on May 27, 2021. The participants acknowledged how, in recent years, the issue of social inclusion has posed new challenges to the Italian institutional system. This is particularly evident in the governance of migrations, a complex and shifting reality, whose numbers have grown dramatically. At different levels, the Italian institutional system has adopted policies to promote social inclusion, proposing experimental initiatives which proved themselves effective in various areas sensitive to integration processes. Faced with this complex reality, however, institutions have often responded in an untimely and belated manner. In particular, the participants in the seminar reported a lack of

"systemic actions"towards the integration of minorities and the promotion of active citizenship. This follows the indications of UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25th September 2015 [3], and in particular SDG4, with its focus on inclusion, equitable quality and lifelong learning.

In the last 30 years many principles of national legislation have addressed the issue of welcoming and developing good practices of coexistence and integration between different cultures. Truly inclusive education is recognized as an absolute priority in the integration process. Yet policies have not always been able to address satisfactorily the well-being of vulnerable adult minorities. The participants identified what can they described as a counterproductive attitude of the policies dedicated to the issue of migration. These are always characterized by a certain paternalism. In reality, as some participants noted, the very concept of vulnerability, so central to national and European policies, has been questioned and should be substantiated. Italian politics treats with a welfare attitude men and women who often have incredible paths behind them; existential journeys which have led them to develop formal and informal skills that are not even remotely comparable to those of a young Italian. This attitude results in what has been defined as an "inclusive exclusion", one of the major impediments to the creation of a productive learning environment [4].

The participants agreed that the collaboration between institutions and the territories is fundamental. The educational, training and sociocultural activities that deal with interculture and social inclusion involve a plurality of promoters: public and private schools; Local communities; non-profit organizations; the private sector. Such a plurality is important, but without a stable and coherent framework of reference, the extremely diverse territorial landscape becomes fragmented. In addition to this are the closely related problems of an excess of bureaucracy and slowness in the elaboration of institutional responses. In a sector such as that of policies for social inclusion, which is in continuous—and often very rapid—transformation, the risk of making interventions late and ineffective is indeed concrete. Another challenge, in Italy, therefore, consists in understanding how to cut the response times of the institutions, without abandoning a solid approach and rigorous controls.

The guests perceived as equally important the need to overcome the quantitative and emergency nature of Italian policies, in an attempt to transform the institutional initiatives into qualitative and structural responses. A qualitative and widespread approach should be stimulated, involving communities at the micro level, which is often the only one capable to create lasting and fruitful relationships between newcomers and inhabitants. It is therefore important to promote a widespread model of hospitality, which builds up communities, relationships and fosters the creation of common memories. It is the concept of a *lifewide learning* [5], that is to say a learning experience that takes place in various environments and situations both inside and outside the formal education system fostering an approach to learning founded upon connectivity [6].

The Norwegian team set up one single multiplier event to fit all the levels. The meeting was held online on 14 June 2021. All the participants were professionals from the public sector, employment and welfare agencies, local authorities and higher education institutions. When asked about the main debates on learning inclusion, the participants noted how, in the last years, policy debates focused on education and employment among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers flourished. In Norway these categories are widely perceived as the main victims of exclusion from society and therefore the first targets of policies for social inclusion. As the Norwegian report states "over the past decade, statistics show that "employment is distinctly lower for refugees (52,7%) than for the general population (72,7%)." (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries. A report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022).

The participants were concerned that national policies could not match either local conditions or the needs of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. As we read in the Activity Report: "adult

learners in Norway have often fallen between two stools: the attention to the role of the adults in society and employment on the one hand, and on the other hand attention to the individual, their sense of dignity and acknowledging their background and prior education. In theory, there seems to be a focus on the individual rights and needs of each adult learner, but this may sometimes contrast with the expectations of government plans and practices as regards becoming productive as quick as possible. In other words, there seems to be a discrepancy between intention and practice" (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries", A report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022).

Upon arrival, these are enrolled into an Introduction Programme, where they are required to follow a language course and courses on other subjects. This is meant to qualify them for further education or employment. As we read from the Norwegian Report: "the law puts a lot of pressure on the adult learners to quickly progress in their learning to prepare them for employment, whilst at the same time balancing their other roles as adults and perhaps not sufficiently regarding their background and mental baggage" (from the LIDA Internal Report of the Norwegian Multiplier Events). From 2017 on, a new reform grounded on module-based learning and a new curriculum was tested in parts of the country, to address the need for more flexibility for adult learners. This project will serve as a basis for a national reform from 2023, to restructure the adults' learning centres.

The migrants and refugees that arrive in Norway are quickly placed in a system of expectations with regards to the speed at which they should join the work market and be financially autonomous. For this reason, they are appointed a local sponsor from a non-profit organization to work as a mentor. It is nevertheless vital that the professionals from national employment and welfare agency (NAV) are given time to establish close ties to the adult learners, as this will enable them to coordinate and facilitate the integration of the adult learners: "We need an emphatic approach where a safe establishing of relations is the focus. The connection between us in NAV and the users forms an important foundation for how users perceive and relate to the public services in Norway" (from the LIDA Internal Report of the Norwegian Multiplier Events). The effort to increase financial transfers to volunteer organisations, such as the Red Cross, is also perceived as crucial to bolster their ability to play a part in the process, making sure that citizens and newcomers have an incentive to leave their home and participate in social events, helping both the language skills and the growth of a sense of community.

Lastly, the participants in the Norwegian Multiplier Events stressed the importance of digital competency for adult learners. Many refugees arrive in Norway lacking competency in digital technologies, many of them with little or no education in this field. While many Adult Learning Centres teach such courses, still there seems to be a certain difficulty in balancing language learning and social studies with digital competency and educators need more training on how to individually adapt digital learning strategies to the students' needs.

On June 28th 2021, the Portuguese partner organized the institutional focus group, mixing guests from local city councils with the director of a professional training centre for the textile industry. The discussion started acknowledging the existence of an appropriate legal framework, granted by the democratic Constitution, to foster and support inclusive learning and active citizenship through governmental policies. People belonging to groups which find themselves in situations of vulnerability seem to be effectively granted the necessary political attention. The Portuguese team brings as an example the laws concerning the social inclusion income, unemployment benefits, polices regarding lifelong learning and education, housing or employment. As it is written in the final report: "most of the policies and initiatives regarding social inclusion of all people, defined at the Global, European, National and even local level, look very good on paper"" (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries", A Report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022).

Yet, as reported, the participants agreed that much remains to be done, for instance, in terms

of the concrete implementation of fundamental human rights such as access to good education, health care, employment stability, affordable and decent housing and public transportation or sports and culture. Most of the times the lack of information, the difficulty to access support impedes the vulnerable adult minorities to obtain the needed care. The bureaucracy is also a major obstacle, and the strict criteria of eligibility seem to erect a barrier that separates the potential beneficiaries from most of those policies and initiatives. Lack of support and literacy are still responsible for social exclusion. If the potential beneficiaries are not already included in the networks of non-profit and NGO organizations, that represent the first level of intervention, those policies and initiatives hardly get translated into concrete facts. A mediator between policy makers and vulnerable minorities proves itself crucial to implement the opportunities offered by policies.

As in every other aspect of public and social life, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the situation. The local and territorial initiatives get closer to reality, and the professionals working with people in situations of vulnerability always play a key role in translating guidelines into facts. The participants noted how teachers and professionals working with people in vulnerable situations also play a critical role in helping them to develop cultural and gender sensitivity, resilience, and advocacy. This is the reason why a "proximal and integrated approach driven by local actors and professionals is necessary to scaffold empowerment and to guarantee decent living standards for all".

The British multiplier events took place 4 and 11 October 2021. They spread in six different sessions held online. For what concerns the institutional level, the British team first identified the key policy debates in Britain, concentrating on those around racism and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) experiences, disability and health related inequalities, socio-economic factors, equal access to technology, COVID-19 pandemic, gender and mental health.

In relation to such problems, the participants note that there has been a high number of dedicated policies, whose limit is nevertheless of being delivered with a top-down attitude. The participants agreed on the need to reverse such trend and include people from the start. It was also interestingly noted that there is a tendency to assume shared understanding of terms like inclusion/exclusion, but actually the view may differ from country to country. Currently the UK is struggling with the post-Brexit effects, that put the issue of inclusion to a difficult test. Racism and exclusion are still daily experiences in the UK and the inclusion and wellbeing of minorities must be a priority for British policy makers. As we can read in the report: "There is a discrepancy between how policies include people; and how people want to be included. In the UK we are struggling with our post-Brexit British identity, and whether/how we include people. Although in theory inclusion policies are advanced in UK, racism and exclusion is still a personal experience. The challenge is how to include minorities from within the UK as well as minorities from other countries" (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries", A Report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022).

The concept of wellbeing is instinctively related to health issues, but education is a key element of wellbeing, and a major driver of inclusion. Paradoxically, the pandemic has increased our awareness of wellbeing in its broadest sense, fostering a wider discussion. The participants agree that understanding what is meant by 'wellbeing' is also crucial. An individualistic interpretation, focused on the wellbeing of the self and not on that of the community, may end up leaving vulnerable groups are even more stranded and isolated. The importance of wellbeing as a relational concept must therefore be stressed.

Another pressing issue is that of digital inclusion. Again, the pandemic helped UK institutions and policy makers understand how pressing the issue of access and digital divide is. Too many continue to be digital bystanders. Digital technologies can "foster the idea of sharing, reaching out and gaining the attention of a wider audience, facilitating the blending one culture with another. They can also bring a non-geographical commu-

nity to dispersed minority groups, facilitating the sharing of cultural inheritance and traditions". The LIDA Project recognizes the ability to develop individual and shared voices through digital storytelling as key empowerment tool in a learning environment. Access was therefore recognized as a major issue by the participants, who agreed that European institutions must face the challenge of overcoming geographical as well as social and financial barriers to the reach of digital technologies.

8 Lessons Learned from the Stakeholders

The LIDA international multiplier events hosted lively and dense discussions. As we read in the report, the views shared by participants in the multiplier events "are in no way meant to suggest that specific views can be connected with the views of a whole country, culture or a group. Moreover, it is not always clear that a statement belongs to a specific participant in a country, culture or group and this is deliberate in order to maintain anonymity. In terms of methodology there has been no attempt to recruit multiplier participants as part of a randomised sample" (Learning inclusion and active citizenship: views from four European countries", A Report from the LIDA Erasmus+ project dated 19 April 2022). Yet they offer a record of impressions by groups of established professionals, and therefore they significantly helped putting the LIDA project on track.

Nearly all the participants emphasize that in a changing Europe, there is a need for focusing on and firmly establishing inclusion and citizenship for marginalized groups. Language, culture, digitization, health and socio-economic factors are some of the areas in which exclusion happens and where inclusion can and should happen—given well-targeted and designed policies, initiatives, tools and cooperation on the three levels of authorities and transnational organisations, education sector and private enterprises and vulnerable adult learners and their educators. In order to bridge the divide that seems to exist between vulnerable groups and society at large, the systems that are in place to aid and assist need a greater level of efficiency and less bureaucracy. Moreover, the need for general public access to technology and the Internet may be considered a human right and must therefore be a focal point in the setting up and implementation of national policies.

Debating the effectiveness of European policies, they nearly everywhere agreed that though they all point to the right direction, nevertheless still share the same danger: to be administered with a top-down attitude. And a consequent challenge: to give a voice to the voiceless recipients of those policies. A bottom-up attitude must therefore be promoted in order to balance the vertical nature of those policies, offering a chance for the fulfilment of their potential. This means fostering an idea of learning based on co-developing patterns of knowledge [7] and on a co-creative pedagogy seen as "advancing the mutual exchange of knowledge between various actors in an educational setting" [8].

Many strategies were suggested by the professionals involved in the debates. The first was the need to value the past of the socially excluded. This is particularly evident in the case of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. From the point of view of education, the growing presence of adults and young adults who have a direct or family history of migration is a common fact of our schools, both public and private. Upon arrival, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are treated with a welfare attitude and sent to undertake language courses as the first step of the social integration process. And yet these students don't just have different language backgrounds, but also different cultural backgrounds which must be considered and assigned a value. And, most importantly, they have different education, formal and informal knowledge and skills that should indeed be recognized.

Another challenge consists in overcoming what has been defined as the paternalistic nature of European policies. An attitude whose traces may be retrieved in the very concept of vulnerability, that assumes the passive nature of the subject. Policy makers should never assume the

inability to act and to choose of the subjects to whom their policies apply. It is important to consider these subjects as capable of proposing solutions in their turn, that is as "actors", actively contributing to the co-construction of the learning experience. If we want to talk about inclusion, we should give migrants a voice and begin to understand and put to value the wealth of knowledge and experience they have accumulated before and on their journey to Europe. Giving full consideration to the guidelines proposed by UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal n. 4 on inclusive education and lifelong learning United Nations [3].

In a complex landscape, filled with growing barriers, the COVID-19 emergency has further complicated things, imposing accelerations and recalibrations at the institutional level. In particular regarding digital access. Technology, though not comparable to direct face to face interaction, has proven itself essential to keep bonds alive during the health emergency. As noted above, the health emergency has intensified what was already occurring: the weaving of digital technologies into every fibre of our existence. Social and digital inclusion can and must go hand in hand with empowerment and active citizenship and the digital divide, engine of social exclusion, represents another frontier on which institutions must continue to invest, for the sake of social inclusion in general.

Lastly, all the reports stress the importance of a virtuous collaboration between institutions and the territories, as well as the importance of the human, empathetic factor in fostering inclusive education. It is at the local level that policies and recipients finally meet. A crucial level, managed by the realities of the third sector—NGOs, nonprofit and volunteer associations—who work in direct contact with the local communities. These are often small realities, that carry on with their hard work within complicated regulatory systems, despite the lack of systemic policies and the general excess of bureaucracy. This is where things start to turn for the vulnerable adult: the contact is less cold and life begins to change thanks to empathy as well as to various initiatives that affect everyday life, providing practical answers with a pragmatic attitude. This is where the learning experience gets activated, and its actors can be involved in a life wide experience that ultimately fostering autonomy and wellbeing.

9 Conclusion

In spite of being extremely difficult to grasp the complexity of the issues that Europe is facing and at the same time, taking into account the strategies put in place to face them, it is possible anyway to draw some preliminary conclusions on the basis of the data presented in this chapter, related to the comparison between policy level, projects funding level and with respect to the opinions and beliefs of the stakeholders and operators involved in the actions.

The projects and experiences presented shows a wide variety of methodological approaches to carry out different activities at the global and the local context at the same time. However, the frailty and specificity of certain contexts and issues appears to be better tackled with qualitative research methods and related interventions, or at least with a mixed approach.

Valuing the past of the learners, especially when they came from a disadvantaged group, represents the keystone and the starting point not only for successful trainings, but also for a more conscious consideration of learners' individuality, with a specific reference to a culturally responsive teaching [9]. This constitutes the unavoidable assumption of a "circular pedagogy", that includes both the hosted and the hosting, creating a loophole and reinforcing opportunities to access and growth of different target groups.

Inclusion of marginalized group appears to be a high priority in EU, and this is strongly reaffirmed at every level presented in this contribution. Nevertheless, the idea that a significant change can be produced only concentrating on the disadvantaged groups is limited, as the possibility to produce a significant improvement is linked to the involvement of all the actors, to rebuild a sense of belonging in evolving contexts.

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Towards Wellbeing-Ness as an Experience of Inclusion, Belonging and Voice in a Digital (Post-Covid) World of Global Change

Stephen Dobson and Pip Hardy

Abstract

This chapter considers what it means to learn and create personal and shared experiences of wellbeing-ness, where inclusion, belonging and finding a voice are defining moments. Only a few years ago this might have been understood in terms such as social and emotional learning (SEL), but now the buzz word globally and especially in a country such as New Zealand is 'wellbeing'. The challenge is twofold: firstly, how to conceptualise and practice wellbeing-ness in a more digitally informed COVID world, such as through digital storytelling and, secondly, how to assess and put a value on it and, in so doing, show how a taxonomy of the emotions might support an understanding of inclusion.

Keywords

Wellbeing · Wellbeing-ness · COVID · Digital storytelling · New Zealand · Emotions · Generalised trust · Norway: Learning loss

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For many years to come, learning to live with COVID or dreaming of a post-COVID world will be characterised by a key experience. The one that comes to mind is that of collective liminality. The term is familiar in the field of anthropology, where it depicts an in-between zone or state of being, transitioning between the known and familiar, through the open and unpredictable, to a 'new normal' with its own set of norms. We find liminality in many places in the transition from carbon-constrained to carbon-free or in the shift from commercial to social imperatives.[1] In the field of sociology this was classically discussed by Durkheim [1] as a state of *anomie*, when societal norms had weakened or broken down. His view was that it was a source of great anxiety, and we too are aware of how many have felt excluded financially, socially and not least, existentially, from a predictable experience of inclusion, wellbeing and belonging. For some to even have a minimal level of stable digital connectivity remains an issue, while for others, the move from face-to-face or blended face-to-face social interaction has been, at times, overwhelming in unforeseen ways. The unpublished poem below by Dobson anticipates the themes in this chapter, where a person's story is akin to a book:

uncounted yesterdays and tomorrows
would you like to exchange for a human book?

[1] Suggested in conversation with Andrew Jackson from Victoria University of Wellington. Accessed6 Nov 2021

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sharing stories wrapped in seaweed
unique first editions time stamped
we live in hope running our finger along
the forget me knot forgotten.

For some writers [2] the wider digital issue is one that pre-dates COVID experiences, namely the *disruption* it has caused in many walks of life. In education in particular, it is characterised by the move from digitising (e.g. the pen and paper version to copying it in a digital equivalent) to digitalising (e.g. the pen and paper version is re-contextualised in a different, multimodal version). The last mentioned is most clearly seen in the move to using computer-adaptive teaching and learning with personalised feedback and assessment based upon the individual's constantly changing level of attainment. This relies upon computer algorithms that have been written to offer numerous branches or levels for students to follow as their knowledge and skills develop. Of course, it could be argued that it is almost impossible to write such algorithms able to capture all the possible permutations of personalised learning. Yet the Australian online national assessment program 'is now a tailored test that adapts to student responses, presenting students with questions that may be more or less difficult—resulting in better assessment and more precise results.'[2] However, Hogan and Sellar [3] have warned that if this approach spreads to all areas of education we might increasingly face a situation where teachers require fewer qualifications and teacher registration bodies set fewer qualification standards. Such de-professionalisation is a spectre faced in many other occupations as artificial intelligence (AI) makes inroads.

On a more positive note, McCallum et al. [4] suggest that while the digital has resulted in *disruption* to traditional teaching and learning, it is important to focus on how students have started to learn not in spite of digital *distractions,* but because of them. As they put it:

> One of the constant challenges in education is keeping the learner engaged, motivated and connected in a world increasingly filled with distractions. Social media, streaming TV and video games all compete for students' increasingly fragmented attention.

Inspired by the video games, it is clear that learning can be fun and another important element of an experience that deserves closer examination, that is, –flow" [5]. Gamers (athletes, too) experience this flow state when totally engaged in the game. Living in the moment and the experience, the activity is effortless and there is no sense of time passing.

Students can also experience flow, and this is when learning is at its most productive. So, the challenge is to plan and deliver online education so that this level of engagement is attained and (hopefully) encountered on a regular basis. The key lies in the definition of distraction. Screen learning must involve distracting students towards the things that really matter. In education, as in gaming, rather than admonishing learners for not focusing when sitting at desks in school or in front of screens, we should work within our distracted world. We need to play with distraction, work with distraction and learn with distraction. Paradoxically, distraction may not be the enemy, it could be the gateway to more attentive learning.

Concerning liminality, Pendergast and Dobson [6] similarly highlighted how its experience was apparent for youth who are particularly vulnerable when their rites of passage, daily routines, milestones and traditions were repeatedly disrupted, postponed or cancelled by COVID. Such experiences are crucial personal and collective cultural markers for ongoing wellbeing. The point raised was that youth faced the loss of important and valued shared stories to remember in the years to come. They would as a consequence, risk feeling more excluded than included in society. Pendergast and Dobson suggested this might even have an effect on their brains. In their words:

[2] https://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment. Accessed 16 Oct 2021

> The adolescent years, known as the second sensitive period of brain development, are important because this is when shaping of the brain occurs in earnest, in response to the unique environmental experiences of the individual [7].

This process of synaptic pruning, which starts with the onset of puberty and continues for at least the next 5 years results in unused connections being removed, while those that are used are strengthened and "hard wired" with a coating of a substance called myelin.

Memory and processing are enhanced and there is a heightened vulnerability to risk-taking and sensitivity to mental illness because of the intense brain shaping under way. The spectre looms of brains shaped by unmet expectations, disrupted routines, missed significant events, ongoing anxiety, fear and stress about what may be ahead the next day, week, month or year. Neuroscience points to such experiences as paving the way for lifelong reduced outcomes, such as poorer health, lowered educational achievement and the loss of optimism, hope and wellbeing [8].

In connecting with the concept of liminality—the transition from the familiar to the unfamiliar—with unmet expectations, the potential for storytelling to harness a new kind of story emerges from within the liminal space to offer a possible panacea to aid healing and create optimism for the future. This book is about exactly this power of stories, the skills to tell them and how this can create a foundation to support cultures of inclusion and experiences of belonging and wellbeing.

In other chapters authors explore in more detail how our individual narratives tell of the personal, the family and eventually contribute to collective memory when they are not *erlebniss* (lived empty time of repetitive experiences (e.g waiting for the daily bus), but *erfahrung* of non-repeatable or transformational experiences (e.g. a birth in the family or an accident) [9]. The art of telling and engaging in storytelling allows us to experience humanity. Stories are fundamental to our growth and empathy, building resilience and wellbeing, and serving as catharsis and release. There are many different kinds of stories: stories of traditions; place-based stories; those that focus on respect for different world-views and diversity; trauma and catastrophe stories, when we are challenged by events and crises; stories of health and illness, love and loss, hope and joy, of care and carelessness; personal stories of trauma; stories of uncertainty and dilemmas; community stories that enable collective remembering and global planetry stories to save earth in a time of pollution and carbonisation.

We are reminded of the famous and yet often forgotten dialogue between two imaginary refugees who meet in Europe in WWII. They had a series of conversations. The creator of these characters was Bertolt Brecht [10], whose work was published in 1956 in German and not in an English translation until 2019:

> "You could say: disorder is when nothing is in the right place.
> Whereas order is when the right place has nothing at all."
> "These days, you tend to find order where there isn't anything.
> It's a symptom of deprivation.

For Brecht, refugees in flight lived in a world where all meaning has been emptied or, more correctly, all the meaning to which they had been accustomed was discounted, lost and abandoned. Quite simply, all around them was the lived experience and space of the liminal. In these conversations Brecht created a safe place, where the two refugees and the readers could feel at ease, looking forward to each new episode in these conversations, even though the world around was unstable. In a strange turn of events Brecht seems to rescue us from the abyss of meaninglessness, offering us a sense of well-being, even if it is of a fleeting character resting in the form and content of these conversations. The stories of refugees are not owned by a single person. They connect with stories of nomads, wanderers and migrants. But they also connect with inhabitants who are sedentary as they too search for stability and meaning where there appears to be none.

There are also many ways of telling stories that have developed over centuries ranging from the oral tradition and including novels, plays, opera, painting, sculpture, photography, film and, toward the end of the twentieth century, digital stories.

In what follows, we shall look at the experience of COVID in our digital world, the shocks it created and how it continues to threaten inclusion and belonging for so many. Thereafter, we will ask how we might understand and conceptualise wellbeing. Finally, we will move to ask and answer the question, how can we measure wellbeing in a digital world? A key argument will be that it is not enough to identify indicators of wellbeing. Even though this is important, we must also look to wellbeing as an experience, what we choose to call wellbeing-ness. The skills and experience of digital storytelling are an important way of disseminating experiences of wellbeing-ness. This will be taken up in more detail in other chapters in this book.

1 The Shock of Exclusion and Non-belonging

Let us begin with the example of Norway, which on one level is a country not too dissimilar to other countries in terms of the effects of COVID changing the way they have lived. On another level, three events have provided shocks to education in particular, and in more general terms to the personal and shared wellbeing of the population in and outside school settings.

In the early 2000s PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests arrived and it became an international yearly exercise to chastise or praise teachers and students for their performance in the use of reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. Norway discovered it was not cleverer than all its neighbours and that Finland was the global front runner in this respect. As Sahlberg [11] has commented, Finnish education has been characterised by some key ideas in addition to the collective raising of professional skills amongst all teachers. Namely:

> Regular recess and physical exercise are crucial for substantial learning. Small data can often be more effective than big data for achieving big changes. Enhancing equity is an essential component of improving quality of education outcomes.

From the turn of the century the ritual of praising or chastising teachers and students for their performance began in earnest in Norway, but also across the world when new results were released. For some teachers and students, the announcements denoted moments when they felt that they were no longer included in society or the education system. Put differently, as teachers they felt abandoned and let down by some politicians, policy makers and parents, with a continual pressure to perform better. For students there was the feeling that they were in some way letting down their teachers and also their parents.

The image below (Fig. 1) appeared in a national daily in Norway (30.11.16), the teacher saying, ‘knowledge is power’ and the caption to the cartoon was ‘Help! Now our children are smarter than us.’[3] The reason was that Norwegian children were outperforming other children in the Nordic countries in mathematics.

The second shock occurred on the 22nd of July 2011. 77 youth and adults were killed when a Norwegian undertook a terrible massacre on a single summer afternoon. The then Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said the following, ‘it was one Norway before and one after the 22nd of July.’ All in the country were included in the shared feeling of sorrow after the event. There was not a sense of exclusion and non-belonging. It was the opposite, and all felt touched. In the months that followed the missed opportunities to slow and stop the attacker on that tragic day were considered and publicly debated. The immediate sense of an overwhelmingly inclusive sorrow and collective belonging could not last. It was not that Norwegians felt they did not include all, it was more that the intensity of the emotion of total inclusion could not be sustained.

Other emotions surfaced, such as disappointment and even *ressentiment*[4] that the perpetrator

[3] In the original, ‘Hjelp! Nå blir ungene smartere enn oss.’ https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/o0BJm/hjelp-naa-blir-ungene-smartere-enn-oss

[4] A term associated with Nietzsche denoting the hoarding up of resentment rather than living it out and being done with it [12].

Fig. 1 Newpaper cartoon in Norwegian daily. The text reads Knowledge is Power (Kunnskap er makt)

had not been caught before the event. Moreover, Norwegians needed to understand how one of their own had committed these terrible acts. Seierstad's [13] *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway* looked to the perpetrator's upbringing, self-isolation and his gradual movement to the dark side of the web. He suffered from a narcissistic personality disorder and a mixture of self-rage and pity.

It is worth recalling how Sartre [14] famously described a dialectical process where a group can move in pendulum fashion between a serial group entity (individuals regarding themselves as individuals in competition with others) to a group as collective (group-in-fusion) and the reverse. For him the key factor in forming the group as a collective group was an external threat to the group that unified and strengthened their shared sense of purpose and equality. The evidence he identified was not psychological tests or experiments, but an understanding of history and the French Revolution. The revolutionaries were able to collectively act as a group-in-fusion facing a shared outer-threat—as a result they stormed the Bastille. However, in the following years this sense of group we-ness broke down and members of the group began to fear and mistrust each other. We must be careful; Norwegians did not mistrust each other in the sense implied by Sartre. Yet, it is worth noting the strength of an overwhelming inclusive sense and emotion of inclusion is difficult to sustain. We will return to the point on trust in due course.

In the philosophical tugs and pulls between Sartre and his one-time close friend Merleau-Ponty we find this understanding of we-ness and inclusion is played out differently. The early work of Sartre in his novels and *Being and Nothingness* (1984) [15] struggles with the existential understanding of motivation and that it is to be measured and assessed by the individual and all they are worth. In his later work on dialectical reason and revolutions he talks of the moments of collective we-ness that intersperse what is fundamentally still the fall back to the responsibility of the individual to make choices and assessments about historical and equally important daily moments and how to act in a manner true to oneself. In other words, throughout the work of Sartre there is a tacit understanding that motivation is ultimately a question for the individual and to what extent they are or are not motivated by the ways or external threats faced by the group.

Merleau-Ponty's view is different. Our motivations and sense of connected inclusion is paramount and always to be experienced through our bodies and how they position us with and through others to undertake actions, use language and make assessments and evaluations. Merleau-Ponty [16] introduced the term *chiasm* and by this he meant the shared inter-corporeal space of bodies, signs (signifier, signified) and history working together and giving rise to corporeal experiences of touched-touching, seen-seeing, speaking-spoken to, feeling-felt and so on. A good example of this is the handshake or the con-

versation. In the former, who is touching and who touched is indivisible. So too in a conversation, where the moment of speaking is indivisible with respect to listening, as the speaker also listens to their own voice and listens to how they are heard and received by the other.

With Merleau-Ponty's approach in mind we arrive at the view that understanding the individual, in this case Norwegians, is inevitably interwoven with others and the group; in what is a web of inter-connectedness. We are anticipating what will be a central point later in this chapter. Namely, that inclusion and wellbeing are as much corporeal and emotional experiences of connection, as they are the result of an individual's learning and acting to support civic and community obligations founded upon a reasoned rationality for civic participation and belonging. *Lockdown* [17] is a digital story created by a Norwegian citizen that touches on all these dimensions of the individual, including that of civic trust: https://www.patient-voices.org.uk/flv/1288pv384.htm

We have looked at two shocks, one in education and one in society. Now we can move to consider one more closely related to the topic of this book. In 2020 the shock of COVID reached Norway and the world. Nobody escaped what appeared to be its largely invisible hand. On one level, all were included in its reach, despite the way in which it was expressed in different ways: health systems differed in their ability to meet the needs of those affected; not all could earn a wage when many companies or businesses had to close temporarily or permanently; and schools, universities and early childhood kindergarten had to learn to teach online or at a distance for weeks or months on end. People were differentially affected based upon age, socio-economic background, cultural background. access to stable Internet and so on.

Moreover, in Norway and other Scandinavian countries there was another shock connected with COVID. Namely, the erosion of generalised trust whereby all could previously take it as given that society and the welfare state would look after all equally well and all would feel included and experience a shared sense of belonging in the country. This is the sense that an individual belongs to a moral community of like-minded others:

> It is a general outlook on human nature and *mostly* [emphasis in the original] does not depend on personal experiences or upon the assumption that others are trustworthy" [18].

Acknowledging that it is a complex debate as regards measuring generalised trust [19], the point we are making here is that COVID threatened our sense of what it means to belong to a moral community based upon shared trust in particular strangers or people we do not know. Sweden adopted fewer lockdowns than its neighbours and generalised trust was arguably weakened to a greater degree. Throughout the world the level of generalised trust was weakened in general. Political and policy debates about how to rebuild this trust was connected with those reluctant to take vaccines for different reasons and the need to reopen the domestic and international economies to generate sorely needed revenue, employment and a sense of wellbeing.

Globally COVID was the source of shocks as all attempted to maintain and/or build cultures of wellbeing characterised by inclusion and belonging. In education in particular many children did not have access to normal face-to-face learning and teachers had to develop online teaching skills and approaches, while educational authorities similarly had to scramble to create resources. There was great anxiety that not all children had equal access to good teaching, reliable internet or educational resources adapted to online delivery. As Warburton et al. [20] highlighted, developing engaging online teaching is a key imperative so students remain motivated and do not become digital bystanders.

> (...) we can start to identify a series of approaches on a spectrum from simple technological substitution to more radical redefinitions of teaching. In this model of substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition,[5] we tend to find many educators remain firmly rooted in using technology to replace what they already do in the classroom. As a result, the human essence of the teaching experi-

[5] See https://www.powerschool.com/resources/blog/samr-model-a-practical-guide-for-k-12-classroom-technology-integration/. Accessed 3 Oct 2021

> ence is lost when mediated[6] via a digital interface... An example here might be the distribution of electronic class notes to replace the course textbook. The result is a learning setting that's clunky compared to the day-to-day user experience of the internet.

We need to 'design for the online' as Stone [21] has argued. This means to change existing situations into preferred ones. Even though there is no global template for designing for online learning, it can no longer be the sole responsibility of the teacher or the online designer working in the resource division of a ministry of education. Instead, each time we come together—the teacher, student, technologist—we form a new community with a shared discourse. This suggests a reflective and democratic space that allows us to act with consideration and respect for the skills and knowledge of others. We must consider the skills, insights and needs offered by each. The end goal is a seamless and frictionless user experiences of a social internet. In summary, the educational endeavour in a COVID world would in a normative sense be inclusive of all parties. Some might even say it must be user friendly to parents who are, willingly or unwillingly, required to take on the role of home teachers for their children who cannot attend school for long periods.

Involving students and seeking to listen to their views on learning must not be taken to mean giving them total freedom to learn as they wish. Such a policy can actually lead to many not actually learning and the generation of inequalities and lower inclusion in learning. Well before the arrival of digital learning and the situation of today with many having experienced classroom learning via a digital screen and a teacher at a distance, there are lessons from earlier times on this point. Let us turn once again to Norway for a lesson in the risks of freedom to learn policies.

In 1994, Norway launched an educational policy entitled *Reform94* [22]. The goal was to give teenage students more control of their own learning. The policy focused on providing students with regular time for self-directed learning. The national evaluation [23] found that while stronger students had sufficient inner motivation, those needing more support were not well-equipped to control their own learning and manage their own motivation.

Policies such as these are not just a thing of the past. Indonesia, in an attempt to break with an education system known for rote learning from 2019 onwards has introduced a suite of policies known as "*Merdeka Belajar*" movement, or "Freedom to Learn" [24]. As an example, *Sekolah Penggerak* (Initiator Schools) are encouraged to collaborate with schools and teachers to promote progressive learning practices and a customisation of students' experiences, instead of learning everything by sheer memorisation. The spectre of Norway's experience looms in the shadows as a warning, exacerbated by COVID teaching and learning at a distance. Many Indonesian teachers have had limited training in giving students full learning responsibilities within a normal classroom, never mind in an online environment. They found it even more challenging to assess whether students have been learning.

In summary, the argument we are making is that Norway, like many other countries, has experienced a number of shocks in recent history. The last one is COVID-related and, for education, this meant the fear that students would not learn as much as students prior to COVID. The phrase coined to encapsulate the educational shocks has been *learning loss*. Even though the term learning loss is somewhat challenging linguistically (– you have to normally have had something before you can lose it), Engzell et al. [25] contend 'learning loss was most pronounced among students from disadvantaged homes.' In other words, the disadvantaged from before are further disadvantaged because their internet was less reliable, they had fewer home devices to access learning resources, and parents were not as well-prepared or experienced to support child learning.

In the next section, we will consider how to conceptualise well-being with a particular focus on what it means for inclusion and belonging. In other chapters in this book, we contend that a key component is that of growing digital story telling skills to offer students and teachers a tool to

[6] See http://seminar.net/images/stories/vol2-issue2/review_remediation_dobson.pdf. Accessed 3 Oct 2021

reflect upon and make meaning of their learning experiences. To avoid repetition, we will not cover the importance of storying other than to cite Benjamin's [26] comment, which in our view still rings true in many senses, even though he was talking of the shock of the World War I and we are talking of the shock of COVID:

> At the end of the war men returned from the battlefield grown silent — not richer, but poorer in communicable experience.

2 Conceptualising Wellbeing Characterised by Inclusion and Belonging

If we ask the reader to reflect for a moment on how they understand wellbeing, they might highlight it in personal terms, professional terms connected with work or even in social terms connected with family and friends. If we look at how it is understood in the world of schooling the terminology we often come across is social and emotional learning. Teachers might teach students about it in mandatory health programs for teenagers in schools.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) as a concept has been around for some years. Some trace it to the 1960s and the founding of the Comer School Development Program, where low socio-economic elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut trialed and adopted a focus upon meeting the social and emotional needs of predominantly low socio-economic students. Today resources in SEL are collected in CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)[7] with five key focal points: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Schools can use this framework to direct their practice and policy on anti-bullying, (excessive) digital game play, temperaments, friendships, relationships at home or in the surrounding home environment. Social and emotional experiences of the individual students are targeted and how these might impact on a sense of belonging, inclusion and finding a voice. As an example, consider how anti-bullying might draw implicitly or explicitly upon social and emotional learning so that not only the perpetrators or victim(s) of bullying, but also those who witness it as spectators can be encouraged to demonstrate responsible decision making and intervene. When this occurs peer bystanders are encouraged to find their voice and make a stand for inclusion and belonging. Originating in Finland the successful and increasingly global KiVa[8] project has highlighted this [27, 28]. Returning to an earlier point, the goal is to create a sense of *we-ness* (group-in-fusion) or acknowledgement of the *chiasm* of membership in an interwoven social collective recognising others as valid members.

The same principles are at work in cyberbullying when perpetrators ensure that bystanders are able to view their attempt to attack others. If those viewing intervene and refuse the peer bystander role responsible decision making has been actioned and the other components of the CASEL framework are brought into play: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills. Of course, the challenge in cyberbullying is that a teacher is not always present to resist and stop it. Other forms of bystander intervention are required, such as the owners of the digital platform working with national/international regulatory bodies. President Emmanuel Macron of France and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, in the wake of atrocities in both of their countries, rallied others in an effort to stamp out online hate content circulating through social media algorithms. Ardern has commented:

"The existence of algorithms themselves is not necessarily the problem, it's whether or not they are being ethically used," she said, adding that tech companies had shown a real desire to use algorithms for "positive interventions.[9]

So what is the connection between social and emotional learning and wellbeing, when the latter

[7] https://casel.org/about-us/. Accessed 17 Oct 2021

[8] https://www.kivaprogram.net/. Accessed 17.Oct 2021

[9] https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20210515-macron-ardern-rally-nations-and-tech-giants-in-battle-to-stamp-out-online-hate-christchurch-call. Accessed 17 Oct 2021

is the buzz word (of the moment)? Is it simply the case of 'old wine in a new bottle' and that they are basically the same? At a first glance this might seem to be the case, with the accompanying assertion that media, academia and policy makers have found a new way of recirculating the same old content. Alternatively, could it be that there is a causal connection, such that social and emotional learning is the causal driver towards well-being as the end point? There is no simple answer and it is clearly the case that it is a contested space worthy of discussion and how it might lead to actions.

A good colleague of one of the authors, Dr. Graham Stoop, has proposed in conversation[10] a useful way of understanding a distinction between the two: social and emotional learning can be taught in schools, as evidenced by the work of the US based CASEL group. It takes time and requires a process. On the other hand, wellbeing can usefully be considered as a snapshot of how we are doing in the process. Stoop's point is thus summarised: SEL is a process and well-being is a measure for which methodologies and indicators can be developed. We shall consider the measurement aspect of well-being later in this chapter and wish to add that much can also be gained by contending that well-being is very much a form of experience, even if it is a snapshot.

Within this experience there is also an existential aspect and we want to turn to Heidegger for a moment to gain some insights. According to Heidegger [29], emotions reveal the existential state of a person and for us in this context it is an existential feeling of wellbeing. For Heidegger the existential state is imminent in concrete, lived everyday existence, what he termed the *ontic*, the that-which-is of entities, *das Seiende* in German, and usually translated simply as 'being'. The existential refers to how a person lives the ontic in a certain manner (e.g how wellbeing is lived as a burden, joy or in some other manner). Heidegger called this Being (*das Sein*), as it referred to the Being of being (*das Seiende*).

To gain access to it, one could ask, 'how one is, and how one is faring?' and listen to the respondent's tone, as an emotional mood colouring the reply [29]. If the candidate is nervous and shaky in their voice it indicates an existential Being of angst and uncertainty. The challenge in making use of Heidegger's existential (psychoanalytic) analysis is that it reveals only the existential state of the person in phenomenological fashion, and says nothing of the ethical quality of the existential experience, before, during or after it takes place. In our context we are interested in the manner in which the experience of wellbeing is lived existentially. The ethical component we have already touched upon in our comments about generalised trust of the other and the extent to which it is present or lacking.

To reiterate, wellbeing in our view can be captured by the term *wellbeing-ness,* a term we have coined deliberately by adding 'ness' to highlight the experiential, along with the existential component of the experience. In the reminder of this section, we will briefly present the work of Diener (2018) who over several years patiently developed an evidence-based conception of wellbeing. His understanding offers purchase to our conception of wellbeing-ness as an experience with existential implications and connections to a sense of inclusion characterised by belonging and voice.

A number of publications [30, 31] note that it is customary to consider wellbeing as economic capital (e.g. the amount of man-made assets possessed by an individual or group). It can also be understood as natural capital (e.g. the amount and character of natural environment available to the individual or group), human capital (e.g. the totality of skills held by the individual or group) and social capital (e.g. the networks of collaboration with others). We have measures of these forms of capital in terms of wealth and property, levels of uncultivated land, the levels of schooling and vocational and other qualification attained. Measures of collaboration collected in algorithms demonstrating our interactions on different platforms such has Facebook and so on - even if not publicly available.

The trend has been to move beyond solely these capital-based concepts and measures, to consider well-being as 'capabilities' (opportunities with respect to functioning) and how they might be

[10] In conversation 29 Jan 2021

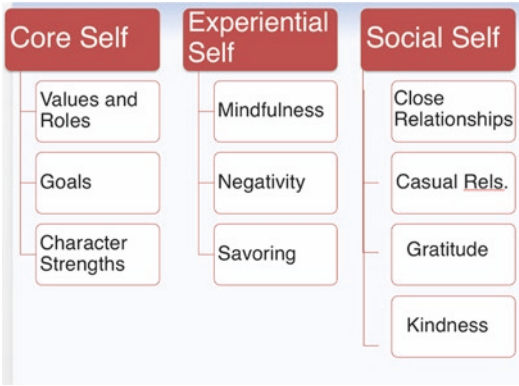

Fig. 2 Subjective wellbeing inspired by Diener [34]

less congruent with the prosperity of a nation and its collective values, especially when individualistic identity is in the ascendant [32]. With this as his point of departure, Diener has sought to expand the understanding of wellbeing to include psychological and non-capital components. The suggestion has been made that it contributes to our understanding of health and longevity [33]. Figure 2 is inspired by Diener's much cited work [34] and represents a tripartite understanding of the individual's subjective wellbeing.

Considering this trend towards wellbeing as a subjective experience with existential import, what we have called wellbeing-ness, our view is that in Covid times it was characterised by three inter-related characteristics.

Firstly, in a positive sense, it involves generalised trust of those we do not personally know. This might be in COVID reminiscent terms, members of the health service with whom we come into contact. In a negative sense, it will be the opposite where the level of generalised trust is in decline. This will rarely apply to workers in the healthcare profession; it might apply to those who are policy makers or politicians who lose their support the longer COVID negatively impacts life and wellbeing e.g. creating a greater sense of isolation and feeling excluded from physical, face-to-face social interaction and consultations.

Secondly, wellbeing-ness is in a positive sense related to the manner in which the sense of liminality and in-between is overcome. This might entail re-establishing new connection and the digital affords new forms of connectivism ,[11] even if it is through digital media and teachers, like other professionals (e.g. doctors, youth workers) work through participation on such platforms—platforms where they would have previously been less present. As Dobson and Schofield [35] put it when considering the new demands planned on learning and teaching in COVID times:

> "If connectivism is the theory, a slogan to action online learning and teaching will be: keep it simple, coordinated (with others in larger or smaller networks) and normal, so we can still feel security in 'know this', 'know how', 'know where' and 'know how it feels'."

The establishment of predictable routines, and not necessarily the same routines as before, becomes an important imperative.

Upon such a foundation, the third characteristic is the opportunity to grow mutual recognition and respect between, in the case of learning, the teacher and the students. Without this, teaching becomes less conducive to learning and feedback to the teacher and in the reverse, from the teacher to the students, becomes blocked by social interaction and trust concerns [36]. It is more likely that emotions of mistrust take the focus away from investing in teaching and learning among the involved parties.

This reminds of when Dobson was a community worker for refugees undertaking home visits to newly arrived refugees after they had left reception centres and were allocated housing in a local municipality. When he entered a home, the atmosphere it evoked reflected how the refugee family was doing. In Heidegger's term: 'how one is, and how one is faring?' Sometimes it was a sense of calm and sometimes the reverse. When it was the latter, a feeling of anxiety, lack of routines and lingering liminality were still evident.

[11] «teaching and learning is now about being able to connect different sources and networks of knowledge, residing in particular places and repositories—sometimes in the heads of others, sometimes recorded elsewhere. What we need is actionable knowledge where critical thinking is still vital but of the character required to select and evaluate» knowledge. (https://www.newsroom.co.nz/ideasroom/the-rush-to-online-ness) Accessed 23 Oct 2021.

Their adjustment to the new country and a new way of Being being had yet to emerge expressing a sense of inclusion, belonging and an accompanying voice to express it. Re-quoting the earlier point: the existential refers to how a person lives the *ontic* (the concrete of everyday life) in a certain manner (e.g how wellbeing is lived as a burden, a joy or in some other manner). Heidegger called this Being (*das Sein*), as it referred to the Being of being (*das Seiende*).

3 Wellbeing as an Indicator or Experience of Wellbeing-Ness

We might pose the question in the following terms: do we measure what we value, or only value what we are able to measure? The answer is dependent on how wellbeing as a construct is understood and then measured. If the construct of wellbeing is understood in terms of different forms of capital, often gathered at a macro level, then we have a number of already existing surveys and already collected administrative data with accompanying indicators to hand. When we consider affective capital, defined by Yoshida and Sue Nichols [37] as a person's emotional resources and feelings about self and others, we begin to envisage the need for qualitatively different ways of understanding wellbeing.

When the construct of wellbeing is understood in experiential and existential terms we have already directed attention to, following Heidegger's ontological ontology, how this might be measured in terms of moods [38]. This is not easily measured in terms of surveys that seek to numerically quantify measures of wellbeing. Our moods can change quickly and on the day of the survey it might be a warm and summer and we are on vacation. Our next day may evoke a different set of moods and we are less inclined to feel we are included, belong and a voice to express ourselves.

With the first mentioned in mind let us consider the example of New Zealand. It has looked to survey-based data. But this is a work in progress. They may well become more wellbeing-ness oriented in the future with the support of technology that might provide those immediate snapshots, as Dobson's colleague Stopp suggested above.

In the New Zealand government's work to develop a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy [39] a number of demanding challenges were identified including: the highest suicide rate for young people aged 15–19 years when compared to other countries, disparities in access to education and health services for Māori and Pacific children and their families; and the disproportionate number of Māori and Pacific People in poverty and material hardship. The UNICEF *Report card no.16* [42] ranked New Zealand 35 of 38 on scores regarding child mental wellbeing, physical health and skills.

Turning to local and international indicators a scan was undertaken by the Government (*Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* 2019):

> We found that there are common measures that are often used to measure children's wellbeing. These include indicators like birth weight, suicide rates, mortality rates, immunisation rates, teenage pregnancy rates, obesity rates, physical activity levels, income levels, housing conditions and educational attainment…The more common measures often have an emphasis on physical health, material wellbeing and educational attainment. Other aspects of outcomes in the Strategy, such as mental wellbeing, loving and nurturing homes, and culture and identity are less commonly captured in existing wellbeing frameworks.

Importantly, they noted that much existing data posits a deficit, rather than strength-based approach e.g. focusing on the 'presence or absence of harm or poor outcomes, rather than the presence or absence of wellbeing or desired outcomes.' With this background the government consulted widely with children and youth to develop a set of indicators to address these challenges where the criteria for each indicator was that where possible it should be:

- Statistically robust
- Regularly collected,
- Strengths based,
- Non-specific (that is, broadly informative),
- Relevant and easily understood, applicable to all children and young people,
- Internationally comparable,
- culturally responsive.

So, what kinds of indicators were developed? The Government in its *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* (2019) [40] landed upon 6 main outcomes and clusters of indicators for each of these outcomes. They are illustrated below in Fig. 3. Of note, is the way they bridge the mental, physical, social areas, along with socio-economic disparities, such has poverty.

They all fit within the larger wellbeing framework with inclusion ('loved, safe and nurtured'), belonging ('accepted, respected and connected') and voice ('involved and empowered') as central.

The measures identified to reach these outcomes and indicators are extracted from a num-

Outcome	Child and Youth Wellbeing Indicators
Children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured	Feeling loved, feeling safe, family/whānau wellbeing, injury prevalence, harm against children, and quality time with parents
Children and young people have what they need	Material wellbeing, child poverty: material hardship, child poverty: low income BHC50, child poverty: low income AHC 50, food insecurity, housing quality, and housing affordability
Children and young people are happy and healthy	Prenatal care, early exposure to toxins, subjective health status, preventable admissions to hospital, mental wellbeing, and self-harm and suicide
Children and young people are learning and developing	Participation in early learning, regular school attendance, literacy, numeracy and science skills, socio-emotional skills, self-management skills, and youth in employment, education, or training
Children and young people are accepted, respected and connected	Ability to be themselves, sense of belonging, experience of discrimination, experience of bullying, social support, support for cultural identity, and languages
Children and young people are involved and empowered	Involvement in the community, representation of children and young people's voices, making positive choices, and involvement in criminal offending

Fig. 3 Outcomes and indicators of child and youth wellbeing

ber of existing surveys. To take an example, the involved and empowered outcome looks to evidence from the *Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey—What-About-Me?*[12]; existing administrative data and the *NZ Health Survey.*[13] This survey approach to indicators leaves the reader wondering if it gains deep and rich enough access to the experience of wellbeing understood as wellbeing-ness. With this in mind let us turn to a different approach to measurement and indicators of wellbeing.

But first, let us look at a digital storytelling project designed to collect digital stories created by young people affected by several serious long-term conditions and their parents. The conditions in question are: severe multi-system allergies, sickle cell disease, Type 1 Diabetes, epilepsy and ulcerative colitis. The stories can be seen here: https://www.patientvoices.org.uk/terrificteens.htm

A qualitative study of the first workshop, consisting of young people with multi-system allergic disease and their parents (Boyd et al., In press) [41] reveals the significance of sharing stories with others. The young people, who faced bullying and worse in their normal school lives, were able to share stories of their common experience, as were their parents. The bonds formed during the workshop, held in 2016, have continued to the present day, with the young people and their parents meeting up on a regular basis—face-to-face when this has been possible and virtually during the pandemic. When interviewed recently for another research project, parents and young people described the therapeutic benefits of sharing their stories and, of equal importance, of establishing a close-knit community where experiences could continue to be shared in an atmosphere of trust and openness. The storytellers who were interviewed spoke of increased wellbeing—or wellbeing-ness—that has been sustained during the intervening years.

One of the main propositions in this book is that storytelling and digital storytelling in particular provide access to meaning and a subjective sense of inclusion, belonging and voice. As stated already, the contention is that stories are fundamental to our growth and empathy, building resilience and wellbeing, and serving as catharsis. They offer shared markers in time and experience of shared social belonging; evoking and communicating the experience of wellbeing-ness. They provide access to the existential emotions of the storyteller and can also touch our own existential emotions as reader or listener. The story can be a long, short, visual, digital, corporeal (a dance) or even a poem.

Here is an example of the last mentioned; a poem written by Dobson that has not been published previously. It considers the Treaty of Waitangi [43]. The Treaty signed in 1840 is the founding document of modern New Zealand, much like the written Constitutions we find in other countries defining rights and principles and who is included and in what manner. Some years after its signing there were violent conflicts between the signatories, over 500 Māori chiefs representing the Māori Iwi (tribes) who are the First Peoples of the country and the settlers represented by the British Crown. To this day this Treaty is lived out in the different personal and shared stories for Māori and the many waves of subsequent settlers who expanded to include those who were not just British in origin.

The poem entitled ***green*** gives voice to a sense of wellbeing-ness concerning the encounter then and now between Māori and settler; the author as a recent migrant to the country. A second untitled and also unpublished poem is included by Dobson's colleague Pine Southon, Hautohu Matua (Principal Māori Adviser) in the Faculty of Education where he worked. Pine responds, much as in a conversation to reading the first poem and her poem uses the word for a tradtional tattoo on the face—Tā moko. See Fig. 4 for an example.[14]

[12] https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/consultations/youth-health-and-wellbeing-survey-results/index.html. Accessed 29 Jan 2023

[13] https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collections-and-surveys/surveys/new-zealand-health-survey. Accessed 29 Jan .2023

[14] Image published in the Otago Daily Times seventh January 2021. https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-lifestyle/man%E2%80%99s-ta-moko-pattern-redemption

Fig. 4 Image published in the New Zealand newspaper Otago Daily Times

green

calligraphy mark the day
contracts spoken written laying down dusted
of each spring bed the eye to rest
predator fences with no name and weasels will find a way
always the way
of summer burn green of every spring
our way a lazy cinema Saturday
a fjord beckon and refuse
high as low as deep
eye to rest
a forest floor
a door
charcoal sketch the afternoon shadow
shaden the grab of history
it burn

Notes to Poem

shaden—Dobson's word for to shade and shadow, but not to forget.

Tā moko etched on your face.

The words of your ancestors are remembered by the wind.

Your dreams and aspirations are echoes of the past.

That taniwha within recalls what the wind has spoken.

Your strength, your fragility will be its own undoing.

Tomorrow just a breathe away.

The past just spoken and remembered.

A tree bends in agreement with the wind.

Whispered as shouted as silenced.

Papatūānuku forever the afternoon shadow.

Ranginui shaden of what was, what could be.

Notes to Poem

Tā moko—the permanent marking or "tattoo" as traditionally practiced then and today by Māori on their faces.

Taniwha—those challenges, barriers, demons within you.

Whispered as shouted as silenced I likened to your high as low as deep.

Papatūānuku—in Māori tradition the earth mother—my landscape, my sketch, my picture, = shadow = hidden space/place.

Ranginui—in Māori tradition the sky father in the creation story of the world.

The emotions as indicators and measures of wellbeing, belonging and voice that are evoked in these poems will vary according to the readers. For some the emotions will be anxiety and sorrow as they are reminded of difficult and at times warring relationship between Māori and settlers. For others it might be a sense of relief that the intensity of these conflicts has passed. Through storytelling expressed in poems such has these, we approach the experiential and existential understanding of wellbeing-ness, or perhaps more correctly put, it offers a complement to the quantifiable indicators of wellbeing often found at the macro, policy level. Most importantly we can seek and obtain a sense of connectedness with others, an emotion of winclusion and belonging along with voice is evident.

4 Conclusion

Wellbeing has moved from an overwhelming focus upon social and emotional learning to a contested space between those advocating on the one hand, the conception and measurement of wellbeing using survey-based indicators of wellbeing, to support macro-policy goals. On the other hand, there are those who understand it as an experience, and understanding of this with what we have chosen to call wellbeing-ness. This is to focus upon the experiential and existential characteristics of well-being and Diener's research on subjective wellbeing moves in this direction.

In this chapter, two ways have been proposed to gain access to wellbeing-ness. One by adopting the existential ontology proposed by Heidegger, highlighting what is basically a taxonomy of the emotions.

Heidegger [29] provides the example of real boredom and in our context, this is a signifier of low or negative wellbeing. It is not the reading of a book that one finds not totally enthralling. When really bored we are not bored with a particular thing or activity, and drift 'hither and thither in the abysses of existence'. An example would be students who throw their hands up in boredom in a COIVD world not because a single experience such as digital schooling is too boring, but because they are bored and fail to be motivated by any of their schooling or extra curricula school pursuits. Heidegger also suggests how the sense of dread, which in our context might refer to an anxiety concerning the future of wellbeing, can be a general feeling of the uncanny (*unheimlich*)—not being at home with any particular thing—as the what-is refuses to remain and disappears and we lose our sense of self in an overwhelming experience of liminality. As it disappears, we become aware of the totality of our existence as lacking a sustained sense of wellbeing.

Some have even gone as far as to propose a taxonomy of the emotions [44]. It is reproduced below in an adapted version in Table 1 below:

The second approach to gaining access to wellbeing-ness has been through storytelling which opens the window to connecting with and including others so we experience a shared sense of belonging and access to the storytellers voice, not only as if it were our own but also because we colour the experience of the story with our own experiences as the viewer or the listener. It is of course not that simple; the risk is that well-meaning inclusion might also result in exclusion and a total experience of inclusive exclusion [45]. For example, a person or group can be included in one area or activity, only to be excluded in another. A member of society with formal qualifications might be excluded from entering the labour market because of the colour of their skin.

Measuring wellbeing or wellbeing-ness, the latter the preferred term proposed in this chapter remains a contested space. Theoretically and in an applied sense, there are those in academia and policy who would make the argument for social and emotional learning as indicative of wellbeing and there are of course good arguments to support this. In this chapter we have argued that wellbeing is more the snapshot identifying and measuring how social and emotional learning is progressing over time. It is not the case of choosing one or the other or the view that they are identical and merely old wine in new bottles.

Table 1 A taxonomy of the emotions (adapted from [44])

	Positive (pleasant emotion of wellbeing)		Negative (unpleasant emotion of wellbeing)	
Object focus	Activating	Deactivating	Activating	Deactivating
Activity focus	Enjoyment	Relaxation	Anger frustration	Boredom
Outcome focus	Joy Hope Pride Gratitude	Contentment Relief	Anxiety Shame Anger	Sadness disappointment hopelessness

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Promoting Learning Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Konstantinos Pagkratis and Stephen Dobson

Abstract

This chapter seeks to understand how global policies of learning are translated into initiatives that promote learning inclusion in local communities and their institutions; these, in turn, lead to increased social belonging and amplification of voice in the (digital) age in which we live, along with health and well-being that are pivotal in supporting and experiencing life as enjoyable and life- enhancing across the lifespan. The case explored is that of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities and how this contributes to a number of SDGs: no. 4 on Quality Education and no. 3 on Good Health and Well-being and how they both can be usefully conceived as a shared platform for the other SDGs, such as SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, with the goal of making human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Keywords

Global network of learning cities · Sustainable development goals · SDG4 · SDG3 · SDG11 · Cities · Communities · Formal education · Informal education · Non-formal education · Sustainable · Cultures of learning · Learning resources · Digital

1 Introduction

It is customary to consider lifelong learning as a series of phases from early childhood, through mandatory schooling and, thereafter, various forms of adult learning generally characterised as *formal* (in a planned learning environment with a syllabus and resulting in some kind of assessment and certification), *non-formal* (takes place outside of a formal learning environment and is structured but does not result in any form of certification, assessment or qualification, such as an amateur choir) and *informal* learning which accompanies other activities (such as kicking a ball with friends in a street).[1]

[1] *Council of Europe: Formal, non-formal and informal learning*. https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/definitions (Accessed 27.11.21)

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As part of the concern with education and learning, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intimately connected with the desire for lifelong learning. SDG4 is clearly focused upon Quality Education to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' SDG3, focusing on Good Health and Well-being, is also concerned with embracing education as a way to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'. Together, these two sustainable goals constitute a shared platform upon which many of the other SDG goals are enacted, such as SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities with the goal to 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.'

In this chapter we are interested in the potential role played by one global initiative in promoting these SDGs and how our understanding of learning inclusion might be expanded to incorporate social belonging and voice in an age where digital affordances might seem to be, but are not always, ever-present, required or equitably shared. We will begin by introducing UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) initiative. Thereafter, we will present four examples from the initiative. The examples illustrate some of the breadth and relevance of GNLC activities in relation to learning inclusion and the development of social belonging and voice.

In the last section of the chapter, we will seek to understand and evaluate the success and challenges of the initiative to date by introducing a theoretical framework. It should be noted that the Global Network of Learning Cities movement is progressive in its ambitions, moving participants from an understanding of the *status quo* of the existing situation to an acknowledgment and pursuit of what might be possible in a forward-looking, visionary sense i.e. the *is* of knowledge moving towards the *ought* of possible knowledge. In our view this lends itself to some concepts introduced by Habermas [1]. He is well-known for expressing the view that knowledge is not neutral, rather it can represent different interests and, in so doing, is value-laden to support these different interests. He proposed a simple typology of knowledge interests as technical (means-ends), cultural (acknowledging the different cultural understandings of participants) and emancipatory (empowering participants and their voices as a transformative force).

In our context, it could be assumed, without further analysis, that Learning Cities might simply further the mean-ends project imperative of goal-directed technical knowledge in the service of global (UNESCO) policy makers, without paying due attention to the cultural or emancipatory interests of the creators or users of this knowledge. With this in mind, it is important to take the time to consider examples of Global Network Learning City initiatives to see if this is the case. To decline the opportunity to do this would be tantamount to acting under the assumption that knowledge is value-free and indifferent to cultural considerations or the desire for emancipation from an existing state-of-affairs.

Culture is understood in the manner evoked by the famous Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth [2] who talked of *ethnic groups and boundaries* as the infinite number of cultural markers we use to recognise and manage the boundaries of our social relationships. As an anthropologist, he included in the array of markers language, styles of clothing, tattoos, food as well as race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, religion and so on. Simply put, in our context, culture is the signifiers or indicators of inclusion that weave together individuals and groups in social relationships [3].

Additionally, readers should note in what follows that SDG 11 talks of urban and community settings, and when talking of GNLC initiatives we are considering primarily urban communities and not the possible differences and similarities between urban, regional, rural and remote communities *per se*. We acknowledge that differences might exist, but in this chapter they are considered out of scope due to the number of words available and must be the topic of further investigation.

To underline the goal of this chapter, it is aligned with the ambition of much policy work and its accompanying documentation and evidence, to move beyond a simple confirmation of

the *is* (confirming what exists) to what *ought* to be possible and actually achievable/achieved in a future directed, visionary sense.

2 UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)—Goals and Ambitions

UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)[2] was launched with the Beijing Declaration in 2013 and can be understood as an example of an initiative that attempts to bridge the digital divide by supporting and showcasing community-sourced learning opportunities across cities, many of which encompass a digital learning component (phrased immediately below in terms of extending 'the use of modern learning technologies') [4]. The fifth international conference on Learning Cities took place in 2021 and explicitly acknowledged this goal in the wake of COVID pandemic: namely, community provision enables individuals to overcome their own personal limitation in skills or access to digital platforms and to participate in lifelong learning. In September 2022 there were 294 members across 77 countries from all parts of the world.[3]

Global Learning Cities are defined in the Declaration as being characterised by:

- Inclusive learning in the education system;
- Re-vitalised learning in families and communities;
- Effective learning for and in the workplace;
- Extended the use of modern learning technologies;
- Enhanced quality and excellence in learning;
- A vibrant culture of learning throughout life.

The biennial International Conferences on Learning Cities (ICLC) have offered member cities the opportunity to showcase their progress on selected themes. Thus, the conference hosted by the city of Cork, Ireland (2017) focused upon *green and healthy learning cities and learning neighbourhoods*, the fourth ICLC hosted by the city of Medellín, Colombia [5] had as its main topic '*inclusion—a principle for lifelong learning and sustainable Cities*' and the fifth ICLC hosted by the city of Yeonsu, Republic of Korea (2021) focused on building *healthy and resilient cities through learning*.

The cases presented in what follows are of interest not merely with respect to achieving the goals of inclusive learning, health and wellbeing and resilience in community settings, i.e. the identified SDGs at the beginning of the chapter and in the declaration. In addition, we are interested in the process by which they have worked to achieve this, in other words, the process by which learning inclusion has been taught, learnt and realised in the move towards these goals.

With this in mind, it is worth noting that the ongoing initiatives seek, at one and the same time, to acknowledge and transcend points raised in UNESCO reports, such as *Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (2021) and with specific reference to lifelong learning the *fourth Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: leave no one behind: participation, equity and inclusion*.:

> Deep and persistent inequalities still exist in adult learning (ALE) participation and key target groups are not being reached. (…) Globally, between and within countries, there remain deep and persistent inequalities in ALE participation, with many vulnerable groups excluded and seemingly off the radar of policy-makers. Migrants and refugees, older adults, adults with disabilities, those living in rural areas, and adults with low prior educational attainment are among the groups facing the greatest barriers to participation in ALE. ([6]: 8)

At this juncture it is important to note that lifelong learning is not simply lifelong along the life course, but *life wide learning* that includes spatial distribution and connection within and across urban communities [7, 8]. As we noted in the Introduction to this book, the imperative to be connected digitally has transformed and added a new dimension to education and to how we need to engage with the process of learning inclusion. Without seeking to discount the challenges in

[2] https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities

[3] https://uil.unesco.org/unesco-global-network-learning-cities-77-new-members-44-countries

gaining digital access faced by different disadvantaged socio-economic and diverse cultural groups, we are thinking of the influence of what Siemens [9] has called connectivism.

When knowledge is distributed widely in different spatial networks, some conceptual (carried in our heads) and some external in books, on the internet or in different community activities across cities that have chosen to be part of the Global Network of Learning Cities, then Siemens' [9] point is worthy of consideration:

> The pipe is more important than the content within the pipe…Our ability to learn what we need for tomorrow is more important than what we know today. A real challenge for any learning theory is to actuate known knowledge at the point of application. When knowledge, however, is needed, but not known, the ability to plug into sources to meet the requirements becomes a vital skill. As knowledge continues to grow and evolve, access to what is needed is more important than what the learner currently possesses.

In our context Siemens is suggesting that learning inclusion in community settings is about being able to connect different sources and networks of knowledge, residing in particular places and repositories, some of which are distributed across the internet. The community activity that is taking place can be seen as *life long* and *life wide learning*.

In an educational sense the very understanding and construct of 'what is a teacher' becomes multiple and distributed across the network of community activities in cities and showcased by the ongoing outputs of the Global Network of Learning Cities. The teachers are multiple since, through the diverse nature of activities, participants are able to learn from each other and at the same time take their turn teaching others. Some, of course, take on a more typical teaching role, as when activities are being set up and new participants need to receive some level of introduction and what might be called for want for better words *onboarding or induction*.

Another way of saying this is that the roles of the teacher and those assessing what has taken place change. With knowledge accumulated in the Global Network of Learning City activities, it is increasingly based upon connecting with the community-based networks, where the physically or virtually present teacher is now only one possible connection and source of teaching, along with judgement, valuation and assessment.

3 Four Examples of Learning Cities Initiatives—What Kind of Activities Do They Develop Together and on Their Own?

By what criteria have the four cases been selected? We are fully aware that any single example cannot represent the full detail and breadth of activities amongst GNLC's. Our goal is different. With this caveat, we will consider two different methodologies for judging the success of cases and, consequently, our choice of case supports an exploratory methodological goal, rather than following preset criteria. If the methodologies are deemed successful in themselves, then it will be possible to refine them with additional GNLC examples or, alternatively, cases external to the GNLC. Overall, this will support a greater understanding of the challenges and successes when a global policy clearly founded upon SDGs is translated into initiatives that promote a) learning inclusion in local communities and their institutions and b) an increased experience of social belonging and voice, along with health and well-being in the (digital) age in which we live.

As we have noted earlier, we are interested not merely in goal achievement, but also in the process by which participants have worked together in community settings. Especially since within these settings relationships are created with institutions, individuals and policy makers and those implementing policies. This suggests the need to recall the triangle of relationships and interactions proposed in the opening to the book (Fig. 1 below). On Level 1, we have an overarching and transnational level where policies formulated and agreed trickle down to communities e.g. the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. Level 2 contains institutional organisations, such as clubs and associations.

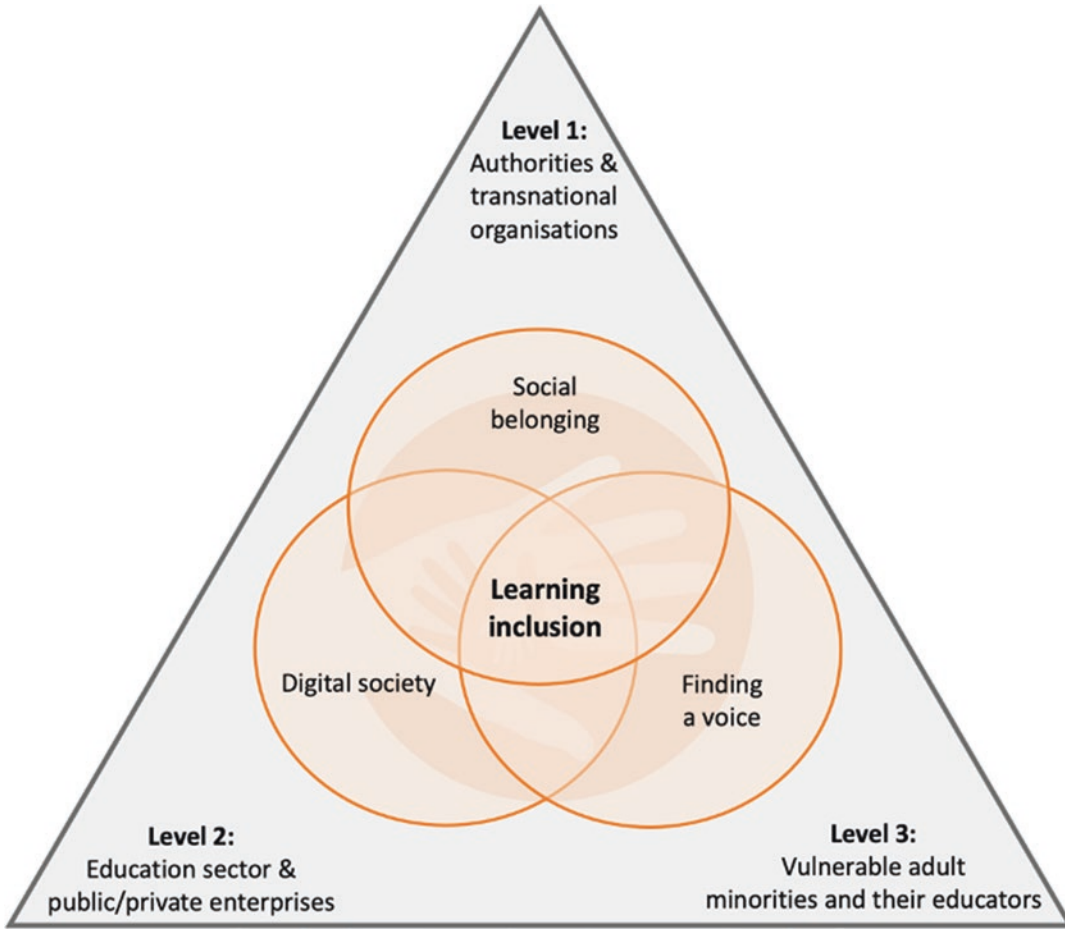

Fig. 1 The relationship between central concepts and themes in this book

Level 3 consists of the participants who are vulnerable adult minorities, their educators and associated professionals.

In effect we are suggesting the opportunity to use the triangle as a model allocating relevant chapter content to each side of the triangle. This triangle is reproduced in its original form in figure 1 above. As this model is applied some adaptations are made: Level 1 is set to be the policy goals and aims of the GNLC as formulated in the 2013 Declaration; Level 2 becomes the community level where policies are enacted through associations and clubs and Level 3 is seen to represent the individual participants who take part in the communities of activity and interactions organised through the GNLC initiatives.

During the biannual conferences, cities agree on MOUs to collaborate and partner with other cities. The cities have a coordinating responsibility and are well-positioned as institutional entities to facilitate and deal with a large amount of non-formal education. Accordingly, they correspond to Level 1 in the figure above with its focus upon authorities with transnational relationships. In some cases, the cities have delegated responsibility to different community stakeholders and educational organisations who undertake the Learning City projects. The delegated bodies might be NGOs interested in education, private learning institutions, universities or colleges of Higher Education. This would correspond to Level 2 in the LIDA project. Those taking part at

Level 3 includes, but is not limited to vulnerable groups and professionals who work with them.

The GNLC is coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and brings together (at the time of writing) 294 member cities across 77 countries, including big metropolitan cities and smaller urban areas. Each member city is represented by key civil and community stakeholders who work with local city administrations. Cities interested in applying for network membership must also be willing to adopt the network concept when submitting their membership application. As claimed by UNESCO UIL, one of the main goals is to enhance cooperation between the cities and strengthen lifelong learning opportunities for its citizens based on the United Nations [10] *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The network also agrees to provide guidance and support with training modules and capacity-building activities to further develop the local education agendas in view of the achievement of Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 3 on health and wellbeing and Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

In recognition of promoting creativity and innovation in lifelong learning, UNESCO launched the Learning City Award in 2015. Cities that are members of the network are asked to submit applications to receive the award and they are evaluated based on a set of criteria such as the progress of their learning city plan and achievement of medium- and long-term objectives.

It might be contended that in the years after the adoption of SDGs [10], there remains an under-thematised and, to some extent, weak linkage and articulation of the relationship between the role of education as a means towards achieving the SDGs, especially given policy recommendations and advocacy work of the United Nations. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, with its focus on leaving no one behind, provides a unique opportunity to build more inclusive, just and fair societies. Inclusion in education is rooted in the selection of the education framework for lifelong learning that is most suited to the particular cultural context. It seeks to secure the opportunities that can advance the right to education for all vulnerable and marginalized groups on the grounds of culture, gender, skills or socio-economic status.

One of the GNLC guiding documents, *Learning Cities and the SDGs: A Guide to Action* [11] has contributed to the study of education policy in particular at the local level. The implementation guide identifies links between the Key Features of Learning Cities and a limited number of targets from selected SDGs, while focusing on three thematic sections:

(a) Green and healthy learning cities.
(b) Equity and inclusion and,
(c) Employment and entrepreneurship.

While this has led to some limitations on the comprehensiveness of the policy discussion, if combined with a complete set of linkages between lifelong learning education and all the 17 SDGs, including its in total 169 targets, it might still be turned into a useful operational tool for UN Member States and their participating cities and, in so doing, address the weak linkage and articulation of the relationship between education and achieving the SDGs.

Network members are invited to participate in the biennial international conference and, according to the theme of each event, best practices, challenges and progress to date are presented based on the local context and how this has been informed by policies in the particular nation. The fifth International Conference on Learning cities (ICLC) [12] was hosted by the city member Yeonsu in the Republic of Korea in October 2021. The representatives discussed the ways in which lifelong learning might contribute to building healthy and resilient cities. The topic was highly relevant due to the COVID 19 public health emergency and underlined the deep impact of the virus outbreak in terms of SDG 3's focus upon the health, mental health and well-being of all the stakeholders involved in the learning process and, in particular, the learners. Previously, the fourth ICLC took place in the city of Medellín in Colombia in 2019 and discussed the topic of inclusion as a principle for lifelong learning and sustainable cities. The host city of the third ICLC,

Cork, Ireland, offered the international community and city members of the network to draw inspiration from Cork's Lifelong Learning Festival and Learning Neighbourhoods initiatives designed to create new learning opportunities for everyone and to celebrate learning. This ICLC inspired city leaders and representatives to build multi-dimensional learning cultures and increase awareness of promoting lifelong learning for all.

We will now present four case studies from city members of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC); namely the capital of Ireland: Dublin, the city of Medellin in Colombia, Jubail Industrial city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the city of Wyndham, Australia.

3.1 Dublin, Ireland

Having joined the UNESCO GNLC in 2019 [13], Dublin showcased significant progress in building a strong learning culture. For Dublin, the key to success was collaboration and catalysing a smooth alignment between key players and stakeholders in the provision of all kinds of education. This has been a decisive factor in establishing lifelong learning as a key principle for development. The city was one of the recipients of the 2021 UNESCO Learning City Award [12] based on a set of initiatives successfully introduced and offered to its citizens (in 2016, County Dublin's population was just under 1.3 million).

Based on the Healthy Ireland Framework 2019–2025, the city launched *The Healthy Dublin City Project* which consisted of different thematic topics and campaigns. The *Keep Well Campaign* launched in 2020 is an example and the result of a collaboration between several local authorities as a well as several ministries such as the Ministries of Health, Social Protection and Community & Rural Development & the Islands [14].

The campaign was established to help improve the mental and physical well-being of people of all ages, including several specific groups within society, such as children on the autism spectrum, new mothers and people with disabilities. The initiative offered several suggestions on how to promote whole year resilience, de-stress and care for the mind and the body through digital means such as simple instructional videos and the Get Ireland Walking App which aimed to change the habits of the citizens by introducing a challenge for the users to walk at least 30 min per day. The Keep Well Campaign has also promoted learning and encouraged citizens to be creative and learn a new skill through different series of digital workshops and webinars on a range of topics such as design, arts and crafts.[4]

As being active and spending time outdoors during all seasons of the year is also significant for strengthening physical and mental health and wellbeing, several programmes have been launched such as gardening for biodiversity, walking groups and cycling.

The promotion of the right nutrition has also been one of the key campaigns of the city of Dublin, as it is vital for a good mental health and well-being. Information and tips have been offered to the citizens about how to cook healthy food, avoid wasting food and how to eat well on a budget. This campaign has been offered through different digital and non-digital platforms with a focus on the elderly population, families, students and children.

To reduce stress and help people manage their everyday mood, the city has also offered online counselling sessions for all including access to health and wellbeing online resources such as eBooks and eMagazines as well as libraries. Citizens suffering from anxiety and depression have also been given support via help phone lines.

3.2 Medellin, Colombia

Medellin is a model city, where inclusive policies are implemented and support the communities to be more engaged and active in the daily life. The city administration has devoted a large amount of its budget to social investments with a specific

[4] Medellín, Colombia https://www.eafit.edu.co/centros/analisis-politico/noticias/Paginas/proyecto_juventudes_tejedoras_.aspx

University EAFIT (2020)

focus on vulnerable youth at risk in the population [15]. The city has suffered in the past from violence and drug trafficking. However, a drastic transformation has taken place through actions to align with the universal call of the United Nations Programme to incorporate 70% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [16]. These actions focus on quality and inclusive education, gender equality as well as health and wellbeing and a safe environment for all. An example follows of the city policies.

The Waiving Youth Project, portraying some of the youth participants in Image 1 (The Juventudes Tejadoras project of the Medillín Youth Secretariat), was launched by the city of Medellin in July 2020 to support the psychology and wellbeing of vulnerable youth as part of the Medellin Future Development Plan 2020–2023. The project aimed to support youth and adolescents (14–28 years old) through training and capacity development on interpersonal emotional, cognitive and behavioural skills, both online and face-to-face, at individual and group or family level. All courses were offered via several learning management platforms such as Coursera, Edx, Udemy, Unimooc and Domestika. The training included courses ranging from pregnancy prevention to suicide prevention for both men and women and tips on dealing with emotional pain and depression [5].

One of the stories that has been highlighted is the one by Kathrine, 23 years old, who resides in Comuna 9, one of the 16 Communes of the city of Medellin. Living in inadequate housing, with no basic infrastructure, Kathrine had developed a physical and emotional fear of rain. Thanks to counselling and psychological support she received she managed to overcome her fears, get to know new people and was able to create her own life project related to her choice of career.

4 Jubail Industrial City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In 2020, Jubail was the first city in Saudi Arabia to join the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. A year later in 2021, Jubail was among the recipients of the UNESCO Learning City Awards [17–21]. Under the authority of the Royal Commission of Jubail, the department responsible for health and well-being had launched a series of campaigns on health education such as healthy nutrition and eating habits, health awareness during Ramadan, children and elderly health awareness of the effects of the Covid 19 virus.

One of the most important commitments of the country has been in the area of health with the goal of covering at least 80% of the population, including offering inclusive health services to those living in rural areas. In line with the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia's National Transformation Program (NTP) 2020 [22] and Saudi Vision 2030 (2016), the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has launched the Healthy Schools Program with the intention of improving the health of school aged students and contributing to the work of the Kingdom in implementing policies and procedures recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The aim of the programme has also been to inform the parents of children, teachers and other staff that schools are increasingly able to look after and strengthen the health of students. School students represent more than 15% of the total population in the country. The Healthy Schools Program is structured around the following components: health awareness, nutrition, exercise and physical activities, school health and medical support, sanitation, hygiene, access to clean water at school and the mental health of students supported by specialists such as psychologists. In addition to these, the programme aims to build a friendly and comfortable environment for the students when at school to enable them to be more active and engaged in the learning process. Based on the Healthy Schools Programme Manual, the executive leadership team of each school may promote partnerships and cooperation with a range of civil society organizations and the private sector to help students develop multiple skills related to health education and to be aware of certain kinds of diseases and how to deal with them, such as diabetes. [23].

4.1 Wyndham, Australia

Several Sustainable Development Goals refer to disability and, more specifically, the following goals clearly indicate the target group:

1. Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all.
2. Goal 8 on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
3. Goal 10 on reducing inequalities and strengthening socio economic and political inclusion.
4. Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable.
5. Goal 17 on promoting partnerships and collaboration

On a national level in Australia, around 1 in 6 (18%) or about 4.4 million people possess an identifiable disability, also known as a disability prevalence.[5] 89% of school-age (5–18 years) children with disability attend school and several challenges exist with regards to engaging learners [24]. The city of Wyndham in Australia is a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and one of the 2021 UNESCO Learning City Award awardees (UNESCO, 2021).

Wyndham's Learning Community Strategy (2018–2023) reflects the strong commitments of the city to ensure quality and inclusive education for all by providing learning opportunities and promoting partnerships and collaboration with several local stakeholders [25]. Inclusion and equity are main pillars of the specific strategy and for this purpose in 2020 a special Learning Group was relaunched (WLG2) with the aim of supporting people with disabilities aged 15–30.

The city demonstrates how inclusion can be mainstreamed across several sectors, while covering multiple SDGs targets and groups [26]. Through this initiative Wyndham City Council, in collaboration with local higher education institutions, disability action groups and several learning providers, is improving all kinds of

[5] Disability prevalence is the number or proportion of the population living with disability at a given time. Prevalence rates can be age-specific (for a particular age group) or age-standardised (controlling for age, so that populations with different age profiles can be compared).

structures and systems related to the formal and non-formal lifelong and life wide education of disabled population. This further promotes their integration into the society.

5 Beacons of Learning Inclusion Promoting Social Belonging and Voice in the Digital Age?

In this section we seek to understand and evaluate the success and challenges of the Global Network of Learning Cities initiative in two contrasting ways. The first is against indicators and rubrics we have ourselves identified in the GNLC's own declaration and the work of its policy makers. This approach is familiar to assessment specialists with its focus upon rubrics and performance against them. Secondly, inspired by Habermas [1], we introduce a theoretical typology using concepts that are external to the GNLC.

What both these approaches share is an interest in not only how an activity and associated knowledge and skills are learnt, but also how the learning entails learning to include others (with an emphasis on '*learning how*' to include). This offers participants a sense of social belonging and voice, where digital means (i.e. media) may or may not be involved.

5.1 Indicators and Rubrics

In seeking to measure the success of GNLC we looked for evidence of topics, indicators and rubrics that we might craft by seeking inspiration from the six defining characteristics in its own 2013 Beijing Declaration. Following this approach, the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities lists six characteristics of learning cities in United Nations [10]. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The first three identify types of learning (inclusive, re-vitalised or effective); each is allocated respectively to one of the following places (education system, families and communities or, lastly, the workplace). It is notable in our context that *inclusive learning* will occur across all of the places and is not found only in the education system. The same applies to *re-vitalised learning* that does not exist solely in families and communities, and *effective learning* that is not only of relevance in the workplace. If we did not seek to capture a more flexible set of learning types across different contexts, the result would be in our view a somewhat rigid and limited understanding of impact and practices.

The last three characteristics of learning cities identified in UNESCO's Beijing Declaration suggest additional performance rubrics and indicators:

- Extending the use of modern learning technologies. In the terminology of this current book this refers to the use of digital learning resources and the skills and knowledge required by professionals, target groups and those creating them;
- Enhancing learning quality and excellence. This suggests to us that not every form of quality is acceptable, but one that strives towards excellence and provides indicators of progress and improvement;
- Creating lifelong learning and a culture for this. This is a central goal in our book, namely, to develop an understanding of knowledge and practice and how it is able to create a sustainable and inclusive culture of learning over the life course. Rubrics and indicators point towards cultures that are empowering and sustainable over time with some level of organisational structure, either formal or informal, that are capable of handing over to new members of the culture, able to recalibrate or plan for contextual changes, and at the same time, involve considering the voice of participants and offer a valued sense of social belonging.

In sum, the topics, indicators and rubrics we are proposing for our purpose draw upon the GNLC initiative and can be additionally combined with SDG 3's goal of health and wellbeing and SDG 11's goal of safe, resilient and sustainable. The resultant indicators and rubrics we arrive at are the following:

- **Learning inclusion** (SDG 4) in the adult learning system, families, communities and the workplace. There may also be some evidence of re-vitalised or inclusive effective learning;
- **Using and creating digital learning resources** (SDG 4) for disadvantaged adult minorities (refugees, migrants and others who might be disadvantaged socially, economically, culturally, physically, politically, by age or gender);
- **Learning that increases the learning quality** (SDG 4) of participants in the direction of excellence;
- **Creating inclusive cultures of learning that are safe and sustainable** (SDG 11) across the life course, empower the voice of all participants and result in a valued sense of social belonging;
- **Promoting health and wellbeing** experiences for all participants (SDG 3).

Table 1 below considers the four examples in terms of the rubrics and indicators proposed above as a measure of success:

Evaluation against the rubric:

Green = highly valued.

Orange = less highly valued.

In considering the table above, the reader might grade the four initiatives differently when the rubrics and cases are used. Without seeking to disagree, the point in the exercise above has as much been about a proof of concept to see if the five rubrics were able to '*notice and value'* [27] different aspects of learning inclusion, health and wellbeing and sustainability as identified by the GNLC, and inspired by, and with reference to, SDGs 3, 4 and 11. All the initiatives are process driven in the sense of setting up structures to build and deliver the learning experiences for participants. Of interest is the way learning excellence appears to be traded off against a greater valuing of learning inclusion in different arenas. Secondly, some, but not all, of the initiatives above draw upon the importance of digital resources. Thirdly, a key focus in the initiatives considered above is health and wellbeing and how it seems to accompany in approximate equal weight the desire for inclusion and the learning of inclusion. This might lead us to conclude that no learning inclusion is possible if it does not at the same time seek and achieve the health and wellbeing of all participants.

5.2 A Theoretical Measure of Success Drawing Upon Different Knowledge Interests: Means-Ends, Culture and Emancipation

As noted earlier, the set of rubrics in the subsection immediately above (5.1) are inspired by goals already stated **within** the declaration of the GNLC's initiative. Another framework to measure the relative success of the initiative might usefully complement and/or contrast this set of rubrics by introducing theories, understood as constructs, sourced **outside** of the founding declaration of 2013. We have in mind drawing upon the inspiration offered by the work of Habermas [1] that speaks to the importance of understanding the processes and structures that exist in experiences of learning inclusion, health and wellbeing and sustainability [28].

Simply put, knowledge is not neutral. It always represents different interests and, in so doing, is value-laden to support these different interests. We propose that a simple typology of knowledge interests might usefully offer a framework against which the success of GNLCs can be measured: technical (means-ends), cultural (acknowledging the different cultural understandings of participants) and emancipatory (empowering participants and their voices as a transformative force). It is to be noted at the outset that the indicator and rubric framework introduced in the sub-section above (5.1) did not consider the particular knowledge interests that might be contained or supported by each of the indicators and rubrics. A second point of note is that Table 2 below does not seek to grade the means-ends, cultures and emancipation in terms of highly valued or less highly valued. As such the table is more descriptive than performative in the sense of making clear assessments or evaluative judgements.

Table 1 The four examples in terms of rubrics of success

Indicators and rubrics → **Initiatives ↓**	**Learning inclusion**	**Using and creating digital learning resources**	**Learning that increases the learning quality**	**Creating inclusive cultures of learning that are safe and sustainable**	**Promoting health and wellbeing**
Keep Well Campaign (Dublin)	Includes many disadvantaged groups	Diverse kinds of digital resources created – instructional videos, etc.	Participation is highly valued, more than excellence	Community based, But not so much evidence of being in the workplace	Nutrition, mental and physical wellbeing, lowering stress
Waiving Youth Project (Medellín)	Youth who have experienced emotional stress	Coursera, Edx, Udemy, Unimooc and Domestika	Builds self-efficacy, more than excellence i.e. effect rather than quality	Combats experiences of insecurity violence and vulnerability to suicide	interpersonal emotional, cognitive and behavioural skills
Healthy Schools Program (Jubail Industrial City)	The school program is part of a larger health education program for all from children to the elderly	The digital is not the major medium for developing and delivering initiatives	Implies inclusion and more important than quality	A friendly and comfortable learning environment that is an engaging learning culture	Mental and physical health awareness: nutrition, exercise, medical support, sanitation, hygiene, access to clean water
Learning Community Strategy (Wyndham)	With a focus upon those identified with a disability	The digital is not the major medium for developing and delivering initiatives	Providing learning opportunities of a formal and non-formal educative character	Involving local higher education institutions, disability action groups and several learning providers	Promoting health and wellbeing by integrating the disabled

Table 2 Different knowledge interests in GNLC initiatives

Knowledge interests → Initiatives ↓	Means-ends knowledge	Cultural knowledge	Emancipatory knowledge
Keep Well Campaign (Dublin)	Diverse kinds of digital resources created—Instructional videos, etc.	Includes many disadvantaged groups and their accompanying cultures.	Knowledge about nutrition, mental and physical wellbeing and lowering stress.
Waiving Youth Project (Medellín)	Use of different digital platforms to achieve goals: Coursera, Edx, Udemy, Unimooc and Domestika.	Youth cultures are enriched, and the initiative is responsive to their cultures.	Builds self-efficacy knowledge amongst youth who have experienced emotional stress.
Healthy Schools Program (Jubail Industrial City)	The school program is part of a clearly defined larger health education program.	Includes all from children to the elderly and their respective cultures.	Mental and physical health knowledge, including about nutrition, exercise, medical support, hygiene, access to clean water and sanitation.
Learning Community Strategy (Wyndham)	Offering targeted learning opportunities of a formal and non-formal educative character.	Cultures of disability identified and integrated with other communities and cultures.	Knowledge about the promotion of health and wellbeing is acquired .

The Habermas-inspired approach speaks of the relationship between knowledge types that scaffold and support actions of a different character. Respectively, the actions are goal-directed (means to ends), supporting cultures of those involved and/or bringing about change in an emancipatory fashion. Integral to these different types of knowledge are different experiences. By this we mean the first mentioned is the experience of delivering a specific action and the means required; the second concerns the building and maintenance of different cultures supporting a shared sense of acting together, and lastly, the experience of transforming the existing state of affairs.

6 Do We Measure What We Value or Only Value What We Can Measure?

This chapter has explored how UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities policies have been translated into initiatives built upon SDGs (3, 4 and 11) and the manner in which they promote learning inclusion in local communities and their institutions. We selected four examples from across the world to illustrate the range of activities involved. However, the chapter had additional ambitions: namely, to develop and trial two methodologies to assess and evaluate the relative success of the initiatives.

With this in mind, we proposed two approaches a) using indicators and rubrics and b) identifying different knowledge interests. With respect to the former, it is important to note that developing and using rubrics can discipline and control participants in the sense that it involves making a choice about what is to be a rubric and the parameters for the indicators for each rubric. In assessment terminology, it is about what is *noticed* as important [27]. With respect to the latter, a different approach is taken, where identifying different kinds of knowledge and their function in supporting different kinds of action is of interest and considered a measure of success.

In both cases, we are defining what is in and out of scope for measuring success of the GNLC initiatives and the extent to which they have achieved learning inclusion, belonging and voice. Put differently, we are proposing two different ways of identifying what is of value. In the introduction to this book, we suggested that this involves asking the simple and yet clarifying question: do we measure what we value, or merely value what we can measure?

Our conclusion would be that it is not the case that the rubric and indicator approach is more

successful at valuing what we value than the knowledge interest approach, or the reverse. Instead, both are different arguably equally valuable approaches that offering us insights into understanding the success of GNLC initiatives. Moreover, nearly all of the chapters in this edited collection are marked by the manner in which the authors consider, more or less explicitly, the measurement challenges faced in evaluating different activities seeking to promote the learning of inclusion, along with the enhancement of voice and belonging. It is our hope that this chapter can be usefully read alongside other chapters in this book and, in so doing, provide useful insights into understanding the relative success of the approaches and activities discussed in these chapters and what they choose to **notice** as salient and by what perspectives and accompanying theoretically informed concepts.

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Part II

How Can the Education Sector and Public/ Private Enterprises Support Learning Inclusion and Active Citizenship?

Fostering Social Inclusion of People in Situations of Vulnerability: Experiences from the Italian and Portuguese Contexts

Valeria Damiani, Susana Coimbra, and Ana Luísa Costa

Abstract

This chapter builds upon the findings of two multiplier events carried out in Italy and Portugal. They involved education professionals such as teachers, educators and other experts working with adults in situations of vulnerability (migrants, refugees and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion). The goal of the chapter is to analyse challenges and obstacles for professionals in promoting social inclusion for the selected target groups and to present best practices with a focus on digital technologies. The last section explores teachers' and professionals' training needs and the supporting actions for their continuing professional development at a local and national level.

Keywords

Social inclusion · People in situations of vulnerability · Italy · Portugal · Immigrants · Digital inclusion · Educational inclusion · LIDA

According to UN DESA [1] training toolkit, there are many challenges concerning the definition of vulnerability. It is not a universal, static, or even homogenous concept. Identifying people in situations of vulnerability is of prime importance when the goal is to avoid their further marginalization and exclusion. An important way to do this is through the mediation of the professionals who work with them. They are in a privileged position to listen and to answer their voices, needs, and demands. In this way, the professionals play a key role in promoting at least three of the sustainable development goals: to end poverty in all its forms, to combat inequalities or work to reduce them and to build peace, justice and strong institutions.

People in situations of vulnerability are those within our societies who are exposed to a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion compared to the general population. They are more likely to experience unemployment and low education which, subsequently, contributes to their further exclusion from society. Poverty seems to be a fertile ground not only for the accumulation, but

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also for the intergenerational transmission of adverse circumstances [2]. The economic income of the family is the most powerful indicator of socio-economic status. Scarcity of resources, malnutrition, health problems, and lack of access to medical care are some of the indicators of poverty that are systematically associated with inadequate family planning, unemployment, precarious employment, and/or low income [3–5].

Material deprivation may be what defines poverty, but poverty has repercussions on the human being as a whole, namely on their sociability (e.g. neighbourhood, friends), the symbolic system (e.g., memories and most important life events), and on personal development and fulfilment [6]. People in situations of vulnerability or marginalisation include but are not limited to lower social classes, older and younger people, people with disabilities, or migrants and ethnic minorities.

International migration, and the subsequent social inclusion of migrants, have become one of the major issues for Europe and the world over the last decades. In the European Union, people with a migrant background are more likely to face discrimination and barriers in accessing education, employment, healthcare, and housing, compared to European citizens, who were born and reside in the EU. Statistics show, for instance, that among the adults aged 25–64 with a low level of educational attainment, 38.5% were born outside the EU (compared to the 19.6% of their European-born counterparts). Similarly, the same percentages are recorded at risk of poverty and social exclusion among the two groups (Eurostat 2019).

Despite the different guidelines or actions carried out in the last years, the European path for inclusion still has to tackle several challenges in order to foster social cohesion and build inclusive societies and cultures within the EU.

In November 2020, the European Union (EU) presented the new *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion* for the period 2021–2027. The plan builds upon the 2016 document (*Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals*), which was aimed to support member States in strengthening their integration policies. The Action Plan for 2021–2027 broadened its target of action which is now related to third-country nationals and to EU citizens with migrant background and expanded measures of supporting adopted by the Commission in the previous document [7].

The Action Plan for the period 2021–2027 acknowledges the key role that social inclusion plays in the well-being of the society and in the economic growth of the European Union and highlights how the integration and inclusion of immigrants is a two-way process, requiring the efforts of both migrants and EU citizens with migrant backgrounds and the host society. This is in line with other three major international documents: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [8], the Global compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) [9], and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) [10], which recognize the potential of migration to promote development in both sending and receiving societies.

The actions implemented by the EU follow a "multi-stakeholder" approach that involves all relevant stakeholders, namely national authorities but also local and regional authorities. It is therefore a "whole society approach" towards social inclusion, including migrants, local communities, civil society, and all levels of government [7].

The main actions envisaged in the Action Plan 2021–2027 are related to the support of inclusive education and training from early childhood to higher education; to the improvement of employment opportunities and entrepreneurship, with specific attention to the access of women in the labour market; promotion of the access to health services and the awareness of health rights (especially for women), and also access to adequate and affordable housing.

The LIDA project—*Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age* (Ref. 2021–1-NO01-KA204–076518)—is aligned with the guidelines and actions promoted by the European Union on social inclusion; especially with respect to the synergy between local authorities, schools, and people in situations of vulnerability and most notably migrants. One of the focus points in this project has been is the development of formal and informal educational paths to foster social inclusion in the consortium's countries, in particular through

the use of digital technologies, which became even more important with the covid19 pandemic.

This chapter presents the findings of Multiplier Events (MEs) carried out in two consortium partner countries (Italy and Portugal) involving professionals of education and of enterprise sectors such as teachers, educators, and other experts working with adults in situations of vulnerability (migrants, refugees and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion) i.e. leve l2 in the triangle introduced in the opening chapters. The chapter is therefore focused on the professionals' perspective concerning the challenges regarding working to foster the social inclusion of people in situations of vulnerability in two Southern European countries. Professionals were invited to participate in two focus groups, one in each country, where they shared positive practices, obstacles, and overall personal experiences that guided their learning processes.

We being with a brief background introduction regarding information and policies on social inclusion in both countries. This is followed by an overview of the organisation and structure of the MEs and a presentation and analysis of the most relevant findings. The final section highlights the main conclusions of both MEs, and identifies some implications for social inclusion in Italy and Portugal.

1 Background: National Contexts for Social Inclusion

This section briefly presents the background contexts of the two countries where the MEs took place, and highlights the main features of the core topics addressed in the focus groups at the national level. First the issue of Portuguese and Italian emigration and immigration will be addressed. Second, some data regarding social, educational, and digital inclusion in both countries will be presented, with a specific focus on the consequences of the Covid-19 disruption. Finally, the main results of both ME's are presented and discussed. While the ME in Portugal addressed primarily the issue of social inclusion via poverty eradication, the one in Italy was mainly focused on the inclusion of migrants into formal and non-formal learning contexts, such as schools and organisations that deal with extracurricular activities for teenagers.

2 Immigration and Emigration

2.1 Portugal

Portugal is, traditionally, a country of emigration of people with low levels of education or skills who seek an opportunity to escape poverty and unemployment. This portrait of the emigrants has been changing over the last decade. In 2019, Portugal was listed in the top 20 countries of emigration with a rate of 20%. In many cases, though, the profile of these migrants was quite different: young educated, and skilled workers who seek to have better career conditions and wages, mostly in France, and Switzerland. Immigration trends have also changed over time. In the 1970s, after the democratic revolution, Portugal began to receive high inflows of migrants from the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa, mostly former colonies, Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Mozambique. From the 1990s onwards, influxes of labour migrants came from Brazil and the Eastern European countries, namely Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Romania. Asylum seekers represent only 1% of total migrants and they are generally escaping from civil wars and humanitarian crises. These forced migrants face high application rejection rates and overcrowded reception facilities.

Most recent data from the Observatory for Migration in Portugal, showed that in 2019 Portugal exceeded half a million foreigners residing in the country, specifically 590,348 people, rising to 662,095 foreigners in 2020 when residence permits in the country are included. These represent unprecedented figures in Portugal. Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of this population, they are mainly concentrated in the urban areas along the country coast. In 2019, women represented 49.8% of the foreign population, and 49.2% in 2020, reversing the trend of feminization of immigration seen since the beginning of the decade. The structure of ten most representa-

tive foreign nationalities in Portugal also underwent some changes, namely associated with the increase in nationals from European countries (such as Italy, France, and the United Kingdom - pre-Brexit), and from Asia (e.g. India), and the decrease in some nationalities from the PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African countries) and from Eastern Europe. The age distribution of the last decades is stable with the foreign resident population tending to be younger than the Portuguese population [11].

2.2 Italy

Italy is the main Mediterranean country where migrants try to reach Europe: from 1 January to 10 November 2021, 57,000 people landed in Italy, 86% more than in the same period in 2020. In addition, 4723 Afghan asylum seekers arrived in Italy in 2021. The Mediterranean represents the core not only of the Italian but also of European migration. It represents one of the most dangerous migration routes in the world. According to IOM data (International Organisation of Migration, 2020), between 1 January and 15 November 2021, out of the 1567 people found dead or missing in the Mediterranean, 1226 died along this central Mediterranean route.[1] In addition to the issue of landings and deaths at sea, the debate on migration in Italy has also focused on international agreements, in particular with Turkey and Libya, that are considered quite controversial, particularly due to the in sustainability of the Libyan situation characterized by the trafficking and exploitation of migrants. On first January 2022, foreigners living permanently in Italy was estimated by ISMU (Iniziative e Studi sulla Multietnicità—Multiethnicity Initiatives and Studies) to be 5,576,000; 519,000 of them are irregular immigrants [12].

[1] IOM, Missing migrants project, database available at https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean?region_incident=All&route=3861&year%5B%5D=2500&month=All (last accessed May 18, 2022).

The analysis of the origins of the foreign population on first January 2021 shows that—besides the Romanian Community, which represents the most substantial foreign community in Italy—third-country nationals mostly come from Albania and Morocco (with, respectively, 11.6% and 11.5% of the total number of non-EU residents), followed by immigrants from Ukraine, the Philippines, India, and Bangladesh.

3 Integration of Migrants in Portugal and Italy

MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index) measures policies aimed at fostering the integration of migrants in several countries across continents, including all EU Members, such as Portugal and Italy. MIPEX identifies and measures the impact of integration policies across eight major domains: labour market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination.

According to the latest edition of MIPEX [13], Portuguese integration policies have been consistently improving over the last years on all dimensions of equal rights, opportunities, and security for both, immigrants, and for Portuguese-born descendants. Portugal is also improving in its weakest domains such as access to health and education. School curriculum on cultural diversity and healthcare access for asylum-seekers are some of the indicators underlined by MIPEX. However, there is still a place for improvements as is highlighted by recommendations drawn from these results. This includes intercultural competencies of professionals and in the access and quality to both, early years and adult education and training. Compared to all other developed countries, Portugal's integration policies in 2019 were above average in almost all areas (except for health). A two-way process seems to be the key to success: national citizens and newcomers generally enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and security, and there is a willingness to accept and interact with each other. In fact, Portugal is ranked in

the MIPEX 'Top Ten' integration policies, along with leading Nordics and other traditional migration destination countries, scoring 81 on the MIPEX on the 100-point scale. Portugal specifically leads among the 'newer' destination countries, far ahead of other countries including Italy.

In fact, immigrant integration policies in Italy [14] have not improved in recent years. On the contrary, they are declining due to restrictive changes to naturalisation and health policies.

The issue of the suitability of the Italian system for the acquisition of citizenship by immigrants, especially by their descendants, cyclically re-emerges in public discussions. The current system requires that one of the two parents becomes a citizen, or, but only in the case of those born in Italy, that the person has reached the age of adulthood. Otherwise, the ordinary rules for adults are implemented, which set economic requirements, and there are some discretionary powers in the management of the process by the administrative bureaucracy. It is widely acknowledged that this system is now inadequate for a country where immigration plays an increasingly important role because it penalises in particular second-generation immigrants, who will nevertheless to become a significant role in the future of Italy. According to the most recent estimates of the ISMU Foundation, second-generation immigrants in Italy between the ages of 0 and 35 years old now number approximately three million [12].

The law of 1 December 2018, which change the Law Decree n.113, reformed the system of international protection, replacing humanitarian protection with special residence permits or a "temporary integration". This change also occurred in France or Germany. This approach encourages national citizens to see immigrants as equals but still foreigners, and not as neighbours or potential citizens. It makes a big difference since results suggest that integration policies emerge as one of the strongest factors shaping not only the public's willingness to accept and interact with immigrants, preventing racial/ethnic and religious discriminati but also immigrants' own attitudes, sense of belonging, sense of trust, participation and even health in the host country.

Italy scores 58/100, which is higher than the average MIPEX country (49) and slightly above-average among EU and Western European (EU15)/OECD countries. It is fair to say that immigrants in Italy enjoy more opportunities than obstacles regarding integration, although major obstacles tend to emerge in political participation and access to nationality, impairing long-term security to settle permanently or invest in their own integration. It is important to provide further supporting to immigrants' labour market integration, both those who still need training and those who have high skills and expertise and struggle to find jobs matching their skills and expectations. Also, early school leaving has to be prevented, supporting students and their families and enhancing intercultural competence of teachers, trainers, and other professionals [14].

4 Social, Educational, and Digital Inclusion: Some Challenges and the Impact of Covid 19 Pandemics in Portugal

As stated by European Anti-Poverty Network ([15], p. 5), "it is not possible to talk about poverty without talking about social exclusion. (…) the concept of exclusion is essential to the recognition that people are pushed out, or to the margins, they do not fall by themselves, and that the kind of relationships society establishes is central to the risks of poverty and exclusion."

According to Eurostat (2021), in 2020, an estimated number of 96.5 million people in the EU (21.9% of the total population) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, corresponding to the sum of persons who are at risk of poverty and/or face severe material and social deprivation and/or live in a household with very low work intensity. Women, young adults, people with a low level of educational attainment, and unemployed persons were, on average, more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2020 than other groups within the EU population.

Despite being slightly below the EU average in terms of poverty and social exclusion, Portugal is one of the most unequal countries in Europe, where the wealthy citizens earn an income that is five times higher than other people who are living in poverty. Unemployment is one of the main causes of poverty in Portugal. Nevertheless, to work sometimes is not enough to escape poverty, since 40.6% of poor individuals live in households where people work full time. Portugal is one of the European countries that work the most, although, the hourly wage for workers is extremely low compared to other countries in Europe. Elderly citizens, the most dominant demographic group, and children are more likely to be living in poverty in Portugal [15–17].

Immigrants play a fundamental role in the efficiency and sustainability of the Portuguese labour markets. However, this does not reflect their qualifications. In fact, they tend to continue earning even lower salaries than Portuguese workers and have higher job precariousness and unemployment rates [11]. As in other European countries, resident foreigners in Portugal are at greater risk of poverty and live with greater material deprivation. However, they do not lead to their greater dependence on the country's social protection. Foreigners show greater contributory capacity than nationals to the social security system and they continue to have fewer beneficiaries of social benefits per total contributor number of foreigners, compared to the total number of residents in Portugal [11].

After the 2008 recession, Portugal did not progress well economically compared to the other countries around the world and faced austerity measures that impacted mostly those who were already struggling. The outbreak of COVID-19 exacaerbated this situation. It led to 400,000 additional impoverished citizens in Portugal and a 9% increase in inequality. The Pandemic increased the risk of poverty from 16.2% to 18.4%, according to the National Statistics Institute (INE), reaching almost two million people and with increases among women, the elderly, and families, especially with children and single parents.

In Portugal, like in most societies, schooling is still a vehicle of social reproduction: disadvantaged children and youth tend to attain lower levels of school achievement and educational levels. In spite of Portugal being considered the country which has most improved in the school performance of immigrant pupils in the last decade (2006–2015), migrant children and youth tend to have poorer academic performances, even when they share a similar socioeconomic background to their national-born counterparts [18]. The pandemic did not find, thus, an educational system free of inequalities. Covid-19 uncovered these inequalities in the families but also in the schools themselves, particularly regarding access and success in the use of digital and information technologies. The use of emergency remote education and the imposition of long periods of confinement changed the conditions and spaces for learning, forcing teachers, learners, and their families to, suddenly, teach and learn online. Nonetheless, to be successful would have required prior knowledge of digital literacy and availability of appropriate resources [19, 20].

The pre-existing inequalities imposed added challenges on children and young people from more disadvantaged family contexts, confined to often-overcrowded accommodation without a quiet space to study, without proper technological equipment or internet connection. Their parents also struggled with the demands of working from home, being laid off and/or putting their health at risk going to their jobs as essential workers, while they were also forced to take over the guidance of the learning process of their children. In the case of immigrant families, the poor knowledge of the Portuguese language, compounded this making it even more difficult [19, 20]. The pandemic deepened the inequalities in education, mostly because of the differences in access to digital resources and adequate support for learning opportunities. Thus, if at the end of the 1990s, in Portugal, the discourse was mostly focused on access to internet: 'info-inclusion'/'info-exclusion' and 'info-alphabetisation', during the first decade of the 2000s, with the integration of ICT in more sectors of public life, from education to health and governance, the active population and students were the target groups. In 2010, digital competences, skills and literary became more and more important. The different paces concerning digital inclusion were made even more obvious with

the pandemics. It made clear the importance of, on the one hand, giving better support to families and to children and young people outside the school, and, on the other, to combat social inequalities [20, 21].

5 Social, Educational, and Digital Inclusion: Some Challenges and the Impact of Covid 19 Pandemics in Italy

The education system has been widely affected by the health emergency caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In addition to the problems arisen in the emergency, the pandemic has revealed chronic weaknesses that characterized the Italian school system for a long time, namely the learning difficulties and inequalities suffered by the most disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. As it happened in Portugal, in many cases, school closures and distance learning activities in Italy have exacerbated dynamics related to school inequality: the physical and relational distancing and the technological issues (mostly due to the absence of adequate devices and Internet connections) have resulted in a progressive emotional and educational disengagement of many students, causing disadvantages in their learning experience [22]. In this scenario, students with an immigrant background lacked specific training in the activities they needed the most. The practice of the Italian language and the additional training activities on Italian L2 have been reduced or interrupted, the spaces for interaction between Italian speakers and non-Italian speakers, which are crucial for motivating the learning of a second language, have been widely limited.

If we consider that the share of pupils with a migrant background account for 10.3% of the total number of pupils enrolled in Italian schools, from pre-school to upper secondary schools, it is likely that most of them have experienced some form of suspension of their learning for almost 2 years. This is in addition to the difficulties that often characterize the school trajectory of students with a migrant background, i.e., lower results than Italians in Italian language and mathematics tests carried out at the national level (especially for first-generation students); the lagging behind in studies (this phenomenon concerns 9% of Italian students and 30% of non-Italian students); the early school dropout and the difficult transition between school, training and work. The data on Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELET) and Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training (NEET) showed that the percentages of foreign-born young people in these conditions remain quite high in 2020 and Italy holds the European record with respect to these indicators [12].

To tackle these issues, research at the national level has been focusing on the development of educational methodologies, mostly pertaining to the field of Intercultural Education, specifically devoted to disadvantaged students with a migrant background. In particular, the intercultural strategies envisaged in Italian schools are related to:

- The revision of school curricula, with the introduction of intercultural issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching, and the promotion and comparison of cultures;
- The provision of extra-curricular activities carried out with out of school organisations that work with migrants and deal with intercultural issues;
- The attention to open school and classroom climate and dialogue;
- The involvement of migrant students and especially of their parents in school activities;
- The reflection on the teaching style (decentralisation of points of views, possible cultural and ethnic bias, teaching to prevent stereotypes and prejudice) and contents;
- The adoption of specific strategies and activities for foreign students, including the provision of Italian as a second language courses [23].

However, in spite of a massive body of research and a general interest in this area at the political level, these strategies did not call into question the Italian education system as a whole and intercultural education seems to be just one of a plethora of issues on which schools are left alone,

in finding resources and allocating efforts for its implementation. In the last 20 years, educational institutions, schools for adults and voluntary organisations have developed a host of effective initiatives, which were however limited to the interest and the willingness of the people promoting them. The educational system at the national level still lacks nationwide initiatives and funding to effectively implement intercultural strategies to foster the inclusion of students in situations of vulnerability and their families [24].

6 The Multiplier Events (ME) in Italy and Portugal for Level 2

As detailed in the previous chapter (see Gabriella, Joao and Andrea's chapter), the Multiplier Events were carried out with focus groups, structured according a common set of questions for all the participants to consider. The set of questions were related to the three levels identified in LIDA: (1) governments and intergovernmental organisations; (2) the education sector and public/private enterprises; (3) educators and students belonging to the adults in situations of vulnerability group.

The table below briefly reports the set of questions that were asked during the MEs for Level 2 (Table 1):

Table 1 Focus group questions

Overall question: How can the education sector and public/private enterprises support learning inclusion and active citizenship?
1. Can you describe some good practices in the training of professionals / use of technology to promote inclusion?
2. What are the main issues/obstacles for teachers/ educators in promoting active citizenship and inclusion through technologies?
3. How might educators and associated professionals be prepared for the digital world of work and study, including 1) the support to innovate collaboratively and sharing pedagogic designs to foster learning inclusion and active citizenship; 2) the promotion of accessible lifelong learning opportunities that can be applied equitably across cultures, languages, ages and abilities?
4. What do you think are important to support learning inclusion and citizenship?

The Italian project partner represented by LUMSA University research group conducted three Multiplier Events, one for each level. Given the pandemic emergency, the meetings took place online, via Google meet. The duration of each meeting was approximately 2 h.

The focus group for level 2 as an example of the methodology was carried out on June 9, 2021 and involved five participants (all women):

- P1—the head of the Education Department in Comunità di Sant'Egidio run school in the Trastevere neighbourhood, Rome (the main school of the organisation in the city centre). Approximately 1.800 students (migrants and refugees from 118 different countries) attend this school. The Comunità di Sant'Egidio is a religious international network that operates in more than 70 countries to help people in poverty and experiencing situations of marginalization. It has also other schools in Rome and in Italy and they offer courses on Italian language (A1-C2 levels);
- P2—the head of the Intercultural Centre of CEMEA Mezzogiorno, an active communication and inclusion organisation in Rome for teenagers;
- P3—a School Principal of a pre-primary, primary and lower secondary school in Rome;
- P4—the Head of the Education Sector at Centro Astalli in Rome. Centro Astalli is the Italian branch of the Jesuit Refugee Service-JRS.
- P5—the person in charge of the Health Sector at Centro Astalli in Rome.

The three ME in Portugal were also implemented separately by the Portugeuse proeject partner, represented by a research team from the University of Porto. Level 1 and level 2 multiplier events were implemented online, using the zoom platform, because of constraints associated with Covid 19 pandemic. Level 3 ME was implemented in person to avoid possible limitations regarding the participation of people in a more disadvantaged situation. As in LUMSA's MEs, all the events were recorded after informed consent of the participants.

Exemplifying the methodology, the ME for level 2 was implemented on June 18th 2021 and involved two moderators and seven participants, mostly education professionals who work with young and adult population in situations of vulnerability:

- P1—A female coordinator of the Eradicate Poverty Movement.
- P2—A female teacher at Raul Dória Vocational School.
- P3—A male coordinator of the Second Chance School in Valongo.
- P4—A female psychologist at the Integrated Development Association of Matosinhos (ADEIMA).
- P5—A female teacher at ADEIMA.
- P6—A female coordinator of the Qualifying Center of ADEIMA (F).
- P7—A female representative of the Qualifying Center of IEFP—Cerco/Porto (F).

The following paragraphs present the major findings from both MEs and follow the set of questions that were shared among the consortium partners.

7 Main Results of the Italian ME on Level 2

In describing the ways in which inclusion can be promoted through digital technologies, all participants stressed the crucial role that the pandemic of COVID-19 has played in speeding up their use by students and educators. Technology was a relevant means for inclusion during the COVID-19 disruption as it was deemed very useful for teachers to keep in contact and ensure relationships with migrants and refugees, although at a distance. However, students with low language proficiency levels had problems in using digital technologies. These students often opted for the use of WhatsApp instead of PCs for Italian language distance learning classes.

Before the pandemic, the ME participants reported that they had not made use of the technology during their classes—they often used Apps for translation or audio exercises for mobile phones to be activated together with a text book.

Only a very limited number of good practices emerged, since technology is not generally used in the daily practices of schools/organisations working with migrants and refugees. Moreover, people who took part in the ME posed some general doubts about the usefulness of technology for LIDA's target group, which would instead need close contact with people from the host country, within the daily-life contexts they were experiencing. Participants reported that immigrants and refugees should not be left alone in the use of the technology because their low level of ICT proficiency might increase their isolation. On the other hand, technology might be useful as a tool that enables them to meet other people and to communicate ("*I don't think that technology can be used by this target group in isolation. I believe that technology can be a bridge that can foster communication, in order to link together people from different cultures"—Head of the Education sector, Centro Astalli).*

Only the two persons from Centro Astalli provided an example of good practice and how it was carried out by their organisation: the online meetings with refugees and students from a secondary school in Rome. These meetings were aimed at promoting the use of the technology to foster communication and interpersonal relationships between immigrants/refugees and the people of the host country. During these online meetings via zoom, students were made aware of the needs of the refugees and learnt to consider them not only as people in situations of vulnerability. Refugees, on the other hand, had an opportunity to meet and talk with Italian people. The participants from Centro Astalli reported that these meetings had a strong impact on the ways Italian students considered the immigrants and refugees and their perceptions about immigration and inclusion. On the other hand, from the point of view of migrants/refugees, they managed through the meetings to talk and share experiences with Italian young people—and this opportunity made them feel welcomed as they were treated as peers by the Italian students ("*it is important to consider the others not as victims but as people like us, maybe with different experiences but with the same needs and desires"—person in charge of the health sector, Centro Astalli).*

The main obstacle for the promotion of active citizenship and inclusion through technologies, according to the ME participants, is related to low levels of ICT ability and to the lack of laptops and computers at home (and sometimes also in the schools). During the pandemic, participants reported that both immigrant students at school and migrants/refugees who attended Italian as a second language courses and who did not know how to use a PC were difficult to reach and could easily feel completely lost about their learning.

There has been wide debate in Italy about the "right to be connected", for those people who could not be reached during the pandemic due to lack of PCs/laptops, Internet connection and digital skills. In relation to the lack of internet connection, participants reported a project (*the Linfa project*) carried out by the association *Liberi Nantes*, as best practice in overcoming this challenge. Linfa was an advocacy operation thanks to which, over 200 immigrants in Rome and its province could take advantage of a stable and open broadband internet connection and therefore had access to digital tools for training and remote interpersonal exchanges.[2]

Another issue for promoting active citizenship and inclusion was raised by two participants who took part in the ME: in schools it is often difficult when it comes to involving immigrant parents of students in school activities or even in just school/class parent meetings. Therefore, according to their opinion, families and parents can represent a strong barrier for inclusion, that prevent younger generations of students with immigrant background who seek to fully participate in society. The need to work both with students and their family was thus strongly recommended ("*it is easier for the young citizens of tomorrow to become adult citizens when the adult parent feels that s/he is welcomed and supported"—head and educator of CEMEA Mezzogiorno*).

With regard to the third question of the focus group (the training of educators and other professionals for the digital world to foster learning inclusion and active citizenship), participants provided some useful input:

First of all, they highlighted the need to revise school curricula from a multicultural perspective—for example, revising the way History is taught and learnt, that often includes only a "Western" point of view on historical developments; analysing the proverbs or fairy-tales/stories of different countries in a comparative way in order to not only discover the different cultures, but also to identify the common traits that unify us all as human beings ("*we are all humans and have tried to overcome obstacles in the same way, although in different parts of the globe. This should be the heart of a pedagogy that is aimed at the inclusion"—Pre-primary and Primary School Principal)*.

According to this perspective, teachers should be trained to recognize cultural biases, to consider the other cultures without the lens of their culture of origin, to create spaces for intercultural education, to understand the needs of migrants and refugees ("*teachers and educators should learn to look at the others' culture without the filter of one's own culture…and this is very difficult"—Head of the Education Section of Comunità di Sant'Egidio)*. On these aspects, participants strongly recommended the planning of training activities that involve both educators and refugees/migrants, in order to make it posisble for them to share ideas and requests.

According to participants, intercultural education should be an integral part of school culture as a whole all the time, overcoming the tendency to implement 1-day episodic intercultural activity and instead working to include the intercultural dimension across the curriculum (*"we should avoid activities that are thought to be related to inclusion but instead are telling immigrants "Showcase yourself only today and then remember that you are in Italy and you need to be aligned to our culture"—pre-primary and primary School Head)*.

The schools and the organisations should be "open communities"; a place where students and their families can meet and share their experiences, and where they can find support and help—and therefore it is crucial to envisage activities that can foster these opportunities. With this in mind, the promotion of the cooperation between schools/teachers and the organizations that work

[2] https://www.liberinantes.org/progetto-linfa-azioni-di-solidarieta-digitale-ai-tempi-del-covid-19/

with migrants/refugees at the local level can contribute the generation of positive synergies inside and outside school. Unfortunately, due to the COVID disruption, it wa more or less impossible for schools and organisations to even start working on this aspect.

Finally, in the last part of the focus group, participants suggested several actions that could be undertaken in order to support learning inclusion and citizenship, starting with the knowledge of the host country's language as the most important means for inclusion and citizenship and the key role of education and the school for the development of interpersonal relationships (especially during the pandemic where immigrants faced isolation). These aspects are in line with the need to promote activities that are aimed not only at developing the knowledge of the host country and the skills to find a job but also to provide opportunities to meet and to exchange points of views between migrants/refugees and Italians—because immigrants and refugees are often isolated in reception centres where they live. These activities can take place in the form of online meetings, cultural visits in the city with people from the host country providing information about the life/culture of the city, double interviews (with one refugee and one Italian) where both participants decide which questions to ask each other.

Another important activity to promote inclusion concerns feasts and traditional celebrations. Migrants/refugees usually feel alone during feasts and they miss their families—and participants highlighted that these are moments when migrants/refugees strongly need interpersonal relations/communications. On the other hand, they are also willing to know the traditions of the host country. These are also occasions to share the values of the host culture (democracy, gender equality etc.) in an open and friendly atmosphere and, more simply, to eat together and taste food from different cultures. Participants stressed that it is crucial for migrants and refugees to take part in the cultural life of the city in which they live in (for instance, in Rome there are organizations promote common activities to mark the memory of the deportation of Roman Jews during World War II).

8 Main Results of the Portuguese ME on Level 2

According to Portuguese participants, besides the foundation offered by their initial academic training, it is important that professionals who work to foster social inclusion of people in situations of vulnerability are open, willing, and sensitized to lifelong learning, and this improve their political awareness of active citizenship. Participatory educational approaches that value the sharing of personal experiences and knowledge and intergenerational solidarity are cited as privileged opportunities of reciprocal learning/learning together (*What we are doing today, it was important that this issue was formalized, that we really had knowledge sharing teams*—Professional at a Qualifying Center of IEFP/National Institute for Employment and Professional Training—Cerco/Porto).

However, in order to do this, it is necessary to guarantee that educators/professionals' possess cultural sensitivity, stability and resilience (*I was not prepared for these populations. Therefore, I had to adapt and I think this is the great characteristic that these people must have, the ability to adapt (…) The trainer has to be resilient. Very flexible, being open, and maybe it makes sense to think not only about a project to work with these people, but also projects to work with people who work with these people*—Coordinator of a Qualifying Center/lifelong learning at the Integrated Development Association of Matosinhos ADEIMA). Some specific knowledge and skills were also identified as important such as the proficiency in the use of new digital technologies. Thus, participants highlighted the need for training professionals, creating knowledge sharing actions and partnerships, as well as guaranteeing effective access to technologies for both people in situations of vulnerability and the professionals who work with them (*In a time when we talk so much about the importance of technologies, of updating knowledge in technologies, we are dealing, weekly, with people who do not have technologies at all*—Psychologist at the Integrated Development Association of Matosinhos ADEIMA).

The participants shared some good practice that might promote inclusion and citizenship:

(a) Training movements and networks for raising political awareness and active citizenship: Training and sensitization actions that create spaces for sharing experiences, denouncing and raising civic and political awareness and active citizenship of general population and particularly of organizations and professional groups (e.g. teachers) who work with people in situations of vulnerability (e.g. poverty, homelessness). It may encourage them to go beyond transitional measures of supportive social support, demanding the implementation of effective policies to eradicate poverty and to combat any other forms of human rights violation (*… it is very important that we can all raise our civic and political awareness, isn't it? Because everything is politics in life*—Coordinator of the Eradicate Poverty Movement).
(b) Appreciation and sharing of personal knowledge: According to our participants, professional practices should be based on the philosophy of unconditional and genuine acceptance and appreciation of personal experiences, knowledge and individual interests of people in situations of vulnerability. This enriches the training process and leads to reciprocal learning opportunities. These kinds of knowledge and experience contribute to the construction of educational projects and motivate the development of participatory educational practices (e.g. community radio, photo-novel creation and rap) (*These second chance schools have the practice, it is part of their philosophy, to receive young people unconditionally, embracing them with all their experiences, and these experiences are the challenges of the training process here at the school.*—Coordinator of the Second Opportunity School in Valongo).
(c) Learning from the experiences of relevant others (e.g. older and experienced people, experts). Through such initiatives, it is possible to share, recognize and acknowledge the potential of all people of all ages to promote intergenerational solidarity (*…the interaction between different generations it's extremely important, because nobody loves what they don't know*—Coordinator of the Eradicate Poverty Movement).
(d) (Digital) Literacy and citizenship training for people in situations of vulnerability (e.g. people in situation of poverty, homelessness, migrants) with themes and content adapted to their urgent daily needs and interests (e.g. access to social support platforms, invoice analysis, internet search) and which contributes to fight isolation, to value their knowledge, to empower and to promote inclusion (*… we always look for themes that meet the interests of our trainees, but also that we detect that it is something they need and that we need to work…* Teacher at the Integrated Development Association of Matosinhos ADEIMA).

Some obstacles to the former initiatives were also identified during Portuguese ME, namely the job instability and the lack of investment in digital. In fact, job instability prevails among professionals who work with people in situations of vulnerability, who always depend on precarious funding. This precariousness challenges professional motivation, training sustainability, professionalization and the development and success of their projects. The need to invest in digital is clear in education, and the pandemic made it even clearer. Since confinement stopped face-to-face training, a lot of people who already lack technological knowledge and do not have access to technological means to participate at a distance (e.g., computer, internet access) were significantly harmed. The only possible contact with these people was by phone and mail.

On the other hand, the pandemic fostered the evolution of digital knowledge, for trainees and professionals, enabling some proximity between them in times of confinement. Although, it is also true for teachers, who do not always keep up with new technologies; most of the time, they use more traditional software (e.g., PowerPoint) and both face-to-face and distance training remains

unappealing (e.g., reading manuals). It is necessary to invest in training professionals for the use of new technological tools. It is also important to distinguish the new from the old technologies, and to recognize the impact and formative power of the informal learning context of new technologies, through social media such as Facebook or WhatsApp, on the mobile phone or tablet:

> *…we continue to talk about the old ones and we don't talk about the new technologies, and the new ones are proof that learning in an informal context actually exists and is very efficient. (…) The people that we work with now, maybe they don't know how to turn on the computer, but they also don't need to, because they know how to turn on the Tablet, right? Maybe he doesn't have an email, but he knows how to receive and send emails through.*
>
> (Coordinator of a Qualifying Center/lifelong learning at the Integrated Development Association of Matosinhos ADEIMA).

It is also essential that effective access to technologies is guaranteed for all the people, in particular people in situations of vulnerability; the need for free or affordable access to technologies (hardware, software and internet) is the only way to prevent their digital exclusion that may impair even more their social inclusion.

Portuguese professionals identify two main priorities for preparing professionals in this field: to have clear government guidelines regarding the training needs and profile of professionals working in this field (e.g., to intervene with specific populations such as migrants), and to create and formalize a culture of sharing, implementing partnerships/networks between professionals working in different schools and institutions and, thus, promoting the exchange of experience.

The profile of these professionals has some common features according to Portuguese participants: cultural sensitivity, flexibility and resilience. It was highlighted the importance of training and experience of professionals in building a profile that goes beyond technique, towards a more humanized, empathetic, sensitive and ethical intervention, adapted to the needs and idiosyncrasies of the people they will work with (e.g. homeless, migrants, Roma) and to the context (e.g. Covid-19 pandemic). The in loco training must favor socialization, self-esteem, and motivation, sustained by advanced training and professional integration.

9 Discussion

The findings from the two MEs presented in this chapter highlight the different dimensions of the efforts of professionals who work with people in situations of vulnerability. Although the both the country MEs concerned the challenges for the social inclusion of these people, these dimensions had a dual focus: on the one hand, for the multiplier event which took place in Italy, they were specifically related to the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in formal and non-formal learning contexts. While, on the other hand, for the ME in Portugal, they were associated with the social inclusion of people in risk of poverty in general, also concerning the integration in formal and non-formal education contexts, and encompassing migrants and refugees.

In the Portuguese ME an important topic merged, namely the need of to have more opportunities to build and reinforce networks and synergies between professionals and organizations who work with people in situations of vulnerability. The initial training provided to professionals was far from being enough to deal with the challenges that arose during their daily work in struggling to do their best to foster the inclusion of those in need. Those networks were expected to provide both the needed support and the sharing of implicit or tacit knowledge that might improve their work, self-fulfillment and wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the people with whom they worked, in particular in challenging times such as the Covid 19 pandemic. In order to be successful, professionals had to go beyond the traditional knowledge and skills provided by initial training: they had to show openness and flexibility and express cultural sensitivity, self-reflection and politically awareness and commitment [25].

Intercultural education and the ways of deliver it across the school curriculum and beyond was the topic at the heart of the Italian ME. The educators involved in the focus group have constantly

reported the need to implement deep changes in the educational system that will allow a modification educational methodologies, in-service teacher training and the school organization as a whole, in order to foster the social inclusion of disadvantaged students with a migrant background. To this aim, different pedagogic designs should be developed, reviewing the school curricula from an intercultural perspective and questioning the implicit perspectives and assumptions included in syllabi, teaching activities and even within school textbooks. The schools and also the organizations devoted to the inclusion of disadvantaged people with a migrant background should become "open communities". This can help and provide contexts for dialogue for the students and their families. The creation of links between formal and non-formal learning contexts, between teachers and families and among families themselves is crucial for breaking down cultural barriers and combating stereotypes. This leads to the promotion of integration [26, 27].

All the best practice examples provided by the educators and other professionals in both ME's were characterized by a common aim: to foster the meeting and the mutual sharing of experiences and points of views through learning. In this scenario, according to the Italian ME, teachers and school-heads play a pivotal role, as agents of change. However, as shown in national reports and also in the voices of the educators involved in the ME, the provision of pre-service and in-service teachers training on cultural diversity and pro-social life skills is not enough in managing the complexity of the process of inclusion. It should be necessary to work simultaneously on different levels (educational policies, school organization, teacher training) in order to boost teachers' and educators' expertise and, at the same time, to provide them with appropriate contexts in which to act. The actions to be undertaken are clear to the teachers and the professionals working with migrants and refugees. Yet, Italian schools still have a long way to go to fully and systematically implement approaches and perspectives into the educational system [24].

Cultural sensitivity, but also some stability and resilience, are also key features identified by professionals involved in Portuguese ME. For this to be the case, it is of upmost importance to create opportunities to lifelong training and sensitization actions, sharing good experiences and learning from the ones which may have not succeeded, learning and not just competing with each other, for resources and funding, but to seek solutions and act, collectively, to overcome felt and experienced difficulties. The civic and political awareness that may arise from it may also encourage going beyond traditional representations, approaches and measures of caring support for people in situations of vulnerability, evolving into the sensitization and accountability of all those who actually may eradicate poverty and combat all forms of human rights violation.

The effects of the pandemic on the social inclusion of people in situations of vulnerability was a core issue at the heart of both of the MEs in Italy and Portugal. Teachers and professionals have reported how the pandemic undoubtedly increased the use of digital technologies, with a twofold effect. On the one hand, digital technologies were deemed very useful in keeping contacts and relations with people in situations of vulnerability. In this respect, they were a relevant means for social inclusion during the COVID-19 disruption. On the other, only a limited number of people in situations of vulnerability were able to actually benefit from them, namely those who had access to ICT devices and a stable internet access, and had good levels of language proficiency and ICT skills. For the majority of migrants and refugees, for these reasons the COVID-19 pandemic implied isolation and a deterioration of their learning and participation in inclusionary processes.

The MEs participants in the two countries reported that in order to be an effective tool for social inclusion, digital technologies should be considered as a "bridge" to connect people, to communicate and share. However, technology is not generally used in the daily practices of schools/organizations working with people in situations of vulnerability—also because it is often the case that schools and education centers in Italy and Portugal lack essential digital equipment.

As in the case of intercultural education, actions to make improvements are intended at different

levels—in structural terms (more PCs and Internet access) and also in educational terms (greater focus on learning digital skills and on the use of devices for learning in the classroom or autonomously). Nevertheless, evidence from the MEs suggests that these actions are needed but are not enough in themselves. If the aim is to promote the social inclusion of people in situations of vulnerability, they must be combined with learning of the hosting country language and, most importantly, the provision of diverse experiences to actually meet other people and exchange different points of views.

Some social policies are being implemented to foster social inclusion of people in situations of vulnerability i.e. those who are migrants or national-born citizens. A good part of the immediate solutions found to the pandemic crisis involved digital tools, namely in health, socioeconomic benefits and education. Most of the time, those tools were technically designed and socially delivered in such a way that it would worsen prior inequalities and create new ones. Professionals have to be literally and symbolically interpreters and translators, and mediators who provide a sense of security for these and other populations with whom they work. Digital and other resources have to be both technically designed and socially used for the reduction of social inequalities, respecting human rights and fostering the sense of belonging, social justice, and social inclusion [19].

Thus, the availability of social policies is not enough to make a difference. It is important to strengthen communication, information, and education channels to ensure that they are successfully implemented and actually reach all the people in need [16]. In this professionals play a decisive role. Psychology and other social sciences research have contributed not only to our understanding of the correlates and consequences of poverty and social exclusion, but also how to tackle and combat it. The detrimental short medium and long-term effects of poverty and social exclusion are well documented: it has negative effects on life opportunities and choices, mostly on the academic and work domains, health, and well-being across the life span. Research has also indicated that providing safe and affordable housing, nutrition, health care, education, and financial security can make a difference in reducing inequalities and their generational reproduction. Furthermore, research provides insight into the way how not only objective conditions and behaviours, but also attitudes and beliefs make a difference in combating poverty and fostering social inclusion: stereotypes regarding people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are powerful predictors of change and make a huge difference [28]. Thus, it is important to be aware of its importance not only in the general population but primarily amongst professionals in the frontline working with people in situations of vulnerability, and people themselves.

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Joining Voices for Social Inclusion: Activism and Resilience of Professionals Working with People in Situations of Vulnerability

Ana Luísa Costa and Susana Coimbra

Abstract

Activism in educational, social, and community intervention is widespread in literature as an essential professional role in promoting inclusion and social justice for people in situations of vulnerability. Professionals who work with these populations are in a privileged position for informal and situated learning and engagement with professional activism. This contribution reflects upon the many obstacles that may hinder its more prominent expression, but also on its outcomes in terms of learning inclusion, resilience and the process of overcoming the challenges evident in (re)building of professional identities. This involves considering processes that can be decisive in the way people in situations of vulnerability are perceived, heard, supported, empowered, and included.

Keywords

Professional activism · People in situations of vulnerability · Resilience · Social inclusion · Social justice · Find a voice · Empathy · Situated learning

1 Introduction

The increase of vulnerability in Europe, in particular for migrants, refugees, and other people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, combined with their low chance of civic and political participation, poses unprecedented challenges to professionals[1] who work with them through educational, social, and community intervention. It is noteworthy that a thoughtful and critical look at these professionals' ethical-political attention and commitments is within the scope of their work. It is assumed that it needs to be continually cogitated and invested in when working with people in situations of vulnerability. These claims are especially true in the challenging pandemic

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[1] By 'professionals' we refer to practitioners from several areas, such as education, psychology, social work, health, law.

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context we have experienced and how this has accentuated inequalities and breaches of fundamental rights.

According to the UN report of 2021 [1], years, or even decades, of progress have been impaired or even reversed in important civilization milestones such as eradicating poverty, chronic hunger, or gender inequality. Societies struggled to guarantee access to the most basic needs for all. In fact, the pandemic exposed and intensified inequalities within and between societies. People who in (a) situation(s) of vulnerability, were/are not only at greater risk of becoming infected by the virus, but also of suffering from its gigantic social and economic repercussions that are as of yet to be fully grasped. Professionals who work with them play a key role in rebounding from this trajectory. They may decisively contribute to the (re)building of societies and communities, turning them into more fair, equitable, democratic and inclusive in different domains such as education, employment and health.

However, in order to contribute to more participative and resilient societies, professionals need to become engaged and resilient themselves. This does not happen without support or scaffolding. Nor does it happen solely based on their initial education and training, despite its importance of course. Actually, Clark et al. [2] observed, in a study with counsellors who work with people experiencing poverty, that training (formal and informal/experiential learning), knowledge (e.g. about intersectionality, privilege, oppression), skills (e.g. being alert/sensitive to and openly address the impact of poverty and social class), socio-political awareness and advocacy with or on behalf of the people they work with, are core interrelated dimensions for ethical and competent practice with people in situations of vulnerability. As underlined by the authors, these dimensions build on and reinforce each other, and so by advocating for people experiencing poverty, counsellors (continue to) gain training, knowledge, awareness, and skills to inform their practices and serve people on the micro, meso, and macro levels.

In turn, based on a study with (activist) educators working in schools, Stern and Brown [3] locate activism as a coping mechanism against hopelessness, anxiety, or trends of depression in their field of practice. Representing not only a mechanism for self-preservation, but also a response to these traumatic conditions, through mobilizing for action towards the social justice ideals for public education that they hold dear.

Thus, considering the relevance of these professionals' further involvement with the causes of the people they work with, and commitment to inclusion, participation, and social justice, we start our discussion by reflecting on the significance of professional activism, the political professional role within the work context and penciling out some of the obstacles imposed on it. Thereafter, we concentrate our concerns on the potential for pedagogical and resilience development, for professionals and for the people they work with. Finally, we seek to deconstruct some well-intentioned but counter-productive perspectives embedded in society, literature, and intervention and how they are reflected in expressions such as "vulnerable populations", "to give voice" and some narrow and misleading conceptions of 'resilience'.

Our contribution is offered in the scope of the European project *LIDA—Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age: to Belong and Find a Voice in a Changing Europe*. It aims to contribute to the project's goals; in particularly with regard to the analysis of practices that promote social inclusion and participation of adults in situations of social vulnerability, articulating different levels of interest including policy and society, the education sector and institutions, and professionals and people in situations of vulnerability with whom they work.

2 Being a Professional Activist: Significance and Barriers

In the face of vulnerability and social exclusion, it is crucial that professionals recognize that despite being empowering to share outrage with the people with whom they they work; to be truly transformational, they must frame their struggles in as founded upon an awareness of sociopolitical injustice [4, 5]. Thus, it is important that they commit themselves to social change through conscientization and a joint struggle against the oppressive

structures that generate and maintain it [6, 7]. Such an interventional/pedagogical approach implies assuming an ethical-political professional stance and praxis, that goes beyond the micro circle of palliative treatment, through the provision of basic services, to resolve everyday problems and needs of people in situations of vulnerability. It implies questioning, exposing, and struggling against the macro, globalized, and established forces that maintain injustice and promote exclusion.

The relevance of incorporating political reflection and action when working with vulnerability issues is widespread in literature from diverse fields of knowledge [8–14] and as well as with respect to professional/ethical guidelines (e.g., [15, 16]). Nevertheless, despite these recommendations, being political when facing vulnerability, social exclusion, and injustice, does not seem to be part of a generalized and conflict-free practice in educational, social and community intervention [5, 9, 17].

Gal and Weiss-Gal [18] identify a group of dimensions that help explain professionals' political (dis)engagement: 'opportunity' at the level of political institutions, 'facilitation' on the part of the organizations where professionals work, and personal 'motivation', that is internal (e.g., arising from individual interests/values) or external (e.g., professional training). Other studies also point out specific features as potential predictors of professional activism. Some of these are personal or social, such as age, interest in politics, lack of educational preparation or training in political practice, position in the profession, perception of political action as integral to their professional responsibility or a distinct valuation of social justice. However, others relate to the work context itself, such as organizational culture, support or discouragement of the opportunity to participate [10, 13, 19].

A recent qualitative study about professional activism, with a multidisciplinary and multiprofessional approach [17], presents a set of interrelated aspects that potentially contribute to professionals' disengagement. Namely, professionals' political alienation, accommodation and indifference, possibly related to a lack of critical thinking, and of political conscience and knowledge, that appears to be reinforced by an apolitical stance of the (non)governmental institutions in which they work. A conservative and low participatory tradition in the sector and dependence on funders agendas, may also contribute to curbing the critical autonomy of organizations and professionals who might refrain from supporting strongly expressed political perspectives. The non-political vision of work, often seen as a correlate of professionalism, can lead to mistrust, prejudice, and exclusion of non-conformist professionals, that frequently harm their careers or even put their jobs at risk, which already tend to be precarious. Finally, this is particularly harmful for women, who already have fewer opportunities, and who tend to report heavier workloads and higher vulnerability.

Actually, it is important to emphasize that all these obstacles affect women to an even greater degree, as a result of gender inequality whether in the family, the social, or (specially) the work context, which implies double time management responsibilities and greater effort and risk in engaging with professional activism.

Therefore, despite individual motivations and predispositions for political action, contextual, workplace and political conditions may be crucial in preventing or encouraging involvement in different aspects of policy practice [10, 19]. To be a professional activist implies jumping out of a private and safer work role, and to publicly expose and defend the adoption of a political position; one that usually implies controversy and risk. As pointed out by Grieger and Ponterotto [5], professionals need to 'rock the boat' to create change and this means rocking their own professional boat. In this respect, Greenslade et al. [9] draw attention to the negative impact of contemporary welfare ideologies on adopting a professional activist position. Favouring the dominance of technical practice models at the expense of activist approaches, based on a supposed neutrality or apolitical positioning, can lead to organisational–professional ethical conflicts and to the limitation or concealment of activist practices for fear of professional consequences.

As already mentioned, the financial instability and funding dependence of most organizations

also plays a fundamental role here. Concretely, it can encourage alignment with social and political agendas that set priorities that do not necessarily coincide with those of the teams and professionals working in the field. Furthermore, it implies a continual state applying for funding and the added bureaucratic and administrative burden that follows. All this ends up conditioning the culture of the organizations, and potentially workers' willingness or audacity for activist engagement.

Looking at this from a macro perspective, it is inevitable that this leads to work barriers and limitations reflecting a capitalist and neoliberal political and economic agenda. Structures that guarantee stability and career progression and the acceleration of dynamic work practices are weakened and this in turn leads to unpredictability, precariousness, and insecurity. As a result, relationships and the work organization as a collective is compromised hindering long-term commitments to professional activism that can combat exclusion and social injustice [20].

The fatigue and discouragement implied by these processes, adds to the personal and emotional effort and strain that working with people in situations of vulnerability and injustice entails. It certainly restricts the motivation and effort of professionals to resist these barriers. Nevertheless, knowing that this political professional role persists and is continuously valued, despite all the professional and ethical-political conflicts and risks inherent in adopting a professional activist position, drives us to consider further and reflect upon what makes a difference and lends support to resilience and resistance to these obstacles.

3 Professionals' Experience as a Trigger of Resilience

Working with people in situations of vulnerability may be very challenging, demanding, and stressful or even induce burnout and mental illness. However, it may also be a rich and very rewarding learning opportunity, bringing a sense of purpose and meaning, and the consciousness that it is possible to make a difference in people's lives. This is despite initial professional training tending to emphasise cognitive knowledge and technical skills, and neglecting the importance of strategies that foster professionals resilience [21] and prepare them for policy practice [10, 19].

Resilience is a complex and multi-faceted construct that is hard to define in a consensual agreed manner. Most of the common definitions highlight the ability to 'recover' or "bounce back" from adversity. Initial studies, in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on high-risk children who thrive against all odds. Those children tended to be perceived as having somewhat 'magical' invulnerable features. Nowadays, empirical evidence shows that it is not an innate, fixed, and rare ability. It may sound magical, but it is an *ordinary magic* that results from the action of common internal and external protection mechanisms that may (or may not) be available and activated in most people and contexts in order to change and adjust an expected risk trajectory [22, 23].

In a broad sense, resilience may be defined as "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development" ([22], pp. 10). Resilience implies, then, the attainment of favourable results in terms of adjustment in spite of (or because of) a considerable exposition to risk, thanks to the action of protective mechanisms. To define how bad a risk is or how good is an adjustment is probably one of the most difficult challenges in resilience research. It may often lead to its discredit as a scientific construct, if one falls into one of the opposite sides: anything goes or nothing is good enough. Another common pitfall is to consider that any of these variables may be defined universally, for all the people, in all situations or contexts. Risk and adjustment are, necessarily, heterogeneous, unstable, and embedded in the social values of each group [24, 25]. Most of the valued adjustment outcomes of resilience research are largely influenced by the neoliberal paradigm, according to which it is important to succeed in all the normative tasks societies expect from individuals.

However, there are many ways to succeed that may be more important for the individual, including his/her ability for self-determined participation in public and private life, and well-being, among other things. This suggests that resilience is, therefore, a question of human rights, involving psychological, but also political and socio-economic dimensions [26].

Research on resilience in professional or occupational settings is still "in its infancy" [21]. This is despite it being increasingly viewed as a critical resource for the twenty-first century, in particular in complex, stressful, and emotionally challenging environments [27]. In fact, working toward the ideal of social transformation and justice, requires not only critical, ethical and political awareness, but also resilience, conviction and persistence. The literature shows that in the face of the obstacles posed to professional activism, particularly those resulting from professional-organizational conflict, professionals may respond by staying and 'coping', 'breaking down' and leaving, or staying and resisting. However, relatively little is known about the last, namely about why professionals choose to resist and what supports their resistance [9, 19].

We believe it is interesting and worthy of reflection, how the work context can also offer an answer to this challenge. Despite its potential to inhibit professional activism it also offers a privileged place for informal, situated, and holistic (activism) learning [28–30]; and it also creates fertile ground for resilience and keeping up to do date with ethical-professional purposes. Accordingly, professionals working with people in situations of vulnerability are in an advantageous position and also experience an emergent need to develop and learn about resilience. It is important to keep in mind that a learning by doing approach, has been understood in the literature righlty as going beyond the cognitive realm, integrating emotional, relational and affective learning outcomes [28, 29, 31–33].

Tacit knowledge comes with the experience and the wisdom that turns professionals into people who want and know how to make a difference in their work [34, 35]. We are refering specifically to processes of conscientization, such that the acquisition or strengthening of a sense of (in) justice, is related to inter-personal relational learning that offers experience of empathy, altruism, cultural competence and humility.

4 Antidotes for Professionals' Burnout and Activism Disengagement?

The experience of working with people in situations of vulnerability creates opportunities for conscientization, i.e., for the awareness of social injustice and oppressive structures, which perpetuate inequality, vulnerability and exclusion. Sensitized by the concerns and struggles of the people they work with and eventually inspired by other fellow activists [28, 29], professionals are prompted to reflect on their ethical-professional purposes and commitments. This gives rise to feelings of a duty to fairness. This sense of (in)justice, emerging or being enhanced through their work experience and socialization, has the potential to guide their intervention to the political sphere, committing them with causes of the people with whom they work [17, 31]. Hence, we highlight the role of work experiences and relationships, reinforced by emotion and affection, as rich contexts of shared, informal and situated learning and political engagement [28, 29, 36].

However, professionals working with people in situations of vulnerability are themselves particularly vulnerable to burnout. According to the classical definition of Maslach and Jackson [37] the burnout syndrome comprises emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal fulfilment. Burnout produces detrimental and progressive physical, psychological, and behavioural effects, such as feelings of fatigue, sleep disorders, headaches, lack of attention and concentration, feelings of alienation, irritability, aggressiveness, isolation, cynicism, depression, or even suicide ideation. Simionato and Simpson [38] found, in their systematic review among psychotherapists, that more than half of the professionals referred medium to high levels of burnout. According to their study, the most prominent risk factors were age (being young), having

little experience in the field, and being too involved in the problems of people they assist. Empathy among professionals who work with people in situations of vulnerability is activated or learned by work experience, providing better mutual understanding and appreciation. However, it may also be a double-edged sword.

Empathy may be defined as the ability to vicariously feel what another person feels [39], making it possible to fully apprehend and understand the emotional states of the other [40]. This is a multifaceted psychological construct composed of affective (empathic concern and personal distress) and cognitive (perspective taking and fantasy) components [40, 41]. According to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, empathy increases the probability of altruism. Altruistic behaviours are the ones which ultimate goal is to increase the well-being of others [42–44].

Empathy is usually regarded as a universally positive trait. However, results suggest that empathic feelings towards others, especially when combined with an intense desire of being accepted, loved, and to belong, may lead to the illusion that we are being helpful when in fact we are not [45]. This process tends to protect and reinforce a self-image as a good person. It also questions the actual meaning and usefulness of empathy, since empathy may turn us narrow-minded, and trigger parochial feelings towards our own which, in turn, lead to biased reasoning [45, 46]. Furthermore, one of the main obstacles that can arise to professionals who work with people in situations of vulnerability stems from the dosage and type of empathy involved in the relationships established with people they assist. In particular, high levels of personal distress more probably will paralyse than energise the implementation of successful intervention strategies.

Thus, if empathy is recognised for its mutual positive effects on the interaction with others, it can also have be potentially negative effects on those who empathise. If this emotional contagion is not regulated by the separation of perspectives, a complete fusion between the self and the other will occur, generating reactions of alarm, personal discomfort, and vicarious traumatisation [47, 48]. Instead, it would be important that these professionals activate compassion and genuine and effective altruism [44, 49], without drowning in the suffering of the people they work with. This way, professionals will probably make a more conscious and efficacious effort to understand another's perspective and culture, which may be very different from his or her own, even when they were born and they live in the same society.

In fact, professionals in this field of work are constantly dealing with diversity and therefore need to have a good repertoire of knowledge and skills [8]. Yet, knowledge and skills alone are not sufficient. It is also important to have intercultural competence that results from experiential learning [50]. Intercultural competence is a continuous and dynamic process and has an important affective component: experiencing positive emotions resulting from understanding and valuing cultural differences, i.e., the intercultural sensitivity [51]. It is not an innate human characteristic. On the contrary, it may, can, and should be stimulated. It represents a subjective developmental experience of progressive accommodation of cultural difference, from "ethnocentrism" (Denial, Defence and Minimisation) to "ethnorelativism" (Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration) [50].

The concept of cultural humility goes even further. Based upon the premise that culture is not static, but fluid and subjective, it underlines the importance to be continuously challenged to understand "others" and otherness, and to challenge institutional barriers that cause systemic power imbalances. It stresses the need for individual and institutional genuine accountability, in considering the perspective of other and otherness and not only in tolerating it. This cultural humility presupposes a commitment to critical self-reflection and continuous shared learning [52, 53].

We consider that all these features are essential (often implicit) knowledge when working with people in situations of vulnerability. Ultimately, they may be the antidotes for burnout and disengagement, and explain why some professionals still choose or manage to maintain, or

even reinforce, a political professional stance in their work (against all odds). Assuming that by fostering their sense of (in)justice and strengthening their relational skills, these professionals may become more resilient, which supports them in overcoming burnout and other obstacles identified and see their professional activist identity and practice reinforced.

5 Final Remarks: Questioning Commonplaces as a First Step for Change

In-depth reflection on the intervention with people in situations of vulnerability, reveals the need to maintain a watchful eye on some terminological and conceptual (uncritical) commonplaces in this field of work. They shape our minds as citizens, and particularly as professionals, often influenced as we are by social media, scientific literature and/or institutional guidelines; contribute to the oversimplification and depoliticization of realities and experiences that are, in fact, complex, challenging, and most of the times hard and unfair; and can be tokenistic, blaming and stigmatizing themselves. The first step for change, as mentioned before, is to question the innate, romanticized and acritical conception of resilience for both professionals and the people with whom they work.

First, resilience is not voluntary or a question of will, and it does not emerge from interventions exclusively focused on the person. It depends largely on the socioeconomic resources available. Understanding resilience from a critical and contextualized perspective defies the bias imposed by those who hold the power, acknowledging that the access to and the control over resources depend on many factors besides the intraindividual or motivational ones: cultural, social, economic, political, and even biological factors intervene, making it a product of structurally social inequalities [26].

The complexity attached to resilience research and intervention is worthwhile. In particular, if one takes into consideration all the potential beneficial outcomes and implications for change and improvement when the focus is shifted from the traditional and dominant deficit perspective that shows how people may fail and succumb to the one which tries to figure out how people thrive [25]. However, it is important to keep in mind that any intervention aimed at promoting resilience must avoid top-down approaches. These approaches tend to be deployed in the name of the ones who are in a more vulnerable position. What they try to do however, is to make them more neoliberally productive, and feeling responsible for what they achieve or not. So, they tend to benefit the ones who were already in a powerful position [54].

Thus, to be resilient is not equal to be successful. It implies a worthwhile adjustment in spite of and/or because of the presence of risk. To be exposed to risk is a good way of developing resilience, according to the inoculation model [22, 25]. However, as it happens with vaccination, people do not become properly inoculated if the exposition to the risk is too high, too soon, or too late. Exposition to risk does not guarantee, thus, that people become resilient. They need to get the right dosage at the right time and with adequate support from their immune system. Similarly, to becoming resilient, people need the development of adequate protective mechanisms within themselves and/or their context. People play an important role in the whole process, undoubtedly, but they are far from being the only ones who matter. In fact, when the risk is too high and the external resources are too scarce, resilience may be the least probable outcome. Above all, in these situations, people cannot be responsible for their own (lack of) resilience, it is not fair, they are not supposed to become resilient against all the odds.

Moreover, resilience is not synonymous with invulnerability: no one is invulnerable all the time, in all situations, towards all types of risk, no matter what. In fact, within a resilience framework, the vulnerable group is the one who is exposed to low levels of adversity, but despite that presents unexpected low levels of adjustment. Research suggests that it is a quite infrequent group. It is unusual to do poorly in life without any plausible explanation. If most people possess in themselves and in their environment

enough resources to adapt, it means that people in this group probably are exposed to an unknown, unmeasured, or hidden adversity [22]. It is not the case of the so-called "vulnerable people/populations".

Then, to speak of 'vulnerable people/populations' also implies interrogation and scrutiny. It labels and reinforces otherness, and it becomes more and more important to critically question and denaturalize the oppression that is underlying this expression. UN DESA [55] recognises that defining vulnerability is difficult, since its determinants range from socioeconomic status and living conditions to the power structures that underpin social organization. Accordingly, it is near impossible to find a universal operationalization of vulnerability that is dynamic and heterogeneous. Vulnerability, as resilience, is embedded in cultural values in such a way that is not possible to find a universal way to identify it [56]. When we talk about "vulnerable people" or "vulnerable groups", we are adopting a categorical approach according to each we classify them as being vulnerable rather than identifying and combating the situations of vulnerability in which they are put into by society. It is the case of social and/or economic vulnerability, and the undervaluation, discrimination, and stigmatization that come with it. When people exist in a situation of disadvantage including for example with respect to the distribution of income, housing, education and health, they are most of the time, less prone to behave in an autonomous or self-determined mannery [57] and have fewer opportunities for their voices to be heard and considered.

Expressions such as 'to give voice', are widespread in literature about intervention with people who are oppressed, excluded and underrepresented, and are also described as among the main aims of organizations/projects working with them. Being critical, political, and ethical, in intervention and research, implies questioning these kinds of expressions and scanning for inherent power issues, labelling, and patronizing approaches that are themselves discriminatory and exclusionary. Claims to "give voice" to women, children, people with a disability, victims of racism or LGBTphobia, or any other underrepresented, marginalized and oppressed group may look morally just and have been largely framed by good intentions. It represents a shift from working *on* to working *with* [58]. Of course, at first glance, the metaphor of "giving voice" is quite evocative of social change against privilege, providing the floor to those who are social or economically powerless. However, on adopting a perspective of giving voice to someone or some group, it is assumed that someone or some group does not have any, or is not using it loudly or well enough. So, one may assume, that it is our mission, as professionals and researchers, to amplify or translate these voices. It is worth noting though that during this process, these voices will be the object of transformation and (mis)interpretation, and this may actually reinforce the hierarchies of power that were supposed to combat [58–60].

Much of this terminology and conceptions of the problem are present in organizational guidelines, which guide both intervention and research in this field. This strengthens the relevance and pertinence of problematizing them as counterproductive, due to a stigmatizing and condescending attitude, often opposing the purposes claimed, namely the promotion of inclusion and civic and political participation. We do not give people a voice, they already have a voice. Namely, a voice as a comprehensive concept, that goes beyond the ability to communicate, by considering peoples' knowledge, principles, values, positions, and their way of seeing the world and their place/role within it.

To listen to their voice is important, just as it is important to translate, mediate, amplify, speak out for the ones who are generally not heard because their position lacks power. Our job as professionals who work, through intervention and research, with people in situations of social vulnerability, aiming to promote inclusion and participation, is to learn with each other how to speak out together, to stand and work alongside them, not "representing" them but creating space for them to speak and guaranteeing they (and their claims) are heard. Letting and making everybody else listen, be aware, care, and fight

against the imbalance of power and injustice within our societies. To speak of participation implies that the struggles are carried out by/with the people and their concerns. Not in their name but by/with them. From their place of speech, recognizing and valuing their representativeness and self-determination. Ensuring as Freire put it, that "the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for liberation is what it should be: not a pseudo-participation, but a committed action" ([36], p.44).

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Voice, Belonging, Storytelling and Transformation in Digital Storytelling Workshop Settings—Some Philosophical Considerations

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Abstract

Stories are crucial to our understanding of ourselves and our world. Digital storytelling amplifies ordinary voices and draws on a combination of learned and unlearned skills such as ethical, self and aesthetic knowledge, to express, represent and, through a process of distillation that is not unlike the phenomenological reduction, create a connection between storyteller and viewer that can cross boundaries of time and space. This chapter considers digital storytelling, through a philosophical lens, with a particular focus on the existential and phenomenological aspects of the process and consideration of the types of knowledge that both inform and emerge from the process.

Keywords

Stories · Digital storytelling · Existential · Phenomenological workshops · Lambert · StoryCenter · Patient Voices · Philosophical

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It is often said that storytelling is the foundation of human experience. We learn about the world and share our learning through stories. According to McDrury and Alterio (2003), among others, storytelling is a uniquely human experience, by means of which we not only make sense of past experiences, but also convey emotions and values, and connect with other people.

Stories are among the most powerful tools of anyone concerned with education or learning, whether formal or informal. It is through stories that we learn those things we need to know about being part of, and navigating, a family, group, organization or society [1]. Lindemann Nelson highlights the need for stories to give meaning to abstract sets of morals and ethical theories [2]. By making the universal particular, she suggests, stories give us the chance to connect individual experience with socially shared realities such as power and gender, wealth and health, pandemics, war, migration and climate change. Although research paradigms might privilege data that can be presented in the form of quantitative statistics, it is important to recognise that qualitative data is a necessary balance to such an overly quantitative approach, particularly when professional judgements are required, as is the case in education, health and social care and, indeed, any profession where human beings are central. According to Sumner, 'statistics tell us how the system experiences the individual; stories tell us how the individual experiences the system' (Sumner 2009).

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Stenhouse [3] offers an elegant and succinct argument for the use of stories in improving professional judgment in education. He writes thus [3]:

> *'There is a need to capture … the texture of reality which makes judgment possible for an audience. This cannot be achieved in the reduced, attenuated accounts of events which support quantification. The contrast is between the breakdown of questionnaire responses of 472 married women respondents who have had affairs with men other than their husbands and the novel, Madame Bovary. The novel relies heavily on that appeal to judgment which is appraisal of credibility in the light of the reader's experience. You cannot base much appeal to judgment on the statistics of survey; the portrayal relies almost entirely on appeal to judgment.'*

We find and make meaning through stories. We can tell stories to entertain and to teach. We also tell stories to heal and to bring about change and transformation. In this respect, digital stories, which are readily transmissible via the internet, provide particularly valuable opportunities to learn from personal experience and build on that experience to design and deliver services that are suitable for the constituent group, whether these are students, patients, service users, immigrants, refugees or other vulnerable populations. Chamberlin goes one step further, highlighting the role of stories in enabling us to hold and grasp both wonder and wondering simultaneously:

> *'Every story brings the imagination and reality together in moments of what we might call faith. Stories give us a way to wonder how totalitarian states arise, or why cancer cells behave the way they do, or what causes people to live on the streets… and then come back again in a circle to the wonder of a son… or a supernova…. Or DNA. Wonder and wondering are closely related, and stories teach us that we cannot choose between them. If we try, we end with the kind of amazement that is satisfied with the first explanation, or the kind of curiosity that is incapable of genuine surprise. Stories make the world more real, more rational, by bringing us closer to the irrational mystery at its centre. Why did my friend get sick and die? Why is there so much suffering in the world? Whose land is this we live on? How much is enough?'* [4]

1 Digital Storytelling

Although the term 'digital storytelling' has become ubiquitous in the digital age of the twenty-first century, it was not always so. First coined by Joe Lambert, Dana Atchley *et al*, 'digital storytelling' described a creative workshop process that led participants through the process of creating a short video using then-new technology in the shape of a laptop computer and video editing software. Inspired by the home movies created on cine cameras by Dana Atchley's family, the combination of new technologies, creativity honed in theatres and creative writing workshops, a kind of idealism drawing on Freire's approach to emancipatory education, and the support of funding from Apple Computers, Lambert et al. ran the first digital storytelling workshop in Los Angeles, California, in 1993 [5].

These technological developments wrested the monopoly of filmmaking away from well-funded movie directors and placed the possibility of creating short, personal videos within the grasp of everyone, regardless of age, class, educational attainment, or ability; with a bit of support, anyone could become the director of their own short film.

The model of a carefully facilitated and curated workshop for a small number of people that combines elements of creative writing, reflection, careful listening, photography, community theatre and small group work has become known as the 'classical' model of digital storytelling. Classical digital stories are normally short (2–3 min) videos that weave together a recorded voiceover, still images and/or short video clips and sometimes music or other sound effects into a rich tapestry of experience and reflection. They are characterised by the authentic voice of the storyteller and a degree of emotional openness that encourages viewers to make a connection with the storyteller and his or her experiences [6]. They are truly multimodal, drawing upon multiple techniques and technologies that engage the different senses through seeing, hearing and reading.

It is this classical model of digital storytelling that informs the work of Patient Voices, a digital storytelling project established in 2003 as an educational resource with the aim of restoring humanity and compassion to healthcare through the creation and dissemination of digital stories created by those who receive and deliver healthcare—and sometimes the lack of it. The actor James Earl Jones said 'one of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter' [7]. During 20 years of facilitating digital storytelling workshops, it has been humbling to see that those who are seldom heard and who may not even believe they have a voice—those we might describe as vulnerable—are able to articulate and describe—in words and images—their deepest pain and most heartfelt longings. By creating a digital story, they are able 'to convey their felt experiences of healthcare, via new technology, so that their voices can be heard in any lecture theatre, Board room or conference venue anywhere in the world' [8]. Use of these digital stories to prompt reflection, discussion and debate would, it was reasoned, result in a recognition of our shared humanity and, hopefully, to improvements in healthcare design and delivery. These same aspirations can be applied to education, social care or, as indicated above, any endeavour that has human beings and their existence as its central focus.

Both StoryCenter and Patient Voices have worked around the world, with people from across the spectrum of age, race, gender, class and ability, listening deeply to their stories about the subject in which they are inevitably the expert: their own experience and existence. Those unable to write are supported by someone who can; those unable to use a computer have a 'chauffeur' to follow their instructions in a collective attempt to distil the story to its very essence, to get to the heart of the story. This is a pedagogy alongside and not driven by the teacher leading from the front or influencing from behind.

Both StoryCenter and Patient Voices owe much to the democratising work of Paulo Freire [9]. Determined to liberate peasant farmers from the shackles of illiteracy, Freire built their confidence and competence by starting with what they already knew: their own existence and experience of subsistence farming. The emancipatory work of classical digital storytelling opens the possibility of a deeper understanding of individual existence through close and creative examination of a storyteller's experience or experiences, illuminated by the collective consciousness of all the members of the group. This process often results in new insights and is reported by many storytellers to be transformative [10].

The remainder of this chapter will consider how the support of existential philosophy can increase our understanding of how the process of classical digital storytelling can lead to new ways of knowing, including but not limited to a deeper understanding of our shared humanity and recognition of the importance of community. In what follows, we will look at the deep sharing and examination of personal stories that occur in a digital storytelling workshop through an existential-phenomenological lens and consider the kinds of knowing that may result from the process.

2 What Happens in a Classical Digital Storytelling Workshop?

The schedule for a typical classical digital storytelling workshop is full and varied (see Table 1 below as an example). Before the Covid-19 pandemic, most workshops were held face-to-face in person, over the course of 3 days; travel restrictions imposed by national lockdowns kickstarted what was previously an experimental approach to online workshops so that these were able to establish themselves as a norm. Despite some reluctance to depart from the intimacy and immediacy of face-to-face workshops, it has to be said that there are some advantages to the online model, not least the huge savings in time, money and carbon emissions and, of course, the possibility for participation from anywhere in the world. The Patient Voices online workshop model derives, as does the face-to-face model, from the pioneering work of StoryCenter and relies on a somewhat heady blend of reflection, creative writing, image creation, selection and editing, voice coaching and recording, video editing, group and individual work that results in the final digital story—a dis-

Table 1 Depicting seven sessions in a digital story telling workshop

Session 1	Introductions—to each other and to the course Introduction to digital storytelling and overview of The Seven Steps Writing to a prompt Preparation for story circle Check out/debrief Individual work: Prepare notes or script for Story circle 1
Session 2	Check in Story circle 1 Debrief Drafting a script Check out/debrief Individual work: Finalise script for story circle 2
Session 3	Check in Story circle 2 Hearing your story—Thinking about voice Seeing your story—Thinking about images Tips for recording audio Recording a voiceover Check out/debrief Individual work: Record the voiceover and begin looking for images
Session 4	Check in Image selection/creation Storyboarding Video editing tutorial 1: The basics Creating a rough cut Check out/debrief Individual work: Continue to find (or create) suitable images and begin editing video
Session 5	Check in Feedback on rough cuts Video editing tutorial 2: Special features Refining and editing the story leading to second cut Check out/debrief Individual work: Continue editing video
Session 6	Check in Trouble-shooting and problem-solving Finalising the story leading to final cut Individual work: Continue video editing to achieve a good draft for the screening
Session 7	Check in Screening of stories Check out/debrief and final reflections

tillation of all these ingredients that is, as one storyteller commented: 'pure, clear and potent' (Tait 2009)—a bit like good whisky.

But first, let us set out a plan of what happens in a typical workshop, whether online or in-person; a session, whether online or in-person, equates to roughly 2 hours. In all Patient Voices workshops there is an icebreaker that involves asking each participant in turn: 'please tell us your name (or whatever you would like us to call you) and then tell us three things you really like and three things you really dislike'.

Individual work is any time that is not occupied by specific teaching; in face-to-face workshops, participants work individually on laptops provided, with plenty of support from facilitators. Online workshops necessitate working remotely, but participants are encouraged to arrange individual meetings with facilitators during all stages of the process from script work through to completion of the final video.

Such an outline plan, while useful for scheduling purposes, and for giving participants some idea of the range of activities with which they will be engaged and the different kinds of knowledge and skills they may hope to acquire, does little more than scratch the surface of what actually happens in a workshop. These courses are inherently experiential and, therefore, difficult to describe, certainly if words are our only descriptive tools. Visual methods provide different opportunities for exploration and description. Darcy Alexandra employed this approach, in part, in her doctoral thesis on digital storytelling as transformative practice [11]. Another attempt to understand what happens in a digital storytelling workshop resulted in a short documentary[1] that captures something of the essence of the experience, [12] but even this falls short of revealing the essential experience.

Before going on, it must be noted that digital storytelling workshops are inherently a collective and communal experience and digital stories are co-creations, owing their existence as much to the facilitators and workshop participants as to the individual storytellers. The stories—and the storytellers—cannot help but influence each other as their stories weave in and out of indi-

[1] www.patientvoices.org.uk/pvthedoc.htm

vidual and group focus. Crisan and Dunford put it like this:

> *'On the surface these digital stories are all singular, personal audio-visual accounts of an individual's story, yet—the making of them is shaped by the collaborative experience in the workshop. Each story shows how someone envisages their place in a personal and a public world. They all bridge the past, present and the future. Particular sets or groups of stories acquire a wider representative meaning and, in doing this, say something deeper about the place they come from.'* [13].

3 Philosophy, Phenomenology and Ways of Knowing

In this section we will explore philosophically inspired approaches and, in particular, those inspired by phenomenology, to further illuminate the experiences of participants in a digital storytelling workshop. Traditionally, phenomenology is about reducing the concerns of the individual to describe and focus upon experiences unaffected by social, structural or other forms of explanation. In technical terms, this is known as 'the phenomenological reduction', as in meditating upon a life-changing event and how it is experienced (Puligandla 1970). Such a view aligns with those 'stories' where events are simply laid out for the viewer with minimal interpretation added by the storyteller. This form of storytelling echoes the tradition of the chroniclers of the Middle Ages who presented successive lists of events as a narrative, where the touch of the storyteller is reduced to the barest minimum (Sharfman 2015).

However, in the digital storytelling of the workshop format presented above, the minimalist view of the chronicler is lost. The focus is still upon the existential experience of the individual, a key trait of the phenomenological reduction, but the stories often include the sharing of interpretative judgements and ethical dilemmas that demonstrate the importance of knowledge and skills founded upon *phronesis*. Socio-cultural, economic and political explanations are more often referenced. Moreover, while *phronesis* is honed by the storyteller, the listener or viewer is also invited, as they engage with the story, to make their own meanings.

The phenomenological method in storytelling cultivates a mode of wondering, we may come to see what we thought we knew in a different light or imagine different worlds and the progression of stories. Such insights and imaginings may be unsettling and so care of the storyteller or those experiencing the story is important; and yet moments of astonishing realisations or epiphanies may lead to a transformation in the way existence in the world is experienced (Dobson 2010).

The tradition of phenomenology is well-known in the wake of French philosopher-novelists such as Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre. In their work it is the role of the individual pitted against larger societal forces that occupies centre stage. As we try to understand digital storytelling workshops and the collaborative work of participants, we have also been inspired by the later work of the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He recognised our interconnectedness, even our interdependence, with one another. Merleau-Ponty believed that philosophy should be concerned with establishing a dialogue with the world that makes sense (Deurzen 2009). He introduced the term *chiasm* to explain the shared intercorporeal space of bodies, signs (signifier, signified) and history working together and giving rise to corporeal experiences of touched-touching, seen-seeing, speaking-spoken to and so on (Dobson 2004). In a handshake for example, who touching who?

This constitutes a radical overturning of Western dualistic thinking, which has been founded upon the separation between body and mind, between the seer and the object of sight, between touching and being touched, and the independence of the I from the Other. We are forced to acknowledge that everything is intertwined with—or interdependent—on everything else. In a similar vein, contemporary existential philosopher and psychotherapist Emmy van Deurzen has built upon the work of earlier existential philosophers to propose a model of human existence comprising four inter-related existential dimensions: physical, social, personal and spiri-

Fig. 1 Emmy van Deurzen's four dimensions of existence

tual [14]. In order to understand another's experience of the world, a phenomenological exploration of all four dimensions is essential to the process of healing and progress towards wholeness. Figure 1 below represents the dimensions:

Even with a layer of judgement or interpretation, the creation of digital stories is not intended to be therapy, but it may be—and often is—therapeutic. With Merleau-Ponty's concept of the *chiasm* and van Manen's interest in *the therapeutic* we are conceptually equipped to understand the digital storytelling workshop itself as a source of experience. Thus conceived, phenomenology provides a useful lens through which to view the lived existential experiences of individuals, before, during and even after a digital storytelling workshop, and 'explain how a particular group of individuals in a certain place or institutional context have certain experiences' [15].

4 The Centrality of Phronesis in Storytelling Circles

In the search for *phronesis* (wisdom), it is said that all roads lead to the same place. Religion, philosophy and belief systems all seek to make sense of human existence and, in doing so, suggest a variety of practices that are designed to support the search for understanding. Phenomenology is one such path; Buddhism is another. There are some striking similarities between these two world views, and both may offer a way to view the practice of digital storytelling. Without going into too much detail, the former operates with a number of steps in examining experience (the epoché, eidetic and transcendental reduction[2]) while Buddhist practice tends to focus on awareness of the here and now, noticing in particular the ways in which we experience our human existence, that is, through the body, the feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness. Ultimately, Buddhist practitioners are encouraged to acknowledge our lack of separateness, recognising the nature of what Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh calls 'interbeing', not only with other human beings but with the whole universe [16]. This is also the fundamental truth of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, summarised in the phrase: 'I am because you are'; Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains this concept thus: 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours' [17].

It is worth noting that digital storytelling also passes through a set of stages that mimetically echo an increasing reflection upon the creative shared process of a storytelling workshop. The Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling (see Table 2 below), developed by Joe Lambert and colleagues at StoryCentre are a case in point [18]. Following these steps results in the final story which, in turn, reveals the *chiasm* proposed by Merleau-Ponty the phenomenologist: the inter-corporeal experiences of touched-touching, seen-seeing and speaking-spoken.

[2] The epoché brackets the individual form considering external influences such as culture, social, economic and so on; the eidetic looks to the essence of the chosen object; and the transcendental seeks to understand the specific structure of consciousness revealing this essence, such as care or anger and so on.

Table 2 The seven steps of digital storytelling

Owning your insights—finding what the story is really about and discovering why the storyteller is the only person who can tell this story
Owning your emotions—finding the meaning of the story and, in so doing, recognising the emotions the story brings up for the storyteller
Finding the moment—discovering the moment of change, the moment that will illuminate the storyteller's insight
Seeing your story—thinking about how images will bring the story to life, enhance the storyteller's words and deepen the meaning of the story; developing a visual strategy
Hearing your story—recognising that the unique voice of the storyteller is the best way to convey the tone and emotion of the story and understanding how to blend the voiceover with any music or other sounds
Assembling your story—determining how best to combine spoken words, images and other sounds, using a storyboard and then editing the video
Sharing your story—considering the purpose of the story, bearing in mind the audience, being aware of the possible impact of your story on others and its life after its completion

5 Owning Your Insights

As the story circle begins, there is an air of nervous expectation as storytellers who, until now, have likely been strangers, focus inward, thinking about the words they might use to tell this particular story, or perhaps still searching for a story to tell. Each person is invited to 'tell the story only you can tell, a story from the heart', in other words, an individual and subjective view of something important to the storyteller. As each storyteller finds the words to relate their experience, others in the circle are invited to listen with their whole being, with eyes and heart as well as ears, striving to hear the words that are not spoken as well as those that are.

According to colleague and storytelling facilitator Angeline Koh (in a personal conversation with Hardy), 'StoryTELLING is never complete without StoryLISTENING. In the traditional Chinese character reproduced within Image 1, the word LISTEN 聽 (pronounced "ting") is made up of several Chinese characters...耳 meaning ears, 十目 ten eyes, 一心 one heart. When you listen to someone in this way, you treat him/her like a king 王. The English word LISTEN also spells SILENT when the letters are reordered. To listen is to be quiet so as to give the storyteller your undivided attention.

Image 1 The Chinese character Listen, the English words listen and silent

Comments are made and questions are asked in an attempt to help each storyteller understand how their story might be perceived by another. Listeners seek clarification, and offer possible insights from outside the storyteller's experience, helping to deepen the story, to make it the best story it can possibly be. As we go around the circle, the stories—and the storytellers—begin to interweave themselves as fragments of words and phrases float around the room, some taking root in the consciousness of another.

6 Owning Your Emotions

Tears are not uncommon in the story circle. One storyteller may pass a box of tissues to another while respectful silence allows space for recovery and continuation of the story. Questions asked by facilitators might be: 'Why this story? 'Why this story now?' and 'How do you want your audience to feel?' in answering them the storyteller is offered the opportunity to reveal the

meaning and the accompanying emotions. As emotions are identified and named, the meaning of the story often becomes even clearer. But this is difficult work to do alone. Working together, facilitators and storytellers can name and share the feelings evoked by the storyteller.

7 Finding the Moment

As we listen with eyes, ears and heart, it is not difficult to identify the moment in the story that may be the moment of crisis or that of greatest change, as the storyteller's voice drops in pitch, after a pause, and the eyes glisten with tears. If successfully identified, this moment may help to clarify the purpose of the story and illuminate the insight even further. Although the moment in question may be in the past, it is of course, now also in the present, and in the presence of the others in the circle, wending its way to a future in which that moment has led to understanding and possible transformation. Skogvoll and Dobson [19] have used the Norwegian term '*blikk for øyebikk*' (awareness of the moment) to capture the significance of how particular moments carry more weight and opportunity to influence the future direction of following moments.

These first three steps may take place over many hours, as individual storytellers and their stories gradually become part of the collective story, talking with others who are not, now, quite so other, seeking to understand as well as to be understood.

8 Seeing Your Story

As the script of the story nears completion and storytellers' insights become more internalised, the focus of the work moves away from the mind and the thoughts that are formed in words and towards the eye and the images that will reveal another layer of the story or tell parts of the story that words cannot describe. Storytellers are invited to attend, mindfully, to the images they see in their mind's eye and to construct a visual strategy that has been described as 'a conversation between the words and the pictures' (Alexandra 2015) in the story. There are some experiences for which words are inadequate; Ansel Adams, the great American landscape photographer, famously said 'When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence' [20].

9 Hearing Your Story

Hearing one's own voice is a less-than-pleasant experience for many storytellers as self-consciousness battles with authenticity in the struggle to convey the emotion of the story. However, storytellers are always the best people to relate their own stories, reinforcing the uniqueness of each story with the indelible stamp of their own rhythms and cadences, their own words and phrases and enabling listeners to hear the hint of a smile, the crack of a voice signalling distress. Listening to their own voice, storytellers also gain insight into how others hear them and often learn to slow down, pause for breath or, aware of their audience, perhaps to choose different words.

The spoken word is very different from the written word and writing a script that is intended to be spoken can be very illuminating for people who are accustomed to writing, requiring them to think about the audience they hope to reach and the impact they hope to have. Preparation for recording a voiceover may include breathing exercises, seemingly endless repetition/rereading of the script, adapting where necessary to eliminate stumbles or inappropriate phraseology. This opportunity to hear oneself repeatedly is like an audio version of seeing oneself reflected in a mirror and often culminates in a sort of self-acceptance or even forgiveness for a voice that has been dismissed or even disliked until this point. Of course, for many people—those who are seldom heard—the creation of a digital story and recording a voiceover may represent a moment of liberation, when one can finally reveal to the world a story that has been demanding to be told.

10 Assembling Your Story

Moving into the more technical elements of digital storytelling, storytellers now focus on how words—mostly spoken but sometimes written—will intertwine with images and perhaps other sounds such as music, birdsong, traffic, waves crashing on a beach or whatever other sounds may enhance the story and viewers' experience of it. Video editing software enables easy and straightforward mingling of words and pictures, bringing the story to life and adding new dimensions. Storytellers are encouraged to think about the first image viewers will see, and the last, bearing in mind that these are likely to be the ones that viewers remember and to consider whether image editing or treatments such as panning or zooming may enhance or deepen the meaning of a particular image. It is this part of the process that is initially terrifying and ultimately hugely rewarding for anyone who is anxious about technology, often resulting in enormous pride in the completed digital story.

11 Sharing Your Story

Much as Ansel Adams once said 'There are always two people in every picture: the photographer and the viewer' [21], there are always at least two people involved in a story: the storyteller, the facilitator, all those who share the same workshop experience, and then all the people who watch that story, viewing the story through the lens of their own experience and lending their own interpretations.

From the earliest steps in the workshop, storytellers are encouraged to consider their audience with questions like 'Who is this story for?' 'What is the purpose of your story?' 'How do you want your audience to feel when they watch your story?' 'What would you like them to do?' 'How do you think they might feel?' 'How will you feel if someone from your family/school/community or a complete stranger watches your story?' It is very important to protect storytellers from any unwanted repercussions from sharing their story and so making them aware of the implications of releasing their stories is crucial. Not all storytellers will want to release their stories but those who do should be carefully guided through the entire process to ensure that any words or images that might potentially present a danger to them or to anyone else should be seriously considered. Anonymity is obviously a possibility, but many storytellers are so proud of their accomplishment that they want to be named—again, this is a topic for serious consideration. Ethical guidelines for digital storytelling workshops have been devised in an attempt to pre-empt any possible harm coming to digital storytellers and these should be studied by facilitators of digital storytelling workshops [22, 23].

Ethical issues aside, sharing stories provides such an opportunity for celebration, communion and the deepening of community; at the end of every workshop, the stories that have been created are screened for the participants and, if appropriate or desirable, their friends, family and colleagues. These occasions are always a combination of joy and relief, apprehension and accomplishment, when the story tellers become story viewers and recognise that, in the words of one storyteller 'Our stories are not just our individual stories, but they are also the collective story'.

As the workshop ends, storytellers return to their everyday lives and their stories, with permission, may become part of the digital universe, the distinction between self and other dissolves and the interconnectedness of stories, storytellers and the wider digital audience seems to illustrate Merleau-Ponty's chiasm as well as the Buddhist doctrine of Interbeing. As Mitch Albom said, 'each affects the other and the other affects the next and the world is full of stories and the stories are all one.' [24].

Even this brief resumé of the Seven Steps indicates the range of different kinds of Aristotelian knowledge to be discovered during the course of a digital storytelling workshop: empirical knowledge (*episteme*) is acquired through learning how to write an effective story and the use of a storyboard; technical knowledge (*techne*) is acquired through image and video editing and the acquisition of IT skills; aesthetic knowledge underpins the choice and juxtaposi-

tion of images and sounds and wisdom (*phronesis*)—or at least knowing oneself better—is often the result of this deeply reflective process.[3]

12 Conclusion—Storytelling as Transformation

Digital storytelling is both process, that is, the expression and creation of a digital story—and product, that is, the finished digital story. The end and the means are inextricably interwoven, much as the stories in any given group are also inextricably interwoven. Moreover, there is a final stage that must be acknowledged and that is the potential afterlife of the digital story as it is posted potentially on a platform that might be public or of a more private character belonging to the story circle participants.

We have sought to explore the practice of classical digital storytelling as an existential experience; in particular, we have investigated the various activities involved in a digital storytelling workshop through the lens of phenomenology. We have seen how the creation, expression and sharing of stories as part of a carefully facilitated group process promotes a sense of inclusion, interconnectedness and belonging; relationships between storytellers deepen even as the stories develop, and insights abound. The deep listening that is encouraged in the workshop serves to honour and amplify the voices of those who are not always heard while, at the same time, establishing strong connections between storytellers. This inter-corporeal sharing, speaking, listening, reflecting, seeking to understand are the foundations of a sense of belonging, recognised and expressed by many storytellers as being part of the collective story.

Transformation takes many forms, but many storytellers have described what one storyteller described as 'seismic' changes. What the German philosopher Novalis described as 'the wish to be everywhere at home' [25] is expressed by theologian Jean Vanier as 'finding the freedom to be themselves and to claim, accept and love their own personal story with all its brokenness and beauty' [26]. Reconnecting with oneself enables connection with other people and places and so it seems fitting to end with the words of one particular storyteller in a workshop several years ago: 'I just feel more myself—like so many pieces of myself have been brought back together'.

[3] Carper (1978), a nurse educator, proposes similar ways of knowing to those Aristotle had identified almost 2000 years earlier; her model of nursing ways of knowing includes empirical knowing; aesthetic knowing and moral knowing, which equate with Aristotle's *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*, but she also adds personal knowing.

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Part III

How Is the Methodology of Digital Storytelling Used and Experienced by Different 'User' Groups?

We Belong and Connect When We Have a Voice: Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning

Marta Pinto and Brit Svoen

Abstract

When people have their voice heard and are willing to share their stories, they become empowered with a sense of belonging and social inclusion. This chapter proposes a learning design approach for online and face-to-face learning, which aims to deliver social inclusion for adult migrants and refugees, through digital literacy. The design is based on the participation of a community encompassing students, teachers and technologists. Developing online learning resources entails being culturally and gender sensitive, through stories in every step of the learning journey, focusing on the learners needs and sense of connectedness.

Keywords

Learning design · Participatory design · Education technology · E-learning · Lifelong learning · Inclusion · Wellbeing · Digital storytelling · Adult education

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Social belonging is realised when individual stories contribute to collective knowledge and create a community of sharing. In analogous fashion, teachers as professionals along with learners contribute to defining the skills needed for social inclusion when they share and express a will to participate in sharing their individual experiences. By sharing personal stories, learners give voice to their experiences and their will to belong. We can only begin to understand what is specific to some people, when we recognise the power of peoples' voices in identifying what impacts their sense of belonging and ensure that this voice contributes to and benefits a wider community who are present as active listeners and/or co-creators.

In this chapter, we will present a learning design approach for online and face-to-face learning that seeks to realise social inclusion for adult migrants and refugees. The key means to this end entails being culturally and gender sensitive, through the development of stories along each and every step of the journey towards strengthening social inclusion and an accompanying sense of belonging. Our main claim is captured by the title of this chapter: We belong and connect when we have a voice.

There is no global template for designing online learning. Each time we come together—the teacher, student and technologist—we form a new community creating a shared discourse. This is ideally a reflective and democratic space, called 'ba'(場) in Japanese denoting a network of interactions, determined by the care and trust of partici-

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pants [1], that allows us to act with consideration and respect for the skills and knowledge of others. A central argument is that there should be no bystanders—all need to be included with agency as designers. As Herbert A. Simon [2] once said, anyone who is engaged in "changing existing situations into preferred ones" is a designer.

In our approach to learning and learning design, we follow a lifelong learning tradition that emphasises self-fulfilment and social inclusion in addition to employability and adaptability [3]. Lifelong learning can be defined as

> (…) all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence with a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective [3]

Learning, in a lifelong and also by implication in a lifewide perspective across different geographical spaces, can be formal, nonformal or informal. It can be organised or unorganised, it can take place in the workplace, in an educational institution, at home or in other activities. Not least, education can be a tool to reduce social differences, including in working life, regarding well-being and for personal development [4, 5]. Lifelong learning is also increasingly linked to digital technology and digital transformation, as a means to bridge the digital divide which increased noticeably during the COVID-19 pandemic. EU's *Digital Compass 2030* states that basic digital skills is both a prerequisite and a right to 'fully benefit from the welfare brought by an inclusive digital society' [6].

To reach the target group for this learning design, adult migrants and refugees, another key term is flexibility. Flexible learning is often referred to as educational offerings aimed at people, who for various reasons cannot follow ordinary, full-time studies or classes, and is flexible in the way it is organised in space and time, and how content, learning methods, and use of digital technology are adapted to the learners and their life situation, abilities, and interests [7, 8].

Although these adaptations to facilitate learning are obviously important, the significance of relevance, social identification and well-being should not be under-estimated or undervalued as barriers for learning. The assertion that active citizenship requires social inclusion rings true.

In our approach, we have sought to draw upon theories and practices regarding inclusive learning design, digital storytelling and to a certain degree also connectivism. Our methodology was originally developed and trialled as part of the Erasmus+ project ReGap, introduced below, and has been further developed based on the experiences and results from the project. Similarity over time and in different places is as important as difference, as suggested by Pip Hardy:

> One of the things that we have learned is that people are far more similar than they are different. The things that really matters to people are family, good health, a safe place to live, a sense of community and a sense of belonging
>
> (Pip Hardy, LIDA project partner and co-founder of Pilgrim Projects Ltd)[1]

1 The REGAP Project—Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

ReGap is an acronym for "**R**educing the **E**ducational **Gap** for migrants and refugees in EU countries with highly relevant e-learning resources offering strong social belonging". The project was launched in 2017,[2] when the wave of refugees to Europe, the largest group escaping from the Syrian civil war, was very much in the eyes and minds of all across the world. Unfortunately, this wave was not unique, and there many who continue to experience that they have suddenly been uprooted and chosen to become suddenly immigrants in an unfamiliar country. This means the ReGap experiences continue to be relevant.

One challenge was—and always will be—is to offer meaningful, accessible and sustainable

[1] In Interview during a Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age group meeting in Rome in summer 2022.

[2] The ReGap project was an Erasmus+ project under the key action *Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice*, *Strategic partnerships for adult education* (grant agreement 2017–1-NO01-KA204–034182). Coordinator was Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway, and partners were LUMSA University, Italy, Porto University, Portugal, and the NGO organization CDI, North Macedonia.

inclusion in employment, education, health and social protection services, along with an accompanying personal sense of mutual belonging and well-being shared by new arrivals and host populations. Central to this endeavour is the need to build mutual understandings of different cultures, languages, gender practices and histories. Many challenges are faced by migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, such as language barriers, knowledge of labour markets, limited access to health care and social protection systems and an often felt and experienced disconnection between law and its application in practice.

Also, the lack of digital literacy is an obstacle for many refugees and migrants, at the same time as digital technology and the Internet have turned out to be promising tools for education for this target group. ReGap developed and trialled seven open access e-learning courses that were culturally and gender sensitive, using examples and adapted specific to each country in which the resource(s) are offered: North Macedonia, Italy, Portugal and Norway. The courses met needs in employment, health, social security, education, gender and knowledge of justice systems and citizenship regulations.

Each course includes an introductory component to create socially shared participant identity and belonging and enhanced ICT skills. The courses were designed to be fully online or blended with face-to-face activities. Focus groups and trials with migrants, refugees, educators and professionals (who work and interact personally with migrants and refugees towards their inclusion) were completed (18 focus groups with 323 participants in total). An instruction video and handbook for teachers and professionals was also produced. All resources—courses and instructional materials—were translated into five languages (English, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese and North Macedonian) and adapted to the policy context and regulations in each of the partner countries.

Through this 2-year process, from 2017 to 2019, we built knowledge, skills and created a foundation for social inclusion and well-being through digital storytelling. Migrant and refugee's own stories were incorporated as part of the learning resources. A key objective was to listen to migrants and refugees who co-participated in the development of these stories. This methodology raised the motivation to enroll and complete these courses and confirmed the importance of participants feeling social inclusion and wellbeing as they identified with the portrayal of the digital stories, issues, characters and important knowledge and skills communicated [9].

2 Designing for Social Belonging and Wellbeing

The ReGap project was inspired by recent studies, addressing the importance of a learning design that is welcoming and supports social inclusion to build a safe and inclusive learning spaces [10, 11]. As already stated, the main target groups for ReGap were migrants, refugees, and the professionals who worked with them to support their inclusion in the social structures of the host society. When arriving at a host country, those who are seeking asylum or residence may be considered a 'surplus population' [12], who may be particularly exposed to exclusionary practices through well-meaning inclusion, and be the target of what might be called 'inclusive exclusion' [13]. We need to be aware of this to prevent consequences of exclusion. As Slee [14] has noted, it is crucial to highlight the importance of belonging, and to recall as Svoen, Dobson and Bjørge [15] have suggested, inclusion can act as an operational value as we pursue and identify different indicators of inclusion rather than exclusion.

In this chapter we understand social inclusion to mean going beyond achieving explicit interaction with the social structures of the host society, such as employment, education, health and civic participation. We understand it as the recognition and full participation of the person as a citizen, along all dimensions of citizenship, navigating all the social structures of the host society and as a person who is participating in learning the new culture and sharing their own cultural background. For this to happen, asylum seekers and citizens of the host country need to connect, and

have spaces, moments and opportunities, both physical and digital, to share and voice mutually shared and mutually different experiences.

The journey and experience of a refugee or migrant is increasingly lived through the presence of digital experiences [16]. With mobile devices in the hand we access the internet and people are able to keep connected with supportive networks while on the move to a new country. These can be family, people who have reached the destination country and share information and experiences with others [17]. On arrival in the host country information and knowledge about the new country is accessed from institutions, government bodies, NGOs, and other communities of people. The power of the connection to and between these networks is a form of social and learning capital, pivotal in access to resources, and as a consequence it can contribute to social well-being [16]. By having support and reaching resources through these networks, people interact with, and influence, each other, and can make informed decisions on how to start improving their lives [17].

At least three networks are accessed in both their home country and host country. One network is family and friends, along with refugee/migrant communities in the new country. A second is people giving information on events back in their home countries. A third network is the people they encounter when accessing basic services, such as health and education, humanitarian assistance and so on in the host country.

In designing for social belonging and wellbeing, we should acknowledge the power of these connections in and between these networks and try to bring them into the design process, creating bridges between them, and trying to understand, as Bernhard [18] suggests, how these support networks turn into social and cultural capital. Creating bridges between the multiple voices and narratives around the experience of being a refugee/migrant, may contribute to reduce vulnerability to wider processes of social exclusion and inequality [18]. This calls upon us to consider an approach to online learning design that acknowledges and involves involving multiple voices and stories (professional, volunteering, social, newcomers).

3 Promoting a Sense of Belonging by Utilising Digital Storytelling

The research by Kizilcec et al., [10, 11] highlights how promoting a sense of belonging when learning commences will increase participation, learning and retention as the course progresses. Taking on board this point we have ensured each participant is given the opportunity to experience their own personal belonging by creating a space to voice and affirm their most important values, feel empathy and social identification with others. One of the ways to do this we would argue is through the use of stories to communicate and share experience. This is one of t he core things we have sought to do in the ReGap project.

Digital storytelling is a good way of finding and giving words to stories. Even if digital storytelling may embrace all manner of stories created and shared through digital technology [19], the real strength in our opinion, is how it can be used as an empowering and self-reflexive creative process to listen, share, and develop personal stories, and also to create a sense of social belonging and establish a community feeling as a learning resource. As a (social) media product, a digital story is usually *personal* (but not necessarily self-experienced), *multimodal* (a personal narrator's voice accompanied by images, video, texts and/or music), *short* (a few minutes), and *amateurish* in the way that it is made by non-professionals and doesn't require advanced equipment [15, 20–22].

People voice their stories, both migrants/refugees, as well as professionals, positioning themselves in the processes of social inclusion. It seems to us that if both the learner and the educator have the opportunity to voice and affirm what is most important to them, reflecting upon experience and creating a space in which to live it; this will generate greater empathy, social identification with others and not the least, greater mutual understanding of a deeper, long-lasting character.

4 Collecting and Connecting Stories

We all have a story to tell, and when our story is heard, the person who connects with it will also connect with something within that story, either by relating it to their own experience, the information, or reaching beyond and imagining how it might be if they had lived that experience.

Accessing information through a shared story, follows the same steps as it is transformed into knowledge and then wisdom. This hasn't changed since ancient times when storytelling has similar value. It builds trust, cultivates norms, transfers tacit knowledge, and facilitates unlearning and emotional connections [23]. Finding meaningful ways to relate stories, facilitates and improves learning. How can we tap into those stories? In ReGap's research approach the first moment of connection with peoples' stories was through focus group discussions. This created a moment in time and an opportunity for people to share stories and experiences. They were able to talk and interact with each other and with the researchers.

There were two main groups composed of people who had in common the experience of being refugees, newcomers or established in the host country for a longer period of time, and secondly, professionals and educators whose work it was to support refugee people. The conversations that took place generated ties between all of them, and most important it resulted in the building of common understandings. Both refugees and educators shared their own stories, and also shared the stories of others, who they had met in different connections. This led to closer ties and bonds. This experience of belonging in a personal and social sense constitutes according to Roger Slee [14] an indicator of inclusion. These conversations also informed the researchers about the most relevant topics to reduce the educational gap (ReGap) and thus, led to important insights into the content for the collection of individual stories.

5 Participatory Design and Co-Creating

How inclusive are we being when we design learning without including learners and educators as co-designers? This question becomes more pertinent when the learners and the educators' lives, experiences, background, culture, and context are diverse, and when the desired outcome of their interaction is to become effectively included in the host society. How can educators and developers in host countries create inclusive learning designs, to guarantee that the diversity of the learners is both understood and responded to in a culturally and gender responsive manner?

Learning has a strong social dimension, and the blended model aligns with this, recognizing and promoting social experiences in learning [24] and make it exciting and rewarding for all co-designers and participants to learn through and about other cultures, including the culture of the host country. If educators are aware of this, and learning materials model this cultural and gender sensitive approach, it can help students learn and be respectful of the diversity of peers and content.

From the very beginning of the project, we addressed these challenges in our methodology by actively involving participants from the target group and host culture (e.g. different professionals and community members). In particular, it is essential to not only listen to, and acknowledge their personal experiences and stories, but also to involve them in the design and implementation of the co-creation process, such that the obtained knowledge is utilised and evident in the learning resources. This approach has many similarities with Participatory Design, which is a design tradition related to democratization and decision-making power, originated from Scandinavia in the 1970s [25, 26]. Participatory Design is characterised by three core values.

The first is *having a say*, which means that the users should have influence and power in the decision-making process. It is worth noting that having a voice is not enough, you should also be

heard and have an impact. The second value is *mutual learning*, which refers to the fact that neither the users nor the designers have enough knowledge of both the design possibilities and the domain/context, and they need to learn from each other to be equal contributors in the realisation of the final result. The third and last core value is *co-realisation or co-creation*, which simply means that the users should be involved in the design.

To understand the opportunities and limitations, the visualisation or prototyping of various alternatives is worth adopting throughout the design, implementation and evaluation [25]. According to Liz Sanders' classical map of Design Research [27], an important difference between user-centred design and participatory design is that in the former, users are considered as subjects or reactive informers, while in the latter, they are treated as partners and active co-creators [27].

In our design approach, we strived for both user and participatory involvement in all phases of the development process, from the mapping of their needs and stories, to being co-producers in the development of content and in the trialling and dissemination of the final results.

6 The REGAP Learning Design Approach

Summing up, the theoretical framework used in the learning design for ReGap, can be visualised with three overlapping basic circles, as shown in Fig. 1: (a) lifelong learning, emphasising our philosophy of learning as a democratic tool for active citizenship, personal fulfilment and employability (b) the importance of participation and real co-creation (c) the use of storytelling as a means for empowerment, self-reflexivity and identification.

In the ReGap project, learning resources were co-created together with participants from the target group and the host culture's educational professionals and community representatives who were members of our advisory groups. Based on the focus groups' experiences and stories from arriving to a new country, six topics were identified. In addition to an introduction course, these topics addressed employment, health, social security and welfare, education, gender and justice and citizenship, see Fig. 2.

The way these courses were developed, can be summarised in three steps: First, an educational model and template were developed based on focus groups, best practices and literature studies. The template includes four key dimensions: Social belonging, cultural and gender sensitivity, learning needs and teaching/learning strategies. The template was quite specific, and described topic, lesson durations, learning outcomes, online activities and face-to-face activities. In the second step, the course design and learning resources were developed, again based on the template (pedagogy) and input from the focus groups (topics and content). In the third and last step, the learning resources were piloted and evaluated, and then improved in accordance with the evaluation and feedback. Table 1 below presents an overview of the activities in each step.

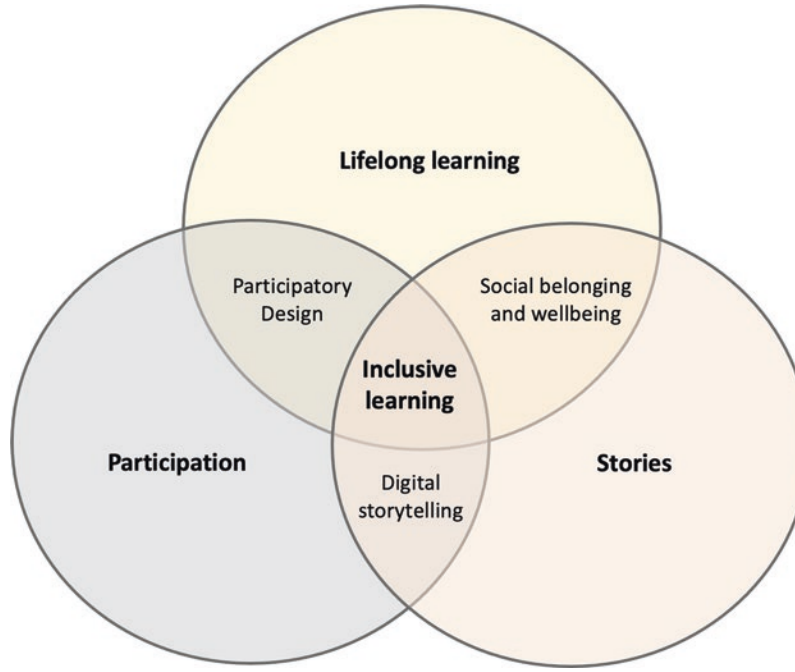

Fig. 1 The ReGap Model for learning design for inclusive learning

Fig. 2 An overview of the ReGap courses

Table 1 A generic version of the ReGap learning design approach presented stepwise

Step 1: The educational model and course template	Step 2: Developing the learning objects	Step 3: Piloting and evaluation
(a) Benchmarking of existing best practice educational resource (b) Develop a focus group protocol and reporting grids (c) Carry out focus groups (d) Develop an educational model (cf. four dimensions social belonging, cultural/gender sensitivity, learning needs and finally teaching/learning strategies)	(e) Create a general course overview for the course/learning resources, with learning outcomes and activities (and possibly useful links to external resources) (f) Complete (fill with content) the course templates (g) Create introductory social belonging learning material (storytelling) (h) Develop F2F activities based on the F2F protocol (i) Implement course content (j) If international resources: Translate and adapt the country-specific parts	(k) Develop schedule plan for the trials, data set, guidelines and observation grids (l) Test both online and blended (F2F) (m) Collect data analytics (n) Evaluate the results (o) Improve the learning resources

7 Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning

Building on the experiences and the main dimensions of the ReGap design process, we chose to further review the power of storytelling and the moments of participation and co-creation. The aim was to create an even more inclusive and cultural sensitive learning design through storytelling and the establishment of networks of support.

7.1 Step One: Finding the Stories

With focus groups being carried out with representatives from the target group (migrants and refugees) and with professionals/educators and community members in the host culture who support them, researchers were able to map needs and gather information about the experiences, perceptions and the stories of each person and group. From this step emerges the importance of support networks and the ties within them and how these are crucial for building common understandings, mutual identification and structures of support.

7.2 Step Two: Co-Create Content and Turn Stories to Learning Resources

The impact of step one is to hopefully generate the clear common understanding and sense of belonging, such that the learning resources should include and emphasize the voice of migrants and refugees in telling their own stories, about their own learning needs and experiences. The experiences from the ReGap project show that the digital story telling method was interpreted by the researchers as a powerful tool for building bonds, sense of belonging and mutual identifications. With this in mind, and before collecting the stories of others, the researchers began their experience as a group, participating in the design process by collecting and creating their own personal digital stories. This experience created a closer bonds between the researchers, reinforcing their own network and building a sense of belonging in a personal and social sense [14, 28].

This is followed by collecting the stories with the target audiences and professionals and community members, both through personal storytelling workshops. The learners together with the researchers/developers were called upon to be content producers by telling their own stories, and co-creating scripted stories based on multiple experiences. This stage includes two approaches: including the stories collected and co-created as part of the learning objects; developing a proposal for F2F activities, to be facilitated by educators; This was to create suitable opportunities for the learners who possessed diverse language proficiencies, to participate, voice and affirm their experiences and stories, and in so doing to build empathy and social identification with others and strengthen levels of commitment to learning in the courses.

7.3 Step Three: Testing the Stories' Identification Power

Results and trials of the courses and all of its learning resources involved participants from the target group. This helped in understanding if the created learning objects/learning resources based on the stories were able to fulfill the aim of supporting recognition and social identification in addition to being relevant with regard to sharing important valuable information. Feedback was used to improve and make adjusts.

We have been able to identify many aspects that are important when developing learning resources (see also [29]). As discussed above, a main principle in our approach was to involve the target group from the start to the end along with educational professionals and community members with the goal of informing content end pedagogical methodology. Based on focus groups interviews, literature studies and previous experiences our approach emphasised:

- Using digital storytelling as a tool to collect and present the voices of the target audiences of the courses, both for social belonging and motivation,
- Supporting learners with poor language skills: using audio-visual elements to compensate

and focus on vocabulary with simple language and short sentences,
- Facilitating both online and F2F learning (blended learning),
- Adding relevant and "inclusive" content and activities, building on everyday experiences and stories,
- Designing for lack of digital literacy, with an intuitive and easy-to-use learning platform,
- Creating open educational resources,
- Judging cultures for whom gender roles are specific,
- Encouraging collaboration between genders and,
- Using gender-appropriate language [30].

Developing sensitivity to the cultural differences among learners in an online course is a key to building community, trust, and collaboration because it creates space to welcome all voices [31]. Gender roles may be specific in different cultures and avoiding typical stereotyping genders becomes important. For example, flippant remarks concerning the stereotypical housewife/student may seem cute to some but are totally inappropriate. Rather, collaboration between genders and gender-appropriate language should be the norm. It encourages equal access to learning, employment and overall social participation and inclusion. Characteristics and factors regarding gender when designing culturally diverse, online learning can involve being intentional in seeking to avoid a stereotyping of gender roles.

The case study approach to e-learning evaluation has been widely used in specific sectors and geographical areas (Higher Education and Vocational education, particularly in USA). However, due to language barriers, and in some cases to a lack of e-skills, the classic approach that includes questionnaires and tests proposed to the learner in order to obtain basic information related to motivation, interest, self-efficacy and achievements were not possible in our particular project.

Moreover, the large educational difference in levels of individuals in target groups, across and within countries involved in the ReGap project, made it hard to use a common standardized tool as a questionnaire or a test to collect data to create a the baseline. This is why it is necessary to follow a mixed approach [32], that includes evaluation activities, and also appropriate research activities to better inform and operationalize the constructs considered.

8 Conclusion

Creating learning resources to address learning needs of people who are on a life journey that is both unique and changing over time, calls for an approach that is inclusive and participatory. Without the existence of a global template to guide a design for online learning, especially for a target audience whose profiles are heterogeneous, we have argued that there is a need to draw upon the strength of relevant communities to provide input into design thinking. The community we have in mind brings together teaching professionals, migrant students and community representatives, as well as online and educational technologists and researchers. It constitutes a new community with a shared discourse. It strengthens democratic participation, social inclusion and the sense of belonging of all involved. This approach also makes it possible to map learning needs and to explore in depth the shared perceptions and experiences of each person and the group as a whole, bringing to light needs specific to their experience and indicative of their mutual understanding.

Participation in the initial design of the online learning environment, and through its actual use, makes it possible for the participants who are a sample of future users, to provide valuable feedback on how it might be improved to meet the needs of everyday struggles. These struggles are multiple and with different levels of complexity, involving language barriers, knowledge of labour markets, limited access to health care and social security systems and the disconnection between law and practice. These trials are suited for smaller groups or even those representing one-to-one situations. This mirros the importance and relevance of qualitative data collected and the diversity of languages and backgrounds within the groups.

By designing for social belonging and wellbeing the focus goes beyond the technology level that supports the online learning environment and interactions. It is the diversity of stories and experiences of migrants and refugees that is important and it needs to be included as part of the design of the online learning journey for the target participants. Encouraged to share their learning and life stories linked with personal experiences, these digital stories are shared with the future learners in the online environment. The aim is to enhance a sense of belonging shared by both the storyteller and listener. There are of courses challenges in a model such as this. For example some may not like to participate for fear of identification if their images or actual voices are used. For researchers this is something we are well-used to and ensuring that ethical consent is secured is imperative and also that anonymity is guaranteed when agreed.

The power of feeling connected empowers people into taking action, but connecting may not always happen as we expect. It becomes relevant and an imperative that connections grow and extend beyond the virtual learning environment, recognising the power of learning both through contact with the online content and through face-to-face learning activities. A design that invites both the sharing of diverse experiences and connections with wider networks, opens the possibility for new, unanticipated connections occuring.

The focus on learners who desire their own empowerment in and through creating storied content rests upon understanding that refugees and migrants are undertaking what is in fact a learning journey. Moreover, inclusion in all stages improves their wellbeing and life as they seek to find more about the host country and what it means to live there. The old adage 'relative to opportunity' sums up the point what while all participants might receive the same learning opportunities, they move along their learning journey at different paces and based upon the different personal and shared resources that they have acquired through prior learning and schooling.

We created stories to inform processes of learning that are sensitive to cultural and gender differences. The stories also support the understanding that including the voice of people is integral to their success and motivation in their learning journeys. The end result fosters a sense of belonging, where they can dream of a better future and move towards its realisation.

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Bridging the Gaps: Promoting Competences for Democratic Culture and the Wellbeing of Girls Through Digital Storytelling

Elsa Guedes Teixeira and Angélica Monteiro

Abstract

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of videos created by girls during digital storytelling workshops and discusses how this process can contribute to promoting competences for democratic culture and wellbeing. Empathy, especially for victims of bullying, was a highly relevant competence throughout the narratives. The analysis focused on wellbeing and the need to recognize differences and to be accepted and respected. The workshops enabled a space for girls to express their concerns and views on wellbeing, a fundamental condition for promoting and sustaining conditions for democratic participation.

Keywords

Digital storytelling · Girls · Young people · Digital citizenship · Media literacy · Wellbeing · Democratic culture · Digital inclusion

In this post-pandemic world, listening to people's voices is more important than ever. Assuming that digital technologies enable us to create and share stories to connect with others, we were inspired to develop digital storytelling workshops with girls, from 14 to 20 years old, from vulnerable backgrounds, in the context of a European project. In particular, we sought to empower these teenage girls as they transitioned towards adulthood to find and use their voices and to belong in a digital world. This belonging was sometimes fraught with emotional, gender and physical issues.

In this chapter, we will describe the approach used in the workshops based on the "seven steps of digital storytelling" proposed by Lambert [1]. We present a thematic analysis of the videos created by the girls, focused on the Council of Europe's 'model of competences for democratic culture', and discuss how ways of storytelling can contribute to a sense of wellbeing and wholeness. The girls were enthusiastic about the opportunity for their voices to be heard and

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acknowledged. From the analysis, several themes emerged: hate speech, cyberbullying, sexting, physical violence, health, emotional and family issues, grief, homophobia, sexuality, dreams and future, professional perspectives, social acceptance, social/cultural inclusion in a host country and resilience.

Ethical guidelines and permissions were obtained to collect, analyse, and further disseminate the data collected.

1 Introduction

Social inclusion in the twenty-first century is related to digital inclusion, which implies access, skills, and participation in the knowledge and information society [2]. Livingstone et al. [3] advocate for online rights of protection, provision, and participation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child [4]. Ultimately, digital citizenship education is related to civic engagement and participation [5]. This concern is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4: 'Quality Education'. However, the UN SDG progress report [6] reinforced the importance of teachers and the learning environment in keeping pace with technological changes and improving learning outcomes, especially for children and young people in most vulnerable situations.

Avid users and daily consumers of diverse social and digital tools, young people are especially exposed to content that can have harmful effects on their wellbeing [7]. Their online habits are frequently difficult for parents to supervise; at the same time, peer group pressure to conform/transgress plays an important role in their individual/collective identities and behaviours [8–10]. Besides fake news, young people are also exposed to online risks: not suitable content (pornographic/violent), conduct risks (e.g. cyberbullying), and contact risks (usually from adults), involving the possibility of inappropriate interaction [7]. Young people's access to violent content online is often decontextualized, extreme, and inadequate for their age, and most are not prepared to cope with possible disturbing experiences.

According to the International Computer and Information Literacy Study [11], only 1% of Portuguese youngsters managed to select the most relevant online information and were able to assess useful and reliable information. These rates are even lower for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The relationship between social, economic, and contextual family variables and the vulnerability to online risks seems indisputable [12, 13].

This chapter draws on data from the experience of the project MINDtheGaps: Media literacy towards youth social inclusion, 2020–2021 [14]. It involved five partners from four countries, Portugal, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Norway. MINDtheGaps was an ERASMUS+ KA2 project (2019-2-PT02-KA205-006226) that used a participatory intervention with young people in vulnerable situations, based on digital storytelling and other open educational resources, to develop media and digital literacy, and therefore, increase opportunities for social inclusion [15].

Data obtained through the thematic analysis [16] of 19 digital narratives created by the participants allowed us to answer the following research questions: *can digital storytelling contribute to express and develop competences for democratic culture and feelings of wellbeing of girls, both online and offline? In what way?*

2 Competences for Democratic Culture as the Foundation of Digital Citizenship

The Council of Europe ([17], p. 7) created a *model of competences for democratic culture*, which includes three sets of values, six attitudes, eight skills, and three sets of knowledge and critical understanding, presented in Fig. 1.

The term 'democratic culture' is used to emphasize that democratic institutions and laws, although fundamental, do not work without democratic values, attitudes and practices and that such a culture is founded upon an interdependent relationship with intercultural dialogue, and aims to secure the participation of all citizens through democratic discussion, debate and deliberation

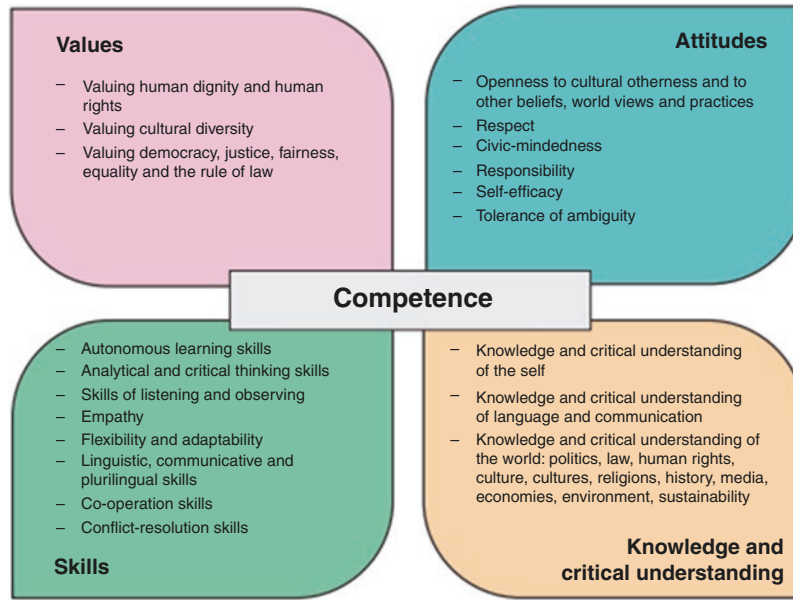

Fig. 1 Model of competences for democratic culture

([17], p. 5). Democratic participation of citizens also requires measures to combat social inequalities and structural disadvantages, without which people from disadvantaged groups would be sidelined in democratic processes. In this framework, democratic and cultural competence is defined as 'the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations' and 'the term "competences" (in the plural)' means 'specific individual resources (i.e. the specific values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding) that are mobilised and deployed in the production of competent behaviour' ([17], p. 6).

The competences for democratic culture are the foundation of the ten digital citizenship dimensions [18] and, ultimately, of digital citizenship. The Council identified three aspects of online life: *being online, wellbeing online and rights online*, in which the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, should be promoted. The underlying assumption is that each person's responsibility as a citizen is similar, whether one is online or offline.

3 Digital Storytelling as a Means of Valuing the Voices of Young People in Situations of Social Vulnerability

As mentioned above, taking as its starting point the *competences for democratic culture* and the *digital citizenship* frameworks, the MINDtheGaps project promoted digital storytelling workshops in Portugal, Turkey and Bulgaria from June to September 2021, aiming to empower young people to develop media literacy and critical thinking and to be able to share knowledge and collaboratively solve problems in a non-formal context. The next section will present the analysis of the videos produced by the Portuguese girls who participated.

The option of digital storytelling has been successfully used with children in educational contexts to promote skills to deal with, violence, bullying and discrimination [19, 20], to build empathy and 'enhance the learning experience and attitude change' [21]. Furthermore, several authors mention that digital storytelling has an impact on the person who tells the story as they share their ideas and feelings with others in a safe context, bringing a sense of togetherness and the

comfort of being listened to while, at the same time, creating knowledge, empathy and sensitivity in those who listen to the story [21, 22].

Digital storytelling ultimately supports social inclusion by enabling an inclusive learning environment [19, 23, 24]. This is in line with the overall aim of Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality education", to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. According to the United Nations ([25], p. 7), the right to education must be guaranteed at all levels—early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training—and should encompass all people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations. In this sense, other SDGs were also of relevance during this project, namely: SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). The reader can access a more detailed description of the SDGs in chapter "Promoting Learning Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

3.1 Developing Digital Storytelling Workshops with Girls

Nineteen girls participated in the workshops in Portugal, aged from 14 to 20 years old, with an average age of 16.8, standard deviation 1.8. The girls' schooling level ranged from 9th to 12th grade, with 47% attending the 11th grade. Their mother's schooling ranged from the fourth grade to university, with the majority having just completed the ninth grade (47%), corresponding to the level of compulsory education for their age group.

3.1.1 Ethics

During the process, the team of facilitators considered ethical issues, especially as they were dealing with minors in a situation of social vulnerability. With this in mind the following conditions were ensured [26]:

1. Assure storyteller wellbeing: together with the girls' teachers and legal guardians, conditions were considered to ensure that they felt comfortable and emotionally supported during the process of sharing and developing the stories.
2. Informed consent: all parents or guardians signed the informed consent agreement. In addition, all the young girls were informed about the project and supported in making informed choices about workshop participation and the content, production and use of their narratives. They were also informed about the possibility of withdrawing at any time.
3. Knowledge production and ownership: conditions ensured that the girls were able to tell their stories with freedom and in different languages. In cases where more sensitive and compromising content was shared, after discussion with the facilitators, these digital stories were not shared or were kept anonymous.
4. Local relevance: the MINDtheGaps project worked with local partners to design the workshops. Each session was carefully prepared and adapted to local contexts and needs.
5. Ethical engagement: ethics issues were observed along the process, and the young girls were listened to during the development of the objectives, selection, workshop design and implementation.
6. Story dissemination: The digital stories were primarily shared with the girls' local communities. After that, some of them were shared online, while the sensitive ones were stored in a place of restricted access.

The Digital Storytelling Workshop Development

The digital storytelling workshop followed the seven steps [1] presented in Fig. 2.

The diversity of situations, emotions and insights presented in Fig. 2 is consistent with the

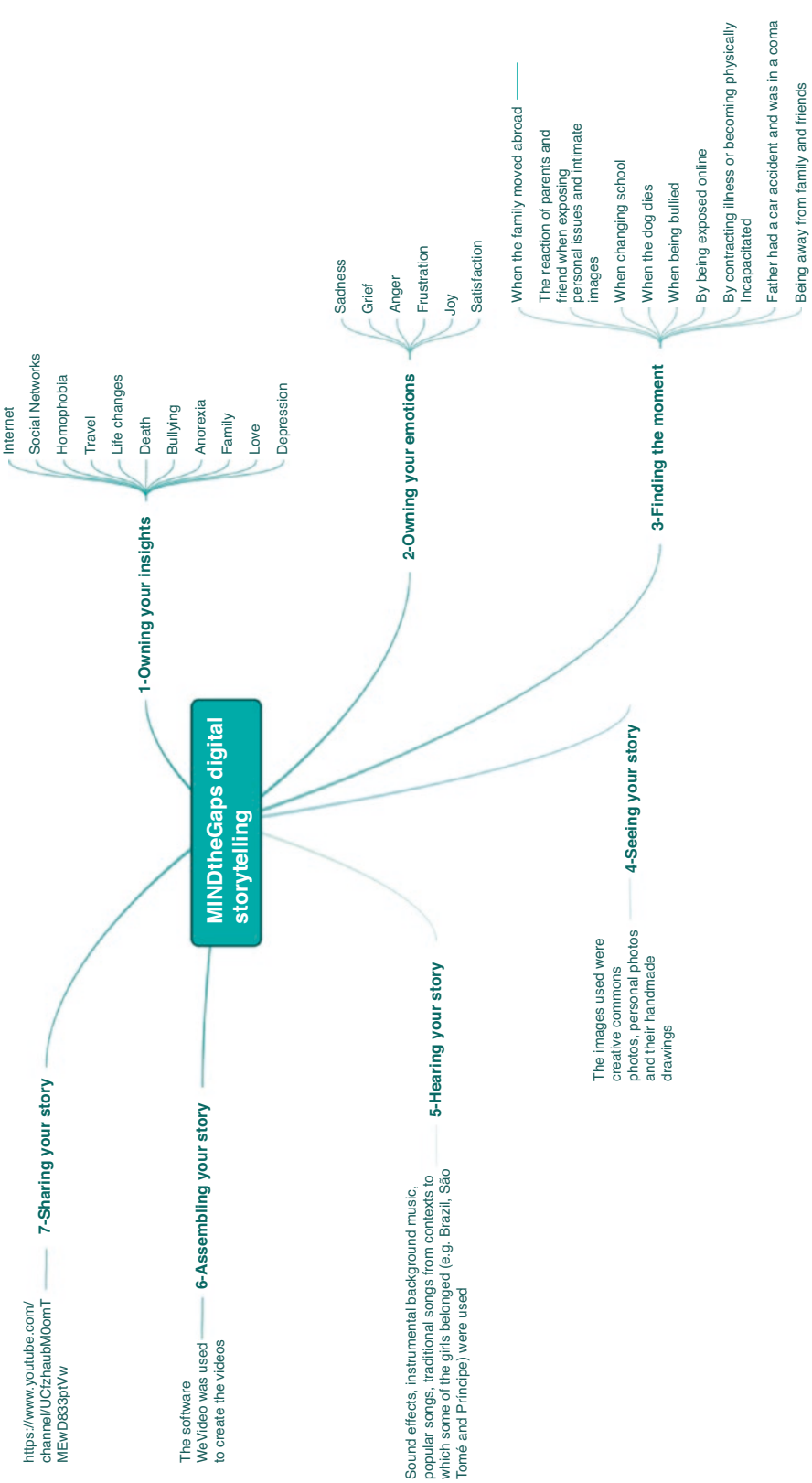

Fig. 2 Digital storytelling steps and MtG digital stories systematisation

diversity of the girls' life stories. As Lambert ([1], p. 10) points out: "This process of self-reflection helps move from an awareness of "I am" to a deeper awareness of "I have been… I am becoming… I am… and I will be….". As life proceeds and is reflected upon, changes can be better understood, and stories have the chance to ripen".

4 Democratic Culture and Wellbeing: Expressing and Developing Worldviews and Feelings Through Digital Storytelling

4.1 Analysing Competences for Democratic Culture Expressed Through Digital Storytelling

For the analysis of the 19 digital narratives produced by the girls who participated in the MTG storytelling workshops in Portugal, a thematic analysis [16] was used, based on the model of competences for democratic culture [17, 27] (Fig. 3). [1]

Concerning *values*, the most frequently mentioned, with 42.1% of references in the girls' digital stories, was *valuing human dignity and human rights*, often related to the absence of those values online, as stated by Rita (18 years old):

> Why don't people and society think before criticising someone?
> We are in the 21st century and there is still the prejudice of image and of how people look.
> (…) Why does our society have to criticise people with coldness, arrogance, and negative points?
> Why do they only see this side? And why don't they see the good side of people?

The attitude of *respect* was also mentioned in the digital stories (21.1%) as a concern for other people's feelings. However, again, the absence of respect was highlighted:

> Always remember to be careful about the comments you make on the Internet because they can ruin a person's life. (Sofia, 14 years old)

> After a while, the conversation began to evolve, and he asked her for intimate photos, manipulating and threatening her, saying he would stop talking to her. (…) Mariana gave in (…) Pedro (…) shared it with his group of friends. (…) It was spread across the internet, which made the whole school, colleagues, and friends of Mariana see the photos. (…) She suffered a lot of bullying. (Helga, 15 years old)

In what concerns other *attitudes*, *self-efficacy* was the most mentioned (73.7%), mainly suggesting that the girls were aware of the necessary competences to meet life's challenges:

> In these last two months, I decided to concentrate on myself, and I learned to live with myself when I needed to, I was the only one there. I am proud of myself. I decided not to demand too much from myself and learn from it. I still don't feel 100%, I am worn out, but that is life. First it makes you strong, and then it makes you happy. (Teresa, 18 years old)

In her digital story, Teresa also clearly showed that she took *responsibility* for her 'mistake':

> 2021 came and I got sick from a mistake that resulted in two STDs [sexually transmitted diseases] that led to me going to the health centre every week and often to the ER. I was having treatments until one at night on one occasion, I became ill and I had, I can say, the greatest pain of my life. In the morning, I woke up and was frightened by what I saw, so I went straight to the emergency room. (…) What STDs can cause!

Regarding *tolerance of ambiguity*, an attitude equally mentioned in the digital stories (21.1%), the girls appeared to be comfortable in unfamiliar circumstances and to deal with uncertainty in a positive manner. In her digital story, Maria (21 years old), expressed her feelings of sadness about leaving her family, especially her younger siblings, to travel to Portugal to pursue her studies:

[1] For the qualitative thematic analysis, only the competences for democratic culture that scored above 20% in the quantitative analysis will be mentioned.

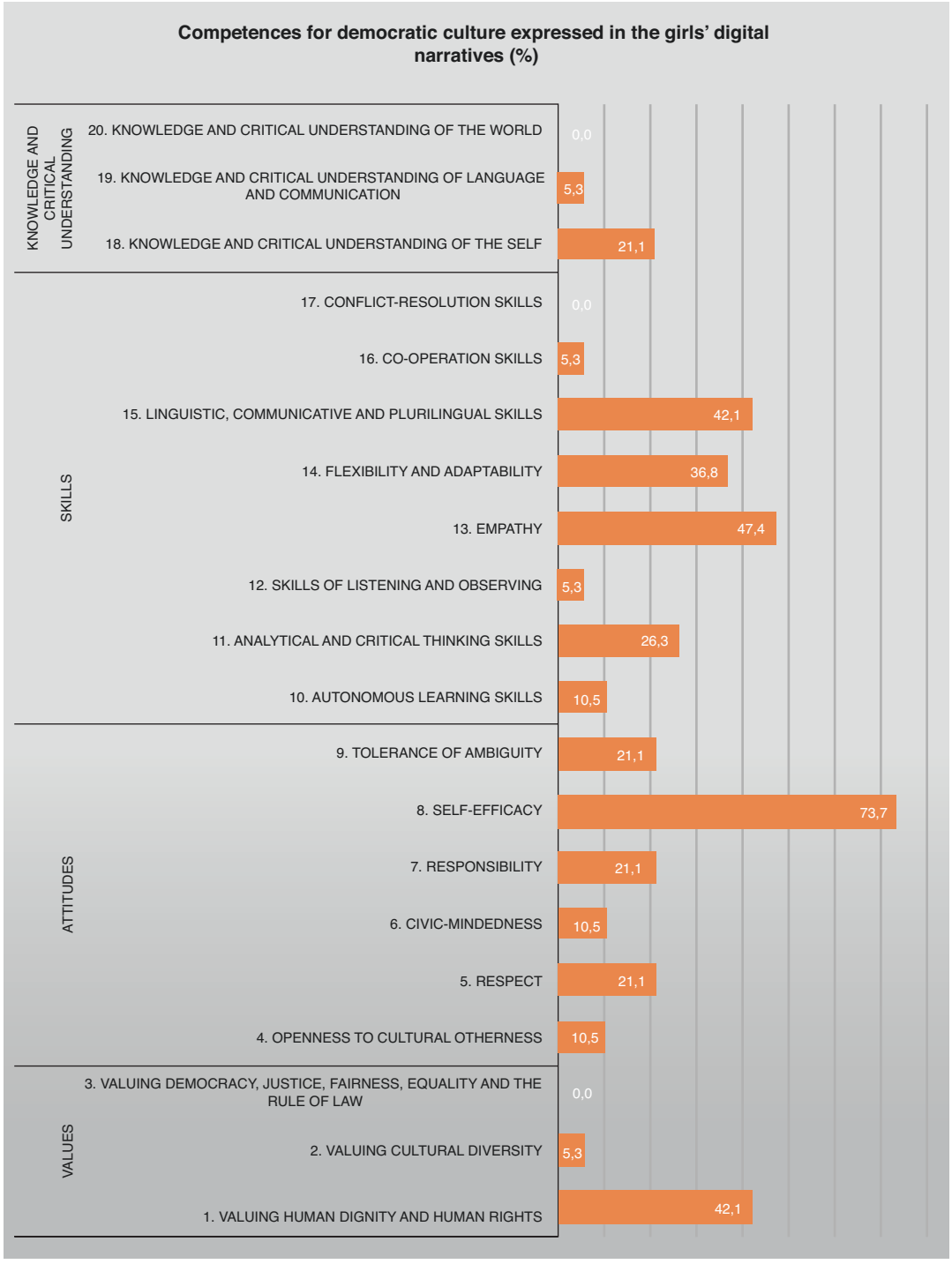

Fig. 3 Thematic analysis of the girls' digital stories using the model of competences for democratic culture [17, 27]

> I felt very bad about it, but I was discreet not to make things worse, and today I am in Portugal. At the beginning it was tough to integrate with new people, everything was different, I didn't feel well, I thought the others were better than me, but now I have new friends, and I have learnt new things and I accept the fact that I am far from the people I love.

Concerning the *skills* for democratic culture, *empathy* was the most relevant throughout the narratives (47.4%), especially related to the suffering of other young people who, in the stories, were victims of bullying:

> Isa has never been a person with a body like the ones shown as standards on the internet. But then again, none of us cared about that.
> However, when I saw her that day… She no longer had that sparkle in her eyes. She was much skinnier.
> I didn't want to comment because she might not feel comfortable, but I started to find it very suspicious when we ate a snack with our friends, and she barely touched her food.
> Later, I asked her if something was wrong (…).
> The Internet had destroyed her.
> I talked to her and quickly convinced her to see a doctor, or a psychologist, and she eventually agreed. (Sofia, 14 years old)

As to the *linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills* (42.1%), the girls were able to express their thoughts on the problems around them, including developing their analytical and critical thinking skills (26.3%):

> The impact of influencers and YouTubers on society is becoming more and more noticeable. We see the younger generations being inspired and wanting to follow the path of those we call idols. We are influenced by their publications, ways of speaking, acting, and thinking. Social media is a medium that brings us closer to our friends and family, but it is also a place of very negative comments and vicious cycles. Take care of yourself and your mental health. Don't compare yourself and accept yourself just the way you are. That's what makes you special and unique. (Margarida, 15 years old)

In what concerns another relevant skill, *flexibility, and adaptability* (36.8%), the young women showed they were able to support other views, adapt to new situations and even to change their mind concerning future professional paths.

Lastly, regarding the cluster *knowledge and critical understanding*, we highlight self-knowledge, and the ability to reflect critically on themselves, their emotions, and feelings:

> In the Association I learnt to respect others, to improve my skills, such as my self-esteem and confidence, to control my emotions, to control my impulsiveness. I have also managed to change several things about myself, to have more goals, to express myself more, but above all I have grown, I am beginning to see life in a different way. (Paula, 15 years old)

4.2 Digital Storytelling and Wellbeing

Valuing the young people's voices through developing digital stories can contribute, as noted earlier, to developing competences for democratic culture. Considering wellbeing as a prerequisite for promoting and sustaining conditions for participation, we also analysed the digital stories' themes by using the indicators as constructs of wellbeing inspired by the New Zealand Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy [28] [2] (Fig. 4). The information about how the process of sharing experiences can contribute to *wellbeing-ness* is discussed in this book's chapter "Towards Wellbeing-ness as an Experience of Inclusion, Belonging and Voice in a Digital (Post-Covid) World of Global Change".

Through a second analysis of the young women's narratives we were able to identify the frequency with which the wellbeing indicators as constructs emerged as relevant. The data has been systematised in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, situations involving the need to be *accepted, respected and connected* are the most represented in the digital stories (46%), related to themes such as coming out as homosexual and/or fighting homophobia; bullying situations and reporting bullying to school by

[2] Child and youth wellbeing strategy. Indicators: https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/measuring-success/indicators

Outcome	Child and Youth Wellbeing Indicators
Children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured	Feeling loved, feeling safe, family/whānau wellbeing, injury prevalence, harm against children, and quality time with parents
Children and young people have what they need	Material wellbeing, child poverty: material hardship, child poverty: low income BHC50, child poverty: low income AHC 50, food insecurity, housing quality, and housing affordability
Children and young people are happy and healthy	Prenatal care, early exposure to toxins, subjective health status, preventable admissions to hospital, mental wellbeing, and self-harm and suicide
Children and young people are learning and developing	Participation in early learning, regular school attendance, literacy, numeracy and science skills, socio-emotional skills, self-management skills, and youth in employment, education, or training
Children and young people are accepted, respected and connected	Ability to be themselves, sense of belonging, experience of discrimination, experience of bullying, social support, support for cultural identity, and languages
Children and young people are involved and empowered	Involvement in the community, representation of children and young people's voices, making positive choices, and involvement in criminal offending

Fig. 4 Wellbeing indicators of the New Zealand Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. (Source: Child Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction Group [28])

Table 1 Number of references per indicator of wellbeing expressed in the young women's narratives

Wellbeing outcome	Frequency
Accepted, respected and connected	40
Happy and healthy	15
Learning and developing	14
Involved and empowered	9
Loved, safe and nurtured	6
Have what they need	3

parents; the importance of accepting themselves as they are; mental health concerns, and the importance of seeking psychological help; emotional learning, including self-love and self-care, and, lastly, finding meaning in adversity.

The second most frequently addressed outcome in the digital stories' themes is *happy and healthy* (17%), which involves *health issues, mental wellbeing and recovery from trauma*. In the digital stories, some themes emerged involving physical and mental health, such as illnesses, infertility, sadness, depression, suicide attempt and dealing with death.

The *learning and developing* outcome, with 16% of the references, includes situations of emotional learning, vocational orientation, the

choice of a future profession and the areas of professional interest.

The outcome *involved and empowered* (10%) involves the girls' relationship with the community; *having their voices, perspectives, and opinions listened to and taken into account*; to be responsible citizens, they, and their families, are supported to make healthy choices. The themes in the digital stories relate to the use of social networks to affirm their sexual identity, the impact of influencers and YouTubers on young people, and recommendations to other young people about internet dangers, including making comparisons with unrealistic standards.

Regarding the outcome *loved, safe and nurtured* (7%), there were some situations in the narratives where the young women expressed this need through romantic love, their father's alcoholism, and coping with parental separation.

The outcome *children and young people have what they need* (3%) is present in the digital stories involving material issues that were mainly related to past situations experienced in the family and in the adaptation to new life contexts, such as economic difficulties, migration in search of new opportunities and the difficulties integrating into a new country.

Based on the young women's stories, the main concerns that emerged from the analysis were related to social aspects. Among the themes addressed, the need to recognise differences and to be accepted and respected by others, but also by oneself stands out. The process of feeling, representing, and sharing the stories also allowed the development of learning about emotion management. In most of the stories, they tended to close with a message of hope. In these cases, friends, family, and other professionals were asigned a fundamental role in the process of overcoming these situations.

5 Final Remarks

In this chapter, we have described the approach used in digital storytelling workshops held with Portuguese young people, from vulnerable backgrounds, based on the methodology proposed by Lambert, in the context of the European project *MINDtheGaps: Media literacy towards youth social inclusion*. The aim of the Project was to use a participatory intervention methodology based on digital storytelling (among other resources), to develop media and digital literacy, and critical thinking, thus increasing young people's participation and social inclusion.

For this chapter, we proposed to study specifically the situation of girls, considering the intersection of the category of gender with other categories of inequality existing in the lives of these young people, in line with concerns expressed in SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). At the same time, based on previous research that showed that digital storytelling can be been positively used with young people to prevent and promote skills to deal with violence and discrimination, to build empathy and to promote attitude change, we questioned whether *digital storytelling can contribute to express and develop competences for democratic culture and feelings of wellbeing of girls, both online and offline and in what way*.

Through a thematic analysis of the 19 digital stories created by the girls, using the Council of Europe's 'model of competences for democratic culture', as well as the indicators of the New Zealand Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, we sought to answer questions concerning the assumption that digital citizenship education, a cornerstone of this Project, is related to civic engagement and participation (both online and offline). It also relates to *wellbeing online* and *rights online* as parallel concerns reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4: 'Quality Education' [29], especially for children and young people experiencing vulnerable situations.

During the workshops, the girls expressed feelings of comfort and closeness after sharing their digital stories. Some digital stories mirrored self-reflection and moments of learning and self-improvement. At this level, regarding the competences for democratic culture expressed through digital storytelling, the most mentioned *values*

were those related to *valuing human dignity and human rights*, often related to the absence of those values online as well as the lack of respect from others. In relation to *attitudes*, *self-efficacy* was the most frequently mentioned, related to the need to meet life's challenges, as well as *tolerance of ambiguity*. This attitude equally moves us to the need to deal with unforeseen circumstances in a positive, engaging manner. Concerning the *skills* for democratic culture, *empathy*, especially for those who are victims of bullying, was consistently mentioned and of high relevance throughout the stories.

The girls were also able to express their thoughts on the problems around them, including developing their analytical and critical thinking skills and showing *flexibility and skills to adapt* regarding new situations in their lives, such as moving to a new country, their parents' separation, or openness to new ideas or professional paths. We also highlight that in many stories, the young women were able to critically reflect on their attitudes and behaviours. In this sense, the digital storytelling workshops not only enabled the expression of democratic competences, but they also enabled the development of a participatory and inclusive process, in which the young people felt free to express feelings and experiences without judgement while others developed democratic values, attitudes, skills and understanding.

As for the wellbeing indicators, we concluded that the situations involving the need to be *accepted, respected, and connected* were most represented in the stories, especially connected with the recognition of difference, the acceptance by others and the need for respect.

In sum, the young people's stories and the story circles showed in a highly appropriate way to the young people and adults involved in the Project that the competences we use in a culture of democracy, in features related to respect for difference, participation, and critical understanding of the world and oneself, affect our social and individual wellbeing. They are all connected and we cannot have one without the other.

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Multilingual Stories for Immigrants and Refugees: A Language-as-Resource Approach

Espen Stranger-Johannessen and Valeria Damiani

Abstract

A major challenge for many immigrants and refugees, particularly those with little or no formal schooling, is learning the language of the host country. Open educational resources (OER), including courses and websites with multilingual stories, are ways to address this challenge. This chapter will present and analyse the OER developed in three projects funded by the Erasmus+ Programme: Advenus and Regap, which integrated language and content learning in courses, and LIDA Stories (https://lidastories.net), a collection of country-specific websites with multilingual stories for youth and adult immigrants and refugees who are learning the language of the host country. The chapter concludes by highlighting the key role of stories for the acquisition of the host country language by migrants and refugees.

Keywords

Multilingual stories · Open educational resources · Immigrants · Refugees · Language and literacy learning · Digital learning Storytelling · LIDA

A major goal for the integration of immigrants and refugees is learning the language of the host country, as language is widely seen as a key to studying, getting a job, and otherwise taking part in the society. At the same time, language learning is a major challenge for many. Immigrants and refugees with little or no formal schooling face a particular disadvantage. They are not fully familiar with print literacy in any language and must rely more heavily on oral and other means of communication and sense-making [1]. Research on adults' literacy development has mostly focused on people who are literate in their first language [2], which further underlines the importance of more research into how the education system can accommodate the group of students who are the primary topic of this chapter.

While many countries offer language courses, usually in addition to other courses and support, students without prior formal education are at a disadvantage since they are accustomed to listening rather than reading for learning—in a school system that is highly oriented towards print literacy. Language is also implicated in this conundrum, as the teachers hardly ever speak the

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languages of their students, and rarely have learning materials in their languages at their disposal. Instructional content, such as literacy, mathematics and social sciences, have to be taught *in* a language, which invariably means the language of the host country. Language and content are often taught together; even if the two are split into separate courses, they are integrated in the immigrants and refugees' learning process.

For pre-literate language learners in particular, but arguably all immigrant and refugees, drawing on their language competence and motivation to adapt to the host country, is a way to apply a resource perspective to language learning, effectively to treat their first language as a resource in the acquisition of the target language, such as Italian, Portugese or Norwegian [3]. Open educational resources (OER), such as bilingual stories with both print and audio, are a way to address this challenge, which has become possible with digital devices, in particular the ubiquitous handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets in recent years, with touch screens facilitating navigation independently of text and keyboard. OER can be used inside and outside the formal education system, which learning cities emphasize (see chapters "Introduction: The Changing World of Pedagogy in Diverse Cultural Contexts" and "Promoting Learning Inclusion Through the Global Network of Learning Cities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)").

In this chapter we will discuss the inclusion of immigrants and refugees, particularly those with little education, from the perspective of language learning and content and language integration through the use of OER in general and bilingual stories in particular. By approaching language learning from a resource perspective, we consider immigrants and refugees' identity and investment [4], and how these theoretical principles are expressed through LIDA's precursor projects (Advenus and ReGap) and LIDA Stories (lidastories.net), which was developed as part of LIDA. All three projects include online resources for adult refugees; Advenus and ReGap offered primarily courses, while LIDA Stories is a collection of country-specific websites with stories for youth and adult immigrants and refugees who are learning the language of the host country (see Fig. 1).

Apart from the background and design principles of LIDA Stories, we present a case for the use of stories created in the Advenus and ReGap projects, which offered online courses that integrated language and content. We discuss how these different digital approaches to support immigrants and refugees' learning can complement each other and draw on stories and storytelling as fundamental modes of human expression. We conclude by pointing to the way forward, specifically how the current development of LIDA Stories builds on prior experiences and a set of design principles, can support the vision of inclusive education in the digital age.

Fig. 1 The LIDA Stories Portal with the four country-specific websites (https://lidastories.net/)

1 Language and Literacy Learning for Immigrants and Refugees

Migration and refugee crises are not a new phenomenon, but the increase Europe has seen in recent years calls for renewed attention to their education and training [5]. Many migrants and refugees are forced to leave their homes, sometimes leaving family members behind. While many value the learning of the host country's language, other concerns and priorities can jeopardise the time and focus they have for courses and training aimed at studying the language or other courses. Financial constraints can also force people to prioritise working over studying. People with limited education from their home countries are particularly vulnerable, not least since they on average require much more time to develop basic literacy and other foundational skills—even to get entry-level jobs or further studies [6].

While basic, technical literacy skills such as decoding and reading comprehension are core to literacy development, the emphasis on functional literacy, where literacy is reduced to a set of technical skills, has been criticised for not taking into account the multi-faceted and context-dependent nature of literacy (e.g., [7, 8]). People develop and use literacy for a purpose, or rather many purposes, depending on the situation, and come to the language and literacy classroom with prior experiences, wishes and understanding, which should inform the teaching that takes place [2, 9]. Two keywords in this context are *language* and *identity*, which will be discussed in the following.

Language and literacy education for adult immigrants and refugees has often implied the use of the target language only [10], even though there is consensus among researchers that the students' first language should be considered a resource and that co-current development of the first language benefits the development of the second (the one that is being taught) [11]. Although there has been an increase in the use and acknowledgement of the students' own languages, many teachers struggle with this, and are caught between competing ideologies and practical concerns (e.g., [12]). Similar tendencies can be found in primary and secondary schools as well, but these groups of students are different in crucial ways, and the wealth of scholarship on multilingualism in schools does not readily translate to the context of adult education.

Orientations towards language in multilingual contexts—language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource [3], along with most concepts and theories in this area, have been developed with respect to children's education, or at least primarily used in that context, but are often relevant for adult education. Re-purposing and recontextualizing concepts and theories, while potentially fruitful, require attention to nuances and shifts in meaning. While Ruiz's concepts were originally intended at the level of language planning and linguistic minorities at a national level, later use of the terms have often focused on the practices and discourses in the classroom [13].

Language as a resource captures both theoretical perspectives on the benefits of multilingualism and pedagogical implications of these [13]. Rather than seeing two or more languages as a question of competition, valorising and supporting students' linguistic repertoires benefits students' academic achievement and affirms their multilingual and multicultural identities [11, 14]. In practice this means allowing for the use of multiple languages in the classroom and encouraging students to use these as part of their learning processes. The deliberate use and facilitation of different languages in this way is known as *pedagogical translanguaging* [15].

Norlund Shaswar [16] found that a teacher expressed multiple competing language ideologies in both discourse and practice, allowing for and employing some level of translanguaging in her Swedish for adult immigrants classroom, but not sufficient to be considered pedagogical translanguaging. Rosén and Lundgren [12] similarly report contradictions and tensions opening for the use of multiple languages, including how translanguaging can create barriers between students who speak the same language (i.e., languages with many speakers, such as Arabic) or

English, which the teacher and some students speak, effectively excluding some students. Translanguaging as a pedagogy for teaching and learning, as proposed by Creese and Blackledge [17], clearly holds great potential, but "[w]hether a specific translanguaging practice is transformative in a specific context depends, to a large extent, on who has initiated it and can decide and control its purpose" ([16], p. 16). Translanguaging, and language in general, is implicated in the power relations in both the classroom and the wider society. An implication of this is that the students and teachers' perceptions, cultural and linguistic resources, desires—in short—their identities, are at the centre stage of language learning.

Identity has proved to be a powerful analytical lens for researching language and literacy teaching across different contexts, including both student (e.g., [18, 19]) and teacher identity (e.g., [20, 21]). While there are many perspectives on identity [22], it is generally described as multiple, shifting, and constructed through discourse and practice [19, 23]. Norton [19] developed a theory of identity that puts relations of power at the heart of language teaching and learning—based on Bourdieu's (language and power) and Weedon's (feminism) scholarship. Based on interviews with five immigrant women in Canada, Norton introduced the concept of investment, a sociological construct parallel to the psychological construct of motivation, in order to take into account the impact of external forces and the power imbalances that adult immigrant language learners often face. The women in her study were motivated to learn, but "all the women felt uncomfortable talking to people *in whom they had a particular symbolic or material investment*" ([19], p. 157, emphasis in original). Previous research on adult language learners had emphasised individual traits, such as motivation and their willingness to speak English. Power differentials between the students and the teacher are blurred or ignored, and lack of understanding for the value and nature of teaching methods in the host country becomes a deficit in the student, who might be labelled "unmotivated".

2 Open Educational Resources and Digital Learning

Immigrants and refugees in Europe usually have access to educational resources such as textbooks, but commercially available materials supplied by the school or institution are limited in many ways, such as curriculum specificity, and teachers routinely expand and enrich their teaching with websites, apps, and other resources. Many of these OER are available online and provided free of charge using open licences. This means that translating, adapting, and republishing are permitted. Apart from the benefit of availability, OER tend to attract a wide range of support, as the effort that goes into creating and making them available is appreciated and generates more support. OER can be both full online courses, known as massively open online courses (MOOCs), but also supplementary materials to be used in addition to courses and textbooks [24]. OER encompass both content, which Advenus and ReGap did, and software, as is the case for LIDA Stories (in addition to content).

All three initiatives are both a product of the open philosophy inherent in the OER movement, and a contribution to it. OER—and more broadly, new information and communication technology (ICT) platforms—are considered a relevant means in tackling the refugee and migrant crisis through the promotion of social inclusion [25, 26]. ICT allows migrants and refugees to learn the language of the host country, in getting health care, in finding a job, in accessing government services and in organising schooling for their children or training for themselves [27].

Research has shown that, in spite of the relevance of OER for the promotion of social inclusion, teachers, migrants, and refugees face difficulties in accessing and using these digital platforms and their content. This is mainly due to the scarcity of OER specifically targeting refugees that can be used in classrooms or independently, the lack of quality control processes for new OER, lack of evaluation mechanisms for existing OER, and the pervasive presence of English as the main language for these resources

[28]. This is the object of wide debate in non-English speaking countries [29].

In their assessment on the features that make ICT deployment successful for refugees and migrants, Bock et al. [30] stressed the importance of a two-way communication functionality of platforms, for example between tutors and refugees and migrants, in contrast with platforms characterised by one-way communication, e.g. a traditional website for information dissemination. The research highlighted three key areas for an effective implementation of a platform targeted to migrants and refugees: (1) sustainable funding (the platform is not only based on volunteering but can pay its operational costs); (2) the scale or penetration (reaching out to a high number of users); and (3) the involvement of end users at the very beginning and throughout the development of a platform in order to meet their actual needs and tailor the contents and functionality of the platform [30].

Similar findings were reported in two studies by UNESCO [28] and the EU Joint Research Centre [31] on the potential of digital learning for migrants and refugees' education. Both reports highlighted some general recommendations that are relevant in the field of OER development for migrants and refugees. These recommendations are firstly related to the need to overcome the exclusive online delivery and to provide blended learning approaches—that combine online and offline learning. This implies the inclusion of learning experiences into wider blended learning designs that incorporate mentoring and peer support and the provision of specific actions that strengthen migrants and refugees' digital literacy skills (that encompass the ability to access OER in non-formal and informal learning and also to create secure and private communication spaces). Providing certifications and degrees that recognize the learning, the adoption of multilingual approaches that increase access for those who do not speak a second language and the inclusion of language learning into formal education initiatives, are considered some of the most relevant features that can foster migrants' and refugees' motivation and investment to learn and enhance their engagement into digital learning [28, 31].

3 Bilingual and Multilingual Stories

The digital revolution and the arrival of connectivism (see "Introduction" to this book) has paved the way for new methods of distributing and displaying books, which, among many benefits, has made it easier to make and share stories and other content that do not warrant large print runs. This includes books in immigrant languages, especially smaller ones, which are not even available in large libraries. The digital format also makes it much easier to make corrections and additions, it is possible to integrate text, illustrations, and audio, and it is easy to navigate between a number of stories and languages in a few clicks, including switching between reading the same story in two different languages. Bilingual stories can then be read either consecutively or concurrently. This allows for accessing the same information through two different languages, and the reader can compare the story—either as a whole or at sentence/page level. Reading a story in a familiar language first allows for an overview and contextual understanding, while switching between languages at the sentence or page level affords contrasting of words and phrases [32].

There are a number of books and websites with stories for children, including multilingual ones. While stories and other literacy materials developed for children are sometimes used in adult education with some success, they are not always accepted or well suited for adults [33]. The illustrations and content in children's stories typically reflect children's life words; adults can feel infantilized if they are given children's books to read. At the same time, the market for storybooks and other materials for adults with low literacy levels is small. The language style, sentence length, and grammatical complexity make such designated texts preferable to newspapers, novels, and other print materials that are written for mother tongue speakers. While such children's stories may be the best on offer, and are sometimes used in adult education classes, they do not adequately meet the needs of adult language learners with initial language and literacy skills. However, virtually all research on multilingual stories and their use in initial language and liter-

acy instruction is done with children, which should be kept in mind when considering the insights from the research literature.

Bilingual stories, or dual-language books, are widely proposed as a contribution to literacy development in multilingual educational settings, particularly schools where many students have an immigrant or linguistic minority background, as well as bilingual communities (e.g., [34, 35]). Dual-language books have been found to instigate a sense of community [36], develop personal and cultural identity [37], improve literacy in students' first [38] and second [39] language. The advantages of dual-language books are linked to the benefits of developing literacy in the first language along with the language of schooling, which is extensively documented empirically and theoretically [11, 40, 41]. When students' home languages are not valued or supported, but rather ignored or silenced, students are given a strong message about their languages, and by extension who they are.

Children's stories available for free are increasingly common, with websites such as storyweaver.org.in, bloomlibrary.org, digitallibrary.io, and letsreadasia.org, which provide stories in multiple languages. However, these websites do not readily facilitate dual-language reading, such as juxtaposing the text or allowing for simple toggling between languages. These and other websites also lack audio (except some stories in major Indian languages), and even though the stories are available for free, the websites are custom made, thus not possible to adapt for other purposes. These shortcomings of related projects spurred the need for a more dynamic approach—making both a website framework and content that could be readily adapted—in keeping with the philosophy of OER, and not reducing openness to merely a question of licences.

> Openness as a foundational principle means thinking about and explicitly facilitating the future reuse and repurposing of data. In the context of an open literacy initiative, this is also embodied in an understanding and expectation that communities and organisations will want to build on, adapt, replace, and otherwise take ownership of the data and format of the stories to suit their local context, as well as in the creation from the ground up of affordances and tools that can make this as accessible as possible. [42]

With this perspective in mind, Global Storybooks started to form and unintendedly sowed the seed of LIDA Stories (see below). In addition to these roots in openly licensed children's stories, courses developed for European immigrants and refugees have also contributed to LIDA Stories. Advenus and ReGap employed stories (among other devices) to teach key skills for managing one's personal and professional life, and some of these stories have been adapted and repurposed for LIDA Stories, in keeping with the spirit of OER. In the following we present these two projects as well as LIDA Stories, before we discuss how these different approaches to supporting inclusion meet different needs and complement each other.

4 Content and Language Integration in an Online Course: Advenus and ReGap

This section presents some examples of the OER created for the Advenus and ReGap projects. Both are based on the evidence reported by the literature in the field and key recommendations [28, 30, 31]. They have involved migrants and refugees at different stages of the development of the resources to tailor OER contents and aims, they have adopted multilingual approaches and have included the learning of the host country language in formal and non-formal contexts as a central aspect of the OER, and they have guaranteed sustainability of the platforms over time across the two projects [43, 44]. Moreover, ReGap has implemented a blended learning approach, combining digital learning with face-to-face activities to be carried out in the classes. In what follows we will consider the characteristics and aims of the OER developed in both projects.

The Advenus project (Developing online resources for adult refugees, ref. 2016-1-NO01-KA204-022090), funded under the Erasmus Plus Programme of the European Union, aimed to foster adult refugees' basic skills in order to promote their integration into host European societies. The creation and the trialling of open access e-learning resources was the main output of the project.

Advenus' assumptions were based on a previous research experience, the EU funded LIBE project (*Supporting Lifelong Learning with Inquiry-Based Education*[1]), aimed at offering young adults (16–24 years old) with low levels of education a set of personalised e-learning units on key and transversal competences, namely literacy, numeracy and problem solving. These e-learning units were provided on a Virtual Learning Environment in Moodle in the four languages of the consortium partners (English, Italian, Norwegian, and Portuguese). LIBE courses, and therefore also the courses developed in Advenus, devised a specific set of activities focused on the development of students' competences through vocabulary and reading skills enhancement [45, 46].

The six Advenus courses on Moodle tackled different issues: literacy and employment issues, the development of e-skills, numeracy, problem solving in technological rich environments in relation to consumer awareness and sustainable development [43]. Each e-learning course was made up of (1) an introduction, aimed at motivating the learner and presenting the topic; (2) the presentation of prompts (e.g., a completed CV, a cover letter example); (3) an analysis section, with a specific focus on the language and on text's structure, key words and expressions adopted; (4) several activities for applying what the learner had just analysed (multiple choices questions, drag and drop, cloze tests etc.); and (5) dedicated feedback, one for each activity, aimed at explaining the most common wrong answers.

Two focus groups were carried out at the beginning of the project with the refugees in order to explore their interests and learning needs and to involve them in the development of the resources [47]. In the redesigning of the courses, great attention was paid to language and content adaptation. In particular, the language of the texts and the activities was simplified, highlighting key words that were deemed useful for the target group in relation to every topic of each course, and the length of the texts was reduced in order to lighten the reading load. Vocabulary learning was at the heart of every course, with explanatory sections focused on the meaning of key words and drag and drop activities, with visual dictionaries to improve lexical competence. The prompts were developed using real-life material concerning experiences that refugees may have encountered, e.g., an example of a CV of a worker with an immigrant background; and real job advertisements that referred to the jobs that refugees and educators had identified as the most common in Italy.

The research experience gained through Advenus was the starting point for another project, also funded under the Erasmus Plus Programme, that followed the same rationale and the structure, i.e., to develop high-quality and open access e-learning resources. The 2-year ReGap project (Reducing the Education Gap, ref. 2017-1-NO01-KA204-034182) broadened the target group of Advenus (now including adult migrants and refugees) and was focused on the improvement of their employment opportunities and the fostering of social belonging. In addition, the knowledge of the host country language was at the heart of the e-learning resources in ReGap.

In line with its main objectives, the six online courses created on Moodle for ReGap were related to those issues that were deemed crucial for migrants' and refugees' social inclusion and employability, i.e., employment, health, education, gender, social security and welfare, justice and citizenship. Each course included, in addition to the language learning activities, a dedicated section on information on the four partner countries, with the aim of supporting migrants and refugees in dealing with relevant cultural aspects or problems they may face in the host country. A feature that differentiates ReGap from Advenus was the inclusion of complementary face-to face activities, to be carried out with students by teachers, educators, or cultural facilitators.

Each course followed a common rationale and structure: (1) the need to motivate refugees' and migrants' learning through an introductory video; (2) the focus on the learning of the host country

[1] https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gabriella-Agrusti/publication/294581470_LIBE_e-booklet_for_teachers_and_educators/links/56c230cb08aee5caccf9bbb6/LIBE-e-booklet-for-teachers-and-educators.pdf

language with an attention to lexical competence and reading comprehension; (3) dedicated activities on key words and on the understanding of each topic; and (4) country-specific information for every topic tackled in the courses. The ReGap course on employment, for instance, aimed at (1) presenting different kinds of job contracts, reinforcing students' lexicon related to different kinds of jobs, to a CV and to a job advertisement; and (2) job describing how to use public transportation or a car to go to work, highlighting the lexicon and communicative expression to ask for information on the street. The country-specific information of the course dealt with workers' rights at the workplace, the system of job centres/agencies, and the basic traffic laws in each partner country (Fig. 2).

The ReGap course was made up of six sections. The first section was an introduction to the course and included a video-interview with migrants and refugees talking about their experiences related to employment in the hosting country (e.g., how they found a job, what are the key elements for finding a job in the country they live in). The other sections presented the main content of the course (e.g. CV, job ads, employment contracts, losing a job) and encompassed different activities related to reading comprehension, a visual dictionary on professions, exercises on lexicon, and key words. The final section recalled the most relevant information dealt with in the course through multiple choice questions and cloze exercises. The characteristics of different kinds of employment contracts (such as permanent/fixed-term contract, self-employment) were embedded in short stories about migrants and refugees (see Fig. 3), followed by a comprehension quiz. The stories allowed users to familiarise themselves with the content of the section, introducing key words and linguistic expressions into real-life contexts.

In addition to this, the course encompassed a face-to-face (F2F) activity to be carried out in class by a teacher, educator, or cultural facilitator. The F2F activity for the Italian version of the course used a video of an immigrant at the employment centre as a prompt to learn key words for finding a job and communicating in job searching contexts (describe your own skills, understand the requested documents, etc.). Students were engaged in small-group activities on vocabulary and then performed a role-play in pairs, simulating an interview at the employment centre. All F2F activities included guidelines on their delivery. In contrast to, or rather in addition to the comprehensive Advenus and ReGap projects, with extensive online course and F2F activities, LIDA Stories is another initiative for inclusion. It is based on the same philosophy and shares the same broad aims, but has a different approach to supporting immigrants and refugees.

Fig. 2 The ReGap course on employment. (The figures are presented in the English language version to ensure consistence with the language of the chapter. Erasmus+ project with identifier Project no: 2017-1-NO01-KA204-034182 https://www.regap-edu.net/regap-courses/)

Fig. 3 An example of a story in ReGap that presents the topic of the section (https://www.regap-edu.net/regap-courses/)

5 Multilingual Stories for Supplementary Language Learning: LIDA Stories

LIDA Stories provides 30 illustrated stories as text and audio in major immigrant and refugee languages, allowing for reading and listening to the same stories in the first language as well as the language of the host country. LIDA Stories is based on Global Storybooks (globalstorybooks.net), a sister project designed for children who are developing language and literacy skills in both their first and second language, such as Arabic and Italian (if they speak Arabic at home and go to school in Italy). Adapting the existing website framework to fit a new purpose, target group, and content (stories, images, and languages), allows for leveraging the versatility of digital technology in multiple ways, including successful designs and design principles, and flexible sharing and repurposing of digital content across related, but independent websites [47]. To clarify what this means in practice, in the following we will explicate how the original Global Storybooks portal and its country-wise/regional websites work and how the repurposing and adaptation into LIDA Stories has taken place, including the transformation from targeting children to adults, resulting in a unique multilingual, multimodal language and literacy resource for adult immigrants and refugees that is—to the best of our knowledge—the only one of its kind.

Global Storybooks grew from another project to provide openly licensed stories in multiple languages, the African Storybook (africanstorybook.org), which offers a collection of more than 1000 stories in more than 100 languages spoken in Africa. With the dire lack of storybooks and textbooks in any language, and in African languages in particular, the African Storybook sought to address one of the major shortcomings of the African education system, and one that is often cited as one of the key reasons to the low literacy levels on the continent [48, 49]. By making stories available for free online, teachers, parents, NGOs and anyone else with Internet access could get hold of stories, including in languages with few or no commercially available books. The

potential for digital content development, translation, editing and distribution, opens up for access in unprecedented ways.

An unintended consequence of the openly licenced stories from the African Storybook was that a large number of high quality, illustrated children's stories were available for translation and repurposing. This happened when a selection of 40 stories were translated into several immigrant and refugee languages of Canada, and the website Storybooks Canada (storybookscanada.ca) was created in order to host these stories and their translations, and in the process challenged the dominant North–South directionality of knowledge flows [47]. The selected stories were also audio recorded in all languages, as audio support is useful for making connections between sound and printed text [50, 51], but also to support children who can speak their mother tongue, but not necessarily read it (in particular when non-Roman scripts are used, such as Persian or Chinese).

5.1 Design Principles

The LIDA Stories website has been designed to be as useful and accessible for people with little or even no literacy skills. This inclusive design includes content, layout, and navigation. The website is simple to use—a great deal of thought has gone into making it accessible and purposeful with the goal of making it a prime resource for immigrants and refugees, and anyone else who finds it useful. The key design features and principles include (1) relevance (2) accessibility, (3) device and format independence, (4) multilingualism and multimodality, (5) audio recordings, and (6) truly open, as explicated below.

5.1.1 Design Principle 1: Relevance

The majority of stories are short and simple, since the largest need for support materials is at the lowest level. However, the five levels cater for a range of students at different proficiency levels. LIDA stories' aim is to aid students' development of foundational skills to they can read texts without requiring the support of parallel texts or audio. LIDA stories are available in each of the four languages of LIDA (including Portuguese, Italian and Norwegian, not just English), known as localisation [52]. Although the content has not been adapted to each country, the 30 stories have been written with the target group in mind to meet the need for texts that are both relevant and appealing by dealing with everyday interactions, practical issues such as ordering food at a café, but also topics like migration, workers' rights, domestic violence and giving birth.

This approach entails language and content integration, even though the main focus is on language and literacy learning. Five of the stories are adapted from ADVENUS/REGAP stories, while two are written by refugees, recounting their own experiences of migration and challenges and opportunities encountered in their own new country. The inclusion of immigrant and refugees' own stories and recycling stories that have been successfully used previously, meets Bock et al.'s [30] criteria of involvement of end users and meeting their needs. The popularity of the children's stories found in Global Storybooks for use in in adult education—in want of an equivalent site—attests to the functionality and value of the platform design.

5.1.2 Design Principle 2: Accessibility

For people with limited experience of computers, and in particular users with little or no formal schooling, simple-to-use websites are crucial in making content accessible. Reading instructions in a second language also represents a challenge, so reducing excess instructions, menus, buttons, and extraneous text and features in general contribute to making a website accessible. The LIDA Stories website has been designed with this in mind. Instead of complex menus, language-dependent guidelines, cookies, and hidden features, all the stories are visible on the front page and accessible by clicking on the image or title of the story. The small menu on top of the page only provides additional information, not the main content (see Fig. 4). Each story can be easily navigated like any other website by scrolling (using the mouse), keyboard (page up/down, spacebar to go down), as well as buttons with icons for chang-

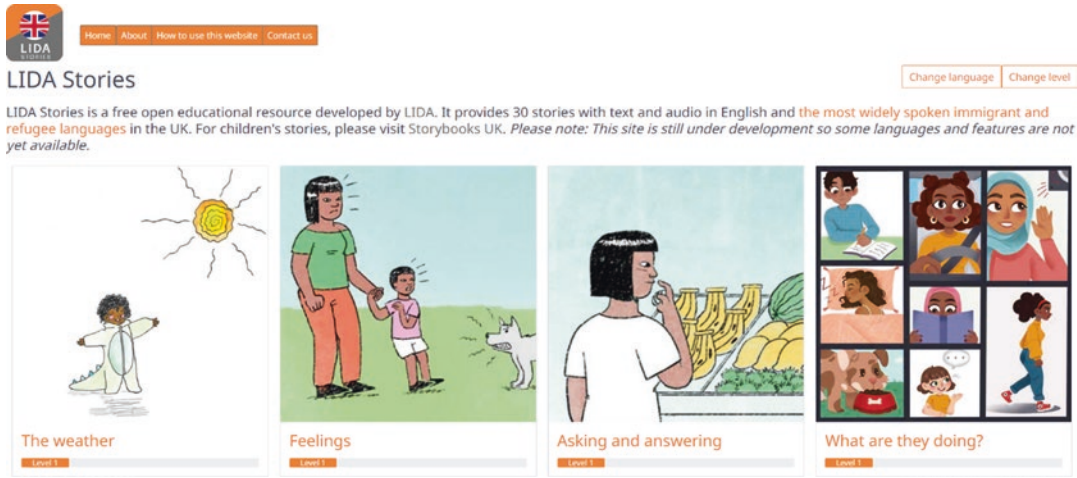

Fig. 4 The United Kingdom website at lidastories.net

Fig. 5 Bilingual booklet (PDF) in Amharic and English (https://lidastories.net/)

ing the page (see below). Similarly, the buttons for playing audio, toggling between languages, and even the equivalent of the colophon (metadata about author, translator, reader, licence) contains icons rather than text. While the website has been designed for ease of use, there is also a full description ("How to use this website") in the menu with descriptions of features, such as how to download different types of PDFs.

5.1.3 Design Principle 3: Device and Format Experience

The website works equally well on a large computer screen, a tablet, and a small smartphone. The text, images and icons neatly fold together such that the size of the screen does not affect the readability or other functions. Since it is a web application, it is not tied to any operating system (e.g., iPhone or Android). The stories are also available for download, either as a regular A4 paper size or booklets (see Fig. 5), so the stories can be used as conventional storybooks. The printouts can be monolingual or bilingual, or even wordless, inviting users to write their own stories, in keeping with the multilingual and multimodal spirit that underpins the project.

5.1.4 Design Principle 4: Multilingualism and Multimodality

The inherently multilingual nature of the website means that the stories are easily accessible across languages. The few other websites that offer the same story in multiple languages, generally keep

Fig. 6 The buttons that toggles between the main language and another language (https://lidastories.net/)

them separated, making it hard to compare text or swiftly navigate between them. Rather than conceiving of languages other than the main language (e.g., Italian or English) as a bonus, in LIDA Stories, the multiple translations are integral to the website, and toggling between a language of choice is the main language is a core feature available with the toggle button (see Fig. 6). More importantly, by offering the same set of stories in all languages, a group of students can read the same story both in their own language, and in the shared language of the classroom, even if the teacher only speaks the language of instruction. The confluence of images, text, and audio support each other to create a multimodal experience for both enjoyment and learning.

Printed dual-language books typically provide images and texts in two languages on the same page or spread. In this mode, the same text can be read twice, once for each language. This mode is available through the website by opening a bilingual PDF (see Fig. 5), but on the website the toggle button allows the user to switch between languages without taking up more screen space. Rather than asking which mode is better—juxtaposed text or a clickable button—the point is the two modes have different affordances, and both are readily accessible.

5.1.5 Design Principle 5: Audio and Recordings

The audio recordings are a prime feature of LIDA Stories, not only to support the development of listening skills in the target language, as is often the case for audio recordings in language classrooms, but also to provide *oral* parallel texts, in addition to the written ones. For people with little or no print literacy skills in their first language, conventional print dual-language books are of little or no use. Similarly, dictionaries are often unfamiliar and challenging, and the opportunity to compare and contrast across languages is severely limited. The audio versions of the stories, however, make the translations available independent of literacy skills, and facilitates the use of the first language as a resource in the learning of the new language. The audio recordings are segmented by page, so it is possible to read a page (one or a few sentences) and listen to the corresponding audio, without the recording running until the end of the story like an audiobook (although that is also an option).

Whereas dictionaries focus on word-level equivalence in meaning, the parallel texts in LIDA Stories provide contextual cues to holistic understanding of meaning at the page and story level, which is likely to be perceived as more meaningful. Grammatical suffixes and words such as particles and conjunctions are more likely to make sense in the context of a sentence or a paragraph than in isolation. People who lack schooling are often experts at inferring meaning from spoken and contextual information, and are likely to benefit from such a holistic approach to supplement explanations given by the teacher. Audio recordings in all languages also means that people can develop literacy in their first language with support from audio to make connections between letters and sounds.

5.1.6 Design Principle 6: Truly Open

LIDA Stories is born out of the OER movement and the principle of sharing, and it takes part in the same by adhering to the same philosophy. The web architecture builds on previous projects, while new stories, illustrations, translations, and audio recordings have been created, and are made

available and easily accessible free of charge and with open licences. Part of the wonder of the OER movement—apart from making available great educational resources—is that other people can reuse and repurpose resources in novel ways. No one could have predicted that children's stories in African languages would find their way to Canada, translated into Asian, European, and Latin American immigrant languages, and in the process spawn a website framework that is ideally suited for adult refugees and immigrants in Europe who are in dire need of educational materials the bridge the gap between their own languages and the language of the host country. This is the power of open (thepowerofopen.org).

6 Discussion

Immigrants and refugees come to the host country with skills, experiences and languages that are too often not valued in the host country, notably by the fact that their first language is either ignored or silenced through explicit or implicit "English only" and equivalent school and classroom level policies [12]. Even many teachers who are in favour of including students' first language, struggle with competing norms and ideologies, and fall short of a truly inclusive and innovative practice through pedagogical translanguaging [16]. Although LIDA Stories and its predecessors Advenus and ReGap cannot be expected to change this, they represent a contribution towards supporting students and teachers to learn in general and draw on their linguistic capabilities in the process. Advenus/ReGap and LIDA Stories approach learning in different, complementary ways, but also have several commonalities.

Social inclusion mediated through the act of learning inclusion is the main framework that has informed the development of the three projects. There are several barriers to social inclusion that migrants and refugees may encounter in the hosting country [53], including discrimination; limited access to healthcare, particularly needed since they have often been exposed to violence or trauma; limited access to the education system; and unemployment.

Regarding the latter, especially refugees represent one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to labour market integration. On average, it takes up to 20 years for a refugee to have a similar employment rate as the native-born, and the employment rate of refugee women is lower than that of other non-EU born women [54]. Among all these challenges, being unable to speak the local language of the host community can be considered the main barrier to social inclusion, since learning the local language is crucial for full participation in all aspects of society. Advenus/ReGap and LIDA stories are an attempt to overcome this barrier, making language learning open, freely accessible, and relevant for migrants and refugees.

Advenus and Regap were full online courses with an account to log in and keep track of progress, a syllabus, questions to each section, and other elements found in a course, primarily with courses on foundational skills and information for immigrants and refugees, with language learning and support built-in [43]. LIDA Stories, on the other hand, is primarily about language (and literacy) learning, with topics on managing personal and professional needs immigrants and refugees might meet integrated into the stories. In this way the two approaches are not competing, but serve different purposes and meet different needs. ReGap responded to the need for face-to-face communication that was identified in Advenus, while LIDA Stories has been designed as a collection of supplementary language and literacy materials to be used partly as part of face-to-face classes, and partly for students to use on their own.

Three central commonalities between Advenus/ReGap and LIDA Stories are their digital platforms, openness, and the use of multimodal stories. By virtue of being digital, the three projects can reach an unlimited number of people, allow for updating, interaction, and audio, which are difficult if not impossible to do on scale without digital technology. As digital devices are becoming ubiquitous, and students increasingly have access to them, and need to master them for their personal and professional lives, using digital technology in adult education classes has a double benefit.

Making the content open and without fees ensures that the opportunity to register is offered to all. It is worth noting that even symbolic fees can keep many users away and add a burden to schools that are often underfunded. OER are also possible to adapt and reuse, just as ReGap has built upon Advenus, and the LIDA Stories has been developed based on the foundation offered by Global Storybooks. In the case of LIDA Stories, the website itself, text, images, and audio are all available for reuse, and might be taken up for different purposes in the future.

Storytelling is a fundamental, universal human activity, and reading and engaging with stories in the classroom is likely to resonate with all students. Stories are at the heart of both Advenus/ReGap and LIDA Stories, but in slightly different ways. In the former, the stories frame a topic, provide key information and vocabulary, and serve as a base for questions, in addition to language learning in general. The four ReGap country trials and a workshop found that the participants identified with the stories [44]. In the latter, stories are what constitute the website, and any preparation or follow-up activities are up to the teacher and students. The LIDA Stories are available in multiple languages and the website is designed to facilitate parallel reading, effectively making the stories bilingual. The use of bilingual stories has a long tradition and a growing body of research on children (e.g., [35, 38]), but in adult education it seems that both practice and research have not explored the potential of bilingual stories.

The stories in all three projects, whether bilingual or not, will hopefully inspire students to make and share their own stories, opening the space for digital storytelling (see chapters "We Belong and Connect When We Have a Voice: Towards a Learning Design for Inclusive Learning" and "The Critique of Learning Inclusion in a Digital World: A Conversation" in this volume). Lastly, stories tend to resonate with people's lives, especially stories about people in a similar situation as the reader. When students experience that their background, interests and language are recognized as a resource (through stories and otherwise), their identities are affirmed and they are likely to be invested in the classroom practices [19]. This is LIDA Stories' ambition—to provide a website that has been designed to be as accessible as possible and provide openly licensed supplementary materials that support both language and literacy development for immigrants and refugees.

7 Conclusion and Looking to the Future

Advenus and ReGap was trialled in four European countries, whereas the LIDA Stories, with its four country-specific websites, is fully operational. Unlike Advenus and ReGap, LIDA Stories does not depend on course management or other maintenance, so it the website will be available for the foreseeable future. Since the website is being completed at the time of writing, it is too early to report on user experiences or impact in concrete terms. However, experiences with stories from Global Storybooks with adults suggest that the new website will be welcomed. The LIDA project team has a vast and expanding network that will support the dissemination of the website across multiple countries. There is great potential for ongoing research both within and across countries.

The experience gained in developing courses for social inclusion through OER and the fostering of knowledge of the host country's language, is the legacy of Advenus and Regap for LIDA. LIDA is built upon and is benefiting from a three-year period of work, carried out in different European contexts, characterized by diverse needs concerning migrants and refugees inclusion. Since 2016, when Advenus was initiated, the nature of migration to Europe has changed considerably. At that time Europe was facing a migrant crisis, with a significant increase of movement of refugees and migrants into Europe that questioned EU's capacity to integrate them into its economy and society [55].

From 2016 onwards, migration flows have waxed and waned with recurring increases in migration due to different global and regional crises (e.g. the conflicts in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine). Despite this, the challenges

related to social inclusion remain the same: access to healthcare, education, and employment; and understanding of and participation in the host societies. For this reason, the key features of the Advenus and ReGap projects continue to be relevant, and with LIDA Stories they represent continuation of transnational efforts to improve our societies.

Advenus, ReGap and LIDA Stories are attempts to meet the need for improved education and educational materials for some of the most vulnerable people in Europe, while adhering to principles of inclusion and language as a resource in the process, in terms of contributions, content, languages, and design—the latter spanning a range of overlapping areas, as we have highlighted in this chapter. Our chapter is closely aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 4—seeking educational inclusion for all. Digital design is often seen as a question of aesthetics, or website navigability and accessibility. In the context of educational resources for immigrants and refugees, however, other concerns such as inclusion occupy centre stage and are thus equally important.

Using stories in education is as old as education itself, but the multilingual, multimodal stories of LIDA Stories are we would argue, a unique contribution pointing the way forwards for educators and developers seeking to harness the power of digital tools for inclusion and learning how to include—i.e. learning inclusion.

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Including the Marginalised: Engaging People with Dementia and the Elderly in Technology-Based Participatory Citizen Storytelling

Tony Sumner

Abstract

In a prescriptive, top-down approach to healthcare development and configuration the narrative of the system can dominate the stories of the marginalised that could inform and enable improvement. Digital storytelling is a methodology used in health and social care, education and quality improvement in which the creation and ownership of stories moves from the system to the marginalised (by age, dementia, etc.) service users. The digital storytelling process has inherent benefits to the storyteller beyond the creation of the storied product, as the verbs of engagement change from harvesting or capturing the stories of the excluded to facilitating and empowering them.

Keywords

Dementia · Digital · Story · Facilitation · Inclusion · Facilitation · Autoethnography · Identity · Elderly

'An important challenge to humanity is to recognise that lives are the pasts we tell ourselves.' [1]. Narrative and storytelling are increasingly important factors and forces in the development and delivery of health and social care services. Digital storytelling and digital stories are an empowering and effective process and product through which marginalised groups can reframe their own experience and expertise, with the aim of influencing provision of services to them. What then if the group of citizen storytellers is marginalised through age and/or Dementia? How do we facilitate their full participation as citizens in a digital age?

This chapter will first use a longitudinal view, charting the sequence of stories made by an 82-year-old nun over the span of 4 years to explore how appropriately adapted digital storytelling processes can create a space for reflection on ageing and end-of-life issues.

Secondly, an orthogonal view of the challenges and benefits of digital storytelling with citizen groups who would otherwise be excluded from sharing their experiences by technological barriers will look at several reflective digital storytelling workshops with elderly nuns, and people with dementia and their partners and carers.

Finally, the chapter will then explain the adaptations to processes and technologies that can minimise exclusion of the elderly and people with dementia from participation in (paradoxically) inclusive technologies.

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1 Digital Storytelling

There has been a realisation over the last few decades of the power and importance of narrative and story. This has been acknowledged as both a benefit for those who create the stories [2] and those who incorporate narrative and story into medical education [3], acknowledging the patient's own areas of expertise, i.e. his or her own life and unique experience of illness [4].

The terms "Digital Stories", "Digital Storyteller" and "Digital Storytelling" have acquired a wide range of meanings over the last three decades. A digital story is perhaps easier to clarify although it has been used to describe creations ranging from a PDF file of a document on a website to the narrative created by a player with a computer game. Here it is used to refer to a multimedia object, created in the tradition of StoryCenter (www.storycenter.org) that consists of a voiceover, images (photographic or drawn/painted), and perhaps video footage, music or sound effects which are assembled together by the digital storyteller and presented as a short video file of around 3 min in duration.

The usage here of digital storyteller is centred on the teller of a first-person narrative or story, and who has as much agency, creativity and control as is possible within the process of Digital Storytelling.

The form of the Digital storytelling process referred to here is, again, one in the tradition of StoryCenter [5], but with adaptations to make it as accessible to the particular groups of storytellers discussed—the elderly and people with dementia. In this tradition, trained facilitators take the storyteller through the structure and nature of stories. Whilst the eurocentric definition of a story from Aristotle [6] in *On the Art of Poetry*, proposes that a narrative structure requires a beginning, middle and end organised in a causal direction with events that are joined together to reveal a plot, in the digital storytelling process storytellers are encouraged to explore other structures that may help them better express their meaning. This involves the work of Kurt Vonnegut[1] on the shapes of stories and the thoughts of film directors such as Jean-Luc Godard who said that "A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end, but not necessarily in that order" [7]. Their escape from the linear structure of Aristotle's model is further empowered by the multimodal nature of the digital storytelling process (Fig. 1) that allows them to construct and tell their story in dimensions beyond a linear text, through the use of images, sound and their vocal delivery. The storyteller then writes their own first-person script. This script is then performed by the storyteller to a group of other storytellers and the facilitators within a story circle and amended or updated by the storyteller in the light of feedback from the group, and with support from the facilitators. The storyteller voices and records their script as an audio file.

Facilitators then help storytellers explore the use of visual imagery, music and sound effects with digital stories, and support them in their curation or creation of visual and aural resources for use within their digital story. In the final turn to the process, the facilitators support storytellers through the process of assembling (Fig. 1) the vocal, visual and aural elements they have created, collected or curated into a digital story using video editing software such as WeVideo, iMovie or Premiere Pro.

While digital storytelling may take place as a part of a formal learning programme, in the cases described here, there is no assessment of the work of the storytellers and so it may be regarded as a process of non-formal learning. The completed stories are then shared within the group of storytellers in a premiere showing [8].

If the storyteller gives permission, then completed stories made in Patient Voices workshops are then released via the Patient Voices website (www.patientvoices.org.uk) from where they are freely viewable. Thus, the creative and reflective process provides three opportunities for what Christopher Johns [8] described as "the performative turn"—first the reading and re-reading of

[1] Vonnegut, K. The shapes of stories https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ

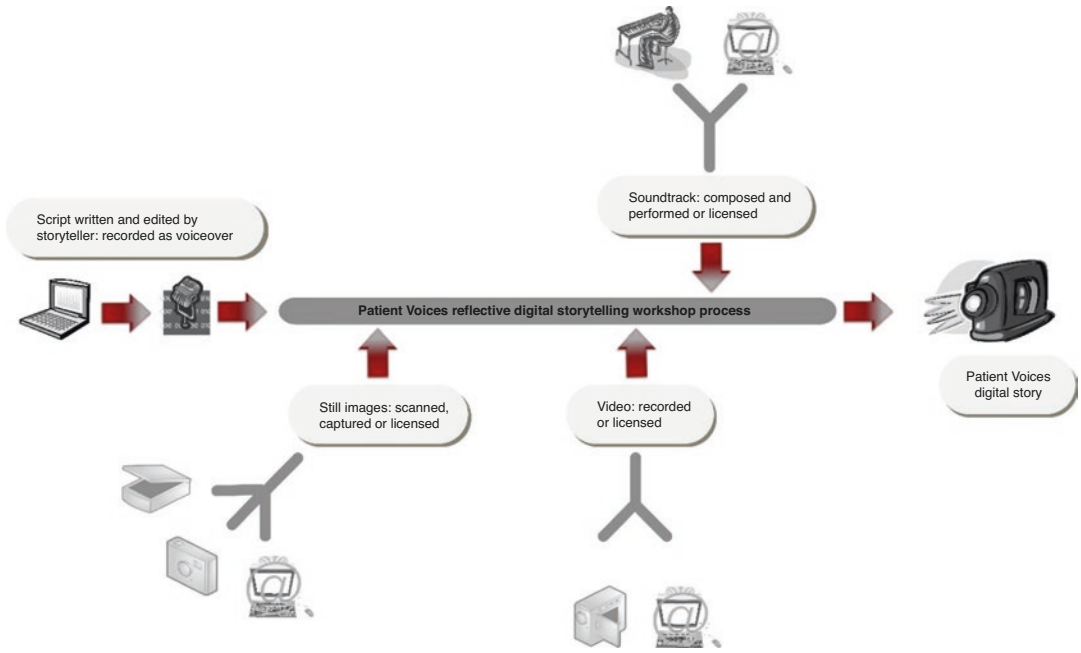

Fig. 1 The flow of components into a digital story ([8], p. 25)

their script to a group of other storytellers, secondly the premiere screening of their digital story at the end of the workshop, and finally the ongoing performative turn of their stories being viewed from the Patient Voices website.

> *Stories are products of reflection, but we do not usually hold onto them long enough to make them objects of reflection in their own right…. When we get into the habit of recording our stories, we can look at them again, attending to the meanings we have built into them and attending, as well, to our strategies of narrative description.* [10]

1.1 Purposive Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling originally grew from community theatre and oral history traditions [5] and flourished in supported projects such as the BBC Capture Wales project [9]. However, as the educator Donald Schön [10] argued:

… storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action….

Digital storytelling provides the storyteller with the ability to frame their stories in an accessible and distributable manner. Through this digital storytelling process they can, returning to Schon again, address the problem of the impermanence of stories:

The distributable nature of digital stories in a world of multimedia and social media means that they and their storytellers can move from a marginalised state to one where their performative turn can be heard in lecture theatres and boardrooms across the world [11]. The powerful nature and ease of dissemination of the digital stories of the marginalised allows them voice in story-based service transformation programmes such as that set out in the Patient Voices journey model [11] shown in Fig. 2.

1.1.1 The Expertise of Experience

As the Patient Voices stories are created and then released to the Patient Voices website, their availability on this site has created a growing fund of

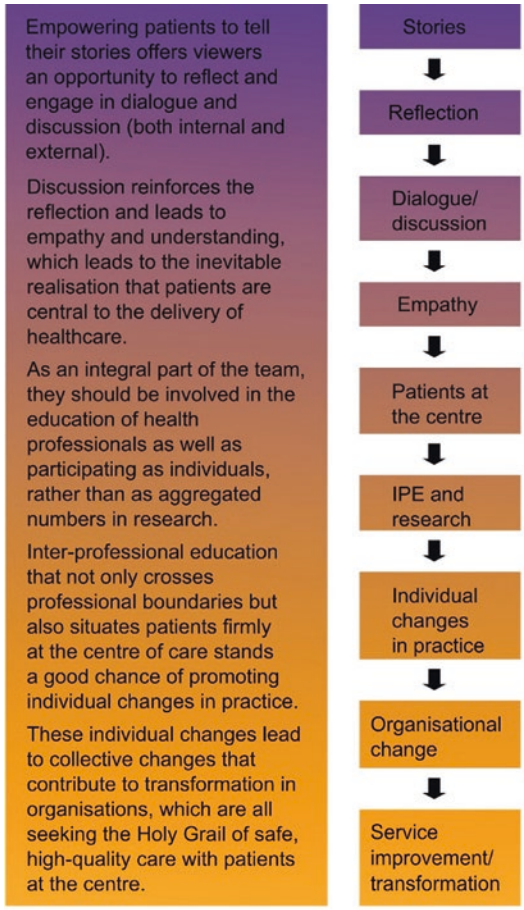

Fig. 2 A story-driven journey to service transformation [11]

knowledge, derived by the storytellers from their own expertise in their experiences and conditions, that can be shared across political and cultural borders and contexts, whether policy, professional, family or community-based ([12], p. 113). Within each workshop group, and across storytellers and story viewers with similar or related experiences and/or conditions, the shared stories can sit at the centre of a fund of identity [13] created by storytellers and story viewers around shared stories (see Fig. 3).

The initial conception of digital storytelling in the Patient Voices programme was as a process that could yield a product (the digital stories) that

Fig. 3 A fund of identity, created by storytellers and story viewers around shared stories

could then be used as "atomic learning objects" within elearning materials [14]. The availability of the stories via the Patient Voices website under a Creative Commons Attribution, non-commercial, no derivatives licence [15] allows the work of the storytellers to become a piece of social capital, invested by them in promoting inclusion via the sharing of their own experiences, stories and expertise with others as Open Educational Resources [16].

1.1.2 Marginalisation

One of the first effects of the marginalisation of a group is that they become less important to policymakers, less visible to the rest of the population, and in so doing become less of a priority, whether for care, housing or social support. They matter, and belong, less to society. This applies to both people with dementia, and the elderly.

> *The most important lesson is that even with our differences, we are connected by the need to matter and the need to belong.* [17]

Lack of understanding, stigma, the use of discriminatory practices and language can result is the marginalisation of people with dementia. This is not limited to the elderly, but also affects younger people with early onset dementia [18].

Marginalisation of the elderly is a global issue, recognised by the WHO. Indeed, in 2020, Maria Branyas, a 113-year old survivor of the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic, stated that: '*the elderly are the forgotten ones of society*' [19].[2]

1.1.3 A Life Told in Her Own Stories: Eva

Not all Patient Voices reflective digital storytelling workshops start as expected. All storytellers are different, all stories are personal and all need the right approach.

After the first session of a workshop Eva, an 82 year old Nun—tiny and frail but with the formidable nature of someone who had spent decades working with drug users and trafficked and abused women, said "well, I rather think I've been sent here on false pretences". We chatted in the garden, and she agreed to join the rest of the morning's sessions on the promise of a latte during the mid-morning break—but she negotiated to get chocolate sprinkles on the top.

By the end of the workshop, she had made her first story, "Standing on my own two feet" [20]. This story encapsulated her independence and determination—and was an insight into the background and life experiences that had nurtured and honed the negotiating skills she displayed over her coffee preferences. After making her first story, Eva came to three more workshops over a period of nearly 4 years. Her stories told of her past and her future, her fears and hopes.

Her second story "From darkness into light: new worlds" [21], explored the fear she felt about changes she could feel in her mind and the possibility of a diagnosis of dementia framed, for her, in the fear that one word can raise.

Having acknowledged that word, in her third story, "A chocolate watch", [22], made later that year, she sought to preserve one of the stories and memories that she did not wish to lose, the story of her escape from Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport after the Kristallnacht in the 1930s.

A remarkable woman, she came to one more workshop in 2011—travelling as ever, by herself on the train. But this time she made the journey twice, because she came once on the wrong day. Typically of her independent nature, she simply waited for the next train back to London, and told us of her adventure when she came to the workshop on the correct day, a week later. It is fitting that, in that final workshop, she made "The Sun also rises" [23] which tells of how she had come to terms with her diagnosis and her future.

These four digital stories, as a collection created by one elderly Nun facing old age and dementia, form a powerful insight into the journey she made, as she described in her final story "From darkness into light" [22].

1.1.4 Everyone Is Different: Workshop Experiences with the Elderly and People with Dementia

Over the two decades that we have been practising digital storytelling facilitation, we have had the honour to work with other storytellers with dementia, their carers and partners. These groups have all been different. Some have been solely people with dementia, some have been a mix of people with dementia and their partners/carers, and some have been groups of elderly storytellers amongst whom there were people with dementia.

1.2 Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) Workshop

Later in the year after Eva came to make her first story, we worked with more Nuns from her community at their retirement home in Yorkshire; a group of storytellers ranging in age from their 60s to just over 102. The aim was to give elderly members of the order the opportunity to reflect on their vocation and calling so that their order could better understand the personal nature of their faith.

Near the beginning of the workshop, the group formed a story circle. As they gathered, another

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/16/worlds-oldest-coronavirus-survivor-the-elderly-are-the-forgotten-ones-of-society

Nun was added, Sister Josephine. Hunched over and unmoving in her chair, the other Nuns said that she never spoke, or responded, but they always included her in the activities of the community.

Because many of the Nuns had hearing impairments, we had brought with us a radio microphone and a speaker. The microphone was passed around the circle as the Nuns told, in turn, their stories of vocation and calling.

Suddenly, as the Nun to her left passed the microphone across her to the Nun on her right, Sister Josephine sat bolt upright and said, 'I want to tell a story.' She told the story of a young child who, during the first world war, meets a man she does not recognise [24]. Then she passed the microphone on and slumped back into silence.

A selection of the digital stories created by Nuns from the order was used at their annual convocation, allowing the experiences and expertise of a group that would otherwise have not been heard to play a part is a discussion and debate on the Order's key tenets.

1.3 Lancashire County Council

These stories were created at a Patient Voices workshop for people with dementia, their carers and partners in Lancashire in March 2015. Statistics tell us much about populations, but cannot tell us how it feels to be an individual with dementia or caring for someone with dementia. We need to hear the stories told by people affected by dementia if changes in policy and practice are to be effective, meaningful and appropriate.

> Statistics tell us the system's experience of the individual, whereas stories tell us the individual's experience of the system. [25]

To gain insights into the experience of people affected by dementia by giving individuals the opportunity to create their own digital stories about their experiences. When shown to practitioners and policy makers, their stories would illuminate what really matters to them about dementia.

Eight patients/carers affected by dementia came to a reflective digital storytelling workshop. Over 2 days, each person identified and distilled their personal story, drafted a script, recorded a voiceover, selected photos for, and edited a short audio-visual piece about their life with dementia.

The stories revealed some unexpected themes, and provided valuable evidence about what needs to improve, particularly in relation to suitable environments for People With Dementia (PWD) [26].

The process illuminated issues in supporting PWD and their carers through creative processes, the interactions between PWD and their partners/carers and some of the social/family pressures and attitudes to PWD.

The stories offer viewers a chance to see things differently and think about things differently and, when shown to a range of professionals from housing associations, the police and allied health professions, enabled these groups to see more clearly what is needed in order to create healthy environments.

Stories and storytelling fulfil a deep need to understand ourselves and each other as fellow human beings. The opportunity for people with dementia to think about and articulate their story and then to create their own audio-visual piece which can be heard anywhere in the world in itself contributes to their sense of agency, purpose and well-being.

The stories themselves speak to hearts as well as minds, shifting perceptions and refocusing efforts where they will have maximum impact. Based on the stories that came from the workshop, a need for standards for housing and commissioning—and a related self-assessment tool within which:

> The main principle being applied in this tool is that all available assets and resources need to be combined, both to create the conditions that reduce the risk of developing dementia, and to develop a framework of support to help those with dementia, their families and carers, to have as good a quality of life as possible.

Working with couples where one partner has a diagnosis and the other does not proved particularly rewarding for us as facilitators and for the couples who were each able to create and share their own stories of this stage of their lives. For

these couples one, or sometimes both partners were excluded from understanding the entirety of the other's experiences. In the final premiere of their stories, they were able to see, both sides of their joint stories.

1.4 Dangling Conversations

Digital stories provide a creative way for people to tell their stories using an amalgamation of voice, image and music, and can be used to engage nurses with others' experiences in the classroom setting. Seven people with early-stage dementia and one carer participated in making their own stories during a Patient Voices Reflective digital storytelling workshop in April, 2011. These participants experienced particular and varied challenges relating to telling a story and engaging with the technical process of digital storytelling. They were supported in overcoming these challenges through person-centred relationships with facilitators, allowing them to negotiate the help required. During the workshop a number of positive changes were observed in the participants: increased confidence, improved speech, a sense of purpose and increased connection [27].

The responses of the storytellers bore out some of the writings on story that we have used to underpin the Patient Voices approach. Jean Vanier [28] wrote that:

> *People reach greater maturity as they find the freedom to be themselves and to claim, accept and love their own personal story, with all its brokenness and its beauty.*

This was reflected back to us by a storyteller who said in their evaluation of the process that:

> *I feel like me again.*

In "*The five people you meet in heaven*" Mitch Albom [29] writes about stories that:

> *Each affects the other and the other affects the next, and the world is full of stories, but the stories are all one.*

This, again, was reflected in the feedback from storytellers who said that:

> *Everybody's story meant so much.*
>
> *We've been learning from each other, and supporting one another.*

2 Digital Autoethnography: Fighting Marginalisation Through Empowering Citizen Researchers

When using first-person reflective digital storytelling with the elderly and/or those with dementia, it is a process through which individuals can reflect upon, create, preserve and share their life experiences.

So, can Digital Storytelling be an autoethnographic process? Can it provide a process through which the individuals that we refer to as storytellers may document their own lives and, through their stories illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of policy and practice, demarginalize themselves through reasserting control and ownership of their stories and influence and change the practice and policies of others though the dissemination of their stories?

Richardson [30] describes five criteria with which to hold all ethnography to high standards (Table 1) which Denzin [31] goes on to include in his sets of criteria for performative autoethnography.

The evaluation or assessment of digital stories is a complex issue, given the multi-modal nature of a digital story, and the reflective and creative nature of the process, but these criteria are very appropriate for the assessment of an individual digital story [32], a series of stories by a single storyteller [20–23] or a set of stories created by a group of individuals with related experiences [33–38] Dementia Insights https://www.patient-voices.org.uk/di.htm

We see these characteristics in the digital stories created by older people and by people with dementia and detailed above. Furthermore, Denzin [31] reminds us that:

> Autoethnography cannot be judged by traditional positivist criteria. The goal is not to produce a standard social science article. The goal is to write performance texts in a way that moves others to ethical action.

Table 1 Richardson's five assessment criteria for ethnography

1	Substantive contribution: Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social life? Does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective? How has this perspective informed the construction of the text?
2	Aesthetic merit: Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
3	Reflexivity: How did the author come to write this text? How was the information gathered? Ethical issues? How has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view? Do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied?
4	Impact: Does this affect me? emotionally? intellectually? generate new questions? move me to write? move me to try new research practices? move me to action?
5	Expresses a reality: Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived experience? Does it seem "true"—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the "real"?

This connects with the purposive nature of digital storytelling as practiced by the Patient Voices Programme where the goal of the storytelling facilitation process is to support the storyteller in creating a digital story that is "Affective, Effective and Reflective" [39]. It has become apparent over the years that one key change that has affected the status which is afforded to patient stories by professional, educators and policy makers has been to treat a patient story as a creative work—just as we would an article, paper or conference presentation—and to reference it appropriately and respectfully as their contribution to the canon of knowledge about the experiences and conditions. Their stories are, after all "auto-analysed data" in that they are the raw data of the storytellers' lives and experiences, analysed by the storytellers themselves through an auto-ethnographic process in this way they are the antidote to anecdote, in that and anecdote or a narrative is unprocessed data describing experience, whereas a reflective story is auto-analysed information—the information of experience [40]. They are, as John Grierson defined documentary film to be "A creative treatment of actuality" [41] made possible and more powerful by the fact that they are, in Wordsworth's phrase "Emotions reflected in Tranquillity" [42].

3 Agility and Adaptability: Lowering Barriers, Empowering Storytellers

We have learnt to innovate and adapt our processes to the particular needs of each storyteller, modifying workshop times and schedules, providing more facilitators, and 'chauffeurs' as one storyteller called them, to drive the computers for them.

This 'adaptive facilitation' has, in our experience been never more important than when working with people with dementia. For the "Dangling Conversations" project [36] that adaptive facilitation applied both to the scheduling of the stages of the workshop, and the approaches adopted to facilitate storytellers in creating their own stories. It became apparent during per-workshop discussions, that the energy and concentration levels of storytellers would vary.

3.1 Workshop Processes

We were very used to this with storytellers with long-term conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, and so adaptations to the workshop schedule were discussed and agreed with the storytellers and their support workers, and the schedule changed accordingly (Table 2).

(a) Facilitation approaches

Within the workshop itself, we decided to move to a different approach to facilitating storytellers. We would use 1 to 1 facilitation ratios, chauffeur rather than coach, and take individual approaches to storytelling prompts, script work, photo and image selection and creation, and audio (voiceover) recording.

Table 2 Adaptations to workshop schedule for people with dementia

Typical face-to-face Patient Voices workshop	Schedule adapted for people with dementia
7–10 storytellers	8 storytellers
2–3 facilitators	4 facilitators
2–3 days	4 days (8 half-days)
7–10 stories	8 stories

(b) Adapting the workshop process

In order that we did not create a culture of ableist exclusion, we decided to eschew our standard approach to the workshop process and embrace the capabilities and creativity of the storytellers (Table 3).

(c) Changes to facilitator goals

As facilitators, our role clarified after the first couple of hours of working with the storyteller. We realised that our success would be measure by helping this group of storytellers in:

- Finding (and holding!) a story
- Looking through photos
- Finding memories
- Harnessing memories
- Scripting
- Recording
- Working together
- Reviewing their story.

(d) Individual and group adaptations.

Some adaptations, beyond adjusted schedules and facilitation styles, were common to all storytellers. For example, all scripts were printed out in a large sans-serif font. But then, each individual person with dementia would most benefit from adaptations that recognised the disparate and individual natures of their abilities—maximising inclusion across the group.

So for example, for Storyteller A who had cognitive issues that affected their ability to scan a sentence across the wrap at the edge of a page, their script was printed out and then cut into strips of paper, each with a single line of text (Fig. 4).

Table 3 Comparison between typical and adapted workshop processes

Typical process	Adapted process
Day 1 Introductions Seven elements of digital storytelling Story circle Script development Day 2 Image editing tutorial Recording the voiceover Storyboarding Day 3 Video editing tutorial Assembling the video Premier of stories Debrief and reflection	Day 1 • Introductions and showing exemplar Patient Voices digital stories • Discussion of process of workshop • Work individually to find and develop stories • Write script • T.S. scan all images into computers Day 2 • Read scripts to the group in story circle • Practice reading scripts • Record voiceovers • Decide what images would want to go with script • Collecting additional images—photographs or videos—the participants idenfitied as necessary for their stories Day 3 • Listen to voiceovers and drop images in to make digital story using video editing software • Chose music and decide whether it plays in background under voiceover • Facilitators tidy up transitions between slides in digital stories Day 4 • Participants, staff and facilitators gather mid morning for premiere showing of all stories • Cake and celebratory lunch

Other storytellers needed individualised adaptations to maximise their participation in the process, and so, for Storyteller B, audio recording was done one paragraph or sentence at a time, with opportunities to review and re-record each sentence. For Storyteller C, the script was printed out in a very large font, and for Storyteller D, the facilitator and storyteller co-created a created a sequence of textual ‘prompts’ from which the storyteller could recount the story.

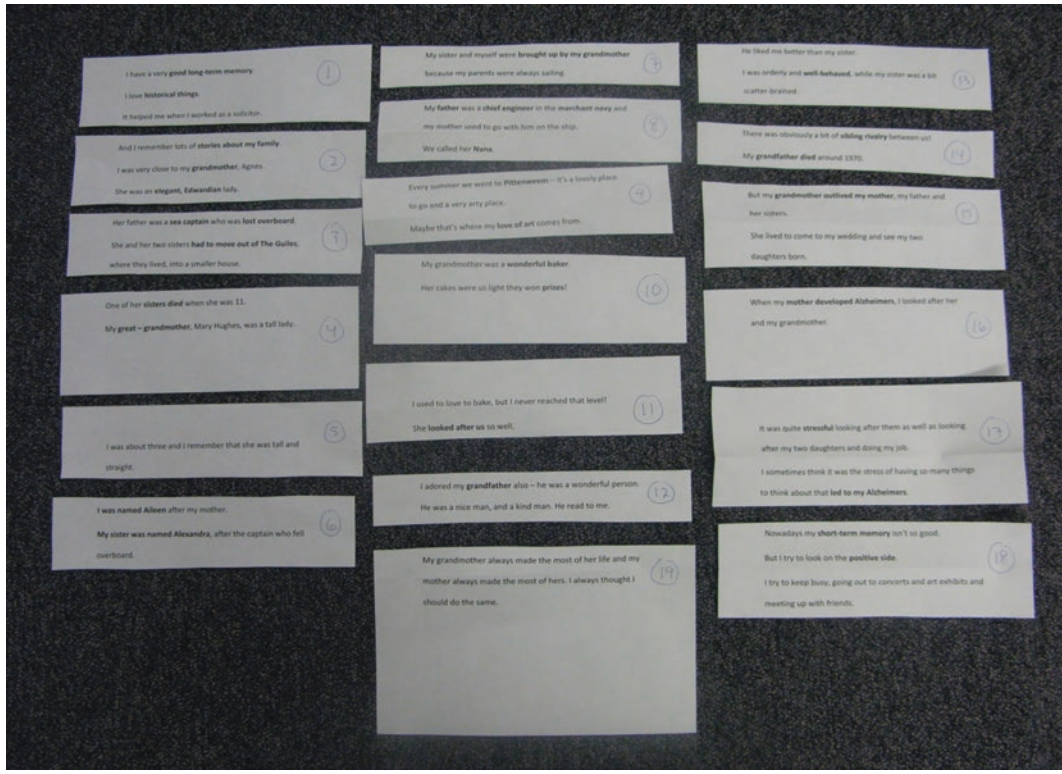

Fig. 4 Adapting printed scripts for reading by Storyteller A

4 Conclusion

In *Being Mortal: Illness, Medicine and What Matters in the End*, Atul Gawande [43] writes that:

> *We've been wrong about what our job is in medicine. We think our job is to ensure health and survival. But really it is larger than that. It is to enable well-being. And well-being is about the reasons one wishes to be alive.*

If doctors and nurses, teachers, bureaucrats, politicians and care workers are to enable wellbeing, they must understand those reasons—they must hear the first-person stories that convey those wishes. The wishes and motivations of the marginalised person may not be what are expected. In one elderly woman's story, she is apparently liberated from the constraints of lung disease and geographical isolation from care systems by telehealth technology, but the core of her story is that she will now be able to look after her granddaughter again [44].

Digital storytelling can provide a process through which citizens marginalised by age and/dementia can take back control over the telling of the narratives of their lives. It can provide opportunities to reflect on life experiences; to make sense of those experiences; to shape how those experiences are described when they are shared with others; to support others going through similar experiences by allowing them to walk in their shoes for a while; and to inform and educate clinicians, carers and commissioners of services through the sharing of a first-person story told in their own words.

Digital storytelling can be described as a movement that is:

> *Explicitly designed to amplify the ordinary voice. It aims not only to remediate vernacular creativity but also to legitimate it as a relatively autonomous and worthwhile contribution to public culture. This marks it as an important departure from even the most empathetic 'social documentary' traditions.* [45]

To achieve this, however, best practices in facilitation are essential, and the digital storytelling process must be adapted to the abilities and needs of the storytellers. There are potential barriers to engagement that are common to many cohorts of digital storytellers (technological resources, skills…) but there are barriers that are relatively higher for the elderly and people with dementia. These include memory and cognitive impairment; vision and hearing issues; physical stamina and emotional energy levels. All these can be addressed with careful programme design and appropriate facilitation skills and resources.

The stories told and shared have also been of immense value to others working in or using the care services, and those managing end of life care, and they continue to inform and educate. The three most viewed stories on the Patient Voices website[3] "Stripped of dignity" [46], "My journey with David" [47] and "The book of Stephan" [48] are about Dementia and care of the elderly and their story pages have, together, now been visited over 350,000 times (as of 31st December 2022).

When the digital storytelling process is successfully adapted to a marginalised group, whether as in this case the elderly and people with dementia or other groups such as asylum seekers and refugees from the war in Kosovo [35] the process can be a powerful experience, and the and the product, the digital stories, can be active and influential advocates for those that may not otherwise be heard, in places they could not reach.

[3] http://www.patientvoices.org.uk/

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The Critique of Learning Inclusion in a Digital World: A Conversation

Stephen Dobson, Brit Svoen, Gabriella Agrusti, and Pip Hardy

Abstract

In this chapter the editors respond to questions raised by Arjen Wals (SDG4 subseries advisor of the Springer SDG series) and his reading of this book as a whole: Is it possible to envisage a counter-movement to the digital age? Are we the editors too distracted by the promise of the digital and risk neglecting how it might colonise our minds, creating new forms of exclusion—despite the importance of digital story telling? What of those who prioritise the digital before other basic human needs, such as food, water and housing? How does this book's focus upon SDG 3, 4 and 11 relate to other SDG's?

Keywords

Counter-movement · Distracted · Colonise
Conscientisation · Story · Flow · Contingency
Mediate · Phronesis

While there is some certain inevitability around the digital age and the mediation of virtually everything through technology, do you as the editors envisage a place for critique as well? Let me offer some context. The world is entering what is arguably a fundamentally new episode in the digital age, characterised by innovations such as AI with ChatGPT that will read, write and even tell stories for us—the stories we want to hear or think we want to hear. Surely, there are also counter-movements, as there have always been, that argue for things like 'digital detox', biophilia and reconnecting with people and places unmediated by technology using all the senses. Are they in themselves a sustainability perspective?

We sense in your question the dream of connecting with reality in an unmediated fashion. A reality that can be experienced in all its richness without technology as window to that reality. Of course, there will always be a place for such experiences (echoing Rousseau [1] in the 1700s when he evoked personal reveries in his mind and associated sensations), and yet we as humans always tend to share these kinds of experiences

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through languages interwoven with media that have taken shape and evolved over time.

As Bolter and Grusin [2] suggest, with the introduction of each new media there has been a new twist in the promise of a logic of immediacy (closer to unfettered experience itself and authentic) which paradoxically introduces at the same time a logic of hypermediacy ('experience of the medium is itself an experience of the real' and authentic, p. 71). They offer several examples, such as painting adopting the use of linear perspective in the Renaissance (op.cit., pp. 24–25). We might consider visiting the Eiffel Tower and saying to ourselves with melancholy, that it looks and feels in a strange unfathomable way less real than the postcard we have at home on the fridge or the movie set in Paris we watched the night before.

In this book we are not suggesting that an immediate experience is impossible, rather that when it is mediated by the digital or other forms. Accordingly, our experience of the real and the authentic becomes more complex and interacts with (rather than is separated from) these different media. The digital is one such media and by no means the only media. It is simply one, following in the footsteps of many for thousands of years.

Irabinna Rigney, a descendant of the Narungga, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri Peoples of South Australia, once related to one of the editors (Dobson) that as an educationalist he was interested in among other things, the role of children in rock painting in the distant past. While very old rock art maybe visible to anybody who views it in person or via different media (e.g. photographs), understanding the stories and cultural knowledge they embody and share is governed by the custodians of these works, such that:

> (…) rock art are part of broader sharing and transmission of knowledge that follows social and cultural protocols that cut across generations of people and media. Sharing stories around a campfire, performing songs and dances for tourists, or in ceremonial contexts, creating artworks for an emerging art market or in rock shelters, all unfolded people's life-worlds…a key feature of rock art is its ability to act as an intergenerational media allowing the transmission of knowledge, gender identity, and power relations to unfold ([3], p. 77).

The point we are making is that as humans we have been using different media for thousands of years and that rock art past and present is one such media with an origin that predates digital media by thousands and thousands of years.

With each new media, different kinds of uncertainty, fears and anxiety have always existed. With the arrival of the handheld calculator for example, people feared children would no longer bother (or need) to develop skills in mental arithmetic and your comments questioner while undoubtedly important, might be indicative of fears concerning the loss of or a transformation of an experience or a skill. [1] Contemporary debates on open access are another case in point. They bring to the fore thoughts about inclusion as a right for all, balanced by concerns about the value of credentials obtained via the medium of open access micro-credentials and MOOCs, and potentially stored by individuals or organisations in not necessarily transparent or open blockchain systems [4].

We do agree counter movements and critique are important in each new twist in the use of media. 'Digital detox' will have a place as you note. Pendergast and Dobson [5] draw attention to the fashion to offer *human books* to those visiting a library i.e. you can request to talk with one of them in person, hear their story and ask them questions. It is not the case that the human book is superior to a pre-recorded audio book on a digital platform. It is more a question of difference with each having their place. For somebody who lives a long way from physically attending the library, the audio book will be important as a signifier and experience of inclusion that is different to that of the in-person experience of the human book.

[1] Ragnar Purje has highlighted the importance of children using chalk in learning to write. He cited research that has linked poor orthographic-motor integration' or hand-brain coordination' with an inability to compose a well-structured and creative written narrative: 'That's because the student is only focusing on letter formation' they haven't developed handwriting automaticity so they can instead develop the narrative.' (https://www.cqu.edu.au/news/709053/return-to-chalk-and-slate-best-for-students-schools-and-environment-cqu-education-academic)

The human book idea dates has its origin in Denmark in 2000 at the annual Roskilde music festival and has spread to over 80 countries. It is known as the Human Library movement,[2] where one of its goals is to increase empathy and understanding and offer a safe space for dialogue. It has to be noted that is it often found at events, rather than as a physical library.

Of course, we do have to keep in mind that even the *human book* with time might also be a three-dimensional digital avatar anticipating any questions with answers, and as such transportable across time and space so all can be included with access to a person's stories and knowledge.

It is our view that critique of the arrival of new twists in digital media, such as AI and ChatGPT must not be based on turning time backwards to the presumption (real or imagined) of some pristine, pre-digital experience; even though one of the editors [6] has highlighted how the viva or oral might for the time being at least, offer a way of identifying an authentic in-person performance and sharing of a student's knowledge as opposed to an AI generated written submission of an assignment on behalf of the student.

Where is the critique of the digital in this book? Where is the kind of raised consciousness (conscientisation) Paulo Freire [7] *would be calling for in light of all this, to transgress the colonisation of the mind and the new forms of exclusion digitally mediated education, learning and, indeed what storytelling might lead to if you are excluded from participation?*

You write that you like the excerpt in our edited collection:

> *With historical hindsight, we will do well to reconsider what the railway journey offered: the ability to visually reflect upon and design a personal world without leaving the carriage. With the digital production of teaching and learning, we too are now called upon to reflect upon and design a world of learning without leaving our seat in front of a digital screen.[8]*

In pre-digital times, the railway window allowed you to observe the landscape that was sliding by, to turn your gaze to where your eyes were drawn to, contemplating, reflecting, or to turn to the compartment you were in, the people around you, having a conversation perhaps.

Nowadays, people in trains are in a perpetual state of distraction, suffering from short attention spans, when not looking to a screen, thinking about reasons to go back to their screen, in the meantime the landscape is still sliding by, possibly a little dryer and less biodiverse when it was back then, but is anybody noticing, does anybody care?

For the editors, the promise of the digital will always in our minds be concerned with inclusion and seeking ever larger circles or welcoming pathways to inclusion (—with the important caveat as suggested above, that some knowledge and skills must respect cultural protocols on access and understanding, as defined by Traditional Owners and First Peoples). We do acknowledge that it will take time to offer access to all other kinds of knowledge and skills, but the digital does provide a way of overcoming the tyranny of distance or other exclusionary practices e.g. for those who do not live within physical access or face disability issues of different kinds.

Inclusion also means for us as editors and for other contributors to this volume, the opportunity to consider digital ways of working *with* and not *for* the disadvantaged so they can develop a voice to communicate and share their experiences. This is about raising skills and not merely awareness; the latter is but the first stage in Freire's [7] understanding of *conscientisation*, followed by skill enhancement.

To be clear, there are four main propositions in this edited collection:

- It is about inclusion in education for all and we reference in particular SDG 4; without discounting that learning about the other SDGs through education is also an opportunity and aspiration worthy of consideration.
- It is more than about the achievement of inclusion. It is about the *learning* of inclusion. Specifically, by what means and with the desire to include those who are disadvantaged in some way, so they can additionally experience and themselves create social belonging.

[2] https://humanlibrary.org/about/gallery/

- It is *with* the disadvantaged and not *for* the disadvantaged defined in a broad sense. The latter (i.e. *for*) implies a project of learning inclusion founded upon positions and structures of dependence between the educator and the disadvantaged, rather than working jointly and equally together *with* the goal of empowering the voice and sense of belonging of the disadvantaged; and thereafter being empowered to move from the role of digital bystander to digital upstander at their own volition. Hence the title of this book, which might ring a touch grammatically incorrect or cumbersome in the ears of the reader with our preference to use the term *with* rather than the term *for*: Learning Inclusion in a Digital Age. Belonging and Finding a Voice *with* the Disadvantaged.
- Lastly, the topic of the book is also that of the digital, which whether we like it or not, is encroaching on and being interwoven with ever new parts of our existence.

As editors we would also like to comment on the point you raised above, namely, '*the perpetual state of distraction, suffering from short attention spans, when not looking to a screen, thinking about reasons to go back to their screen.*'

And in so doing we will take up an equally important question you raise:

If we cannot have deep relations and connections with people, places, other species, and 'matter' then why will people bother to care for them?

While there is some purchase in the view that we are increasingly distracted to, rather than from the digital world and when in this world our attention span is tested by the next digital moment, whatever it might hold for us. As editors we wish to take this opportunity to draw the questioner's attention to an alternative different view, one offered by McCallum et al. [9] in the midst of COVID. This was a time in when school teachers were concerned about the distractions offered to students who were not present in classrooms, but learning away from traditional classroom and at home, through the sole medium of digitally communicated lessons.

These authors suggest that we might all learn to design our learning so it adopts something of what we can take from online gaming. Not it must be said that we should make all learning a form of gamification and thus low stakes play that can be discounted at the flick of a switch (—when the game is turned off). Rather, we can learn from the manner in which online, 'gaming is also a deeply social activity that allows for complex interactions and learning without the physical presence of anything more than a screen.' This speaks to the need for participants to feel a sense of social belonging and this belonging engages them over time so they might experience a sense of willing engagement and absorption.

This engagement and absorption is most commonly understood in its purest form as an experience of 'flow', as popularised by the work of Csikszentmihalyi [10], with effortless concentration when learning and also belonging can be felt. It is important to note it may be for longer or shorter moments, and those experiencing it may not feel distracted by music around them, an adjacent television screen or even a view from a railway carriage. But the point remains, they are engaged, absorbed and open to learning as this takes place.

Teachers have long known of these flow experiences with a different terminology, *blikk for øyeblikk* as it is termed in Norwegian; meaning an *awareness of the moment of contingency* when the students are most clearly ready to engage with and learn a key point of knowledge or a skill [11]. Teachers know that the sustained concentration of students for minutes on end is an ambition and but rarely realisable.

Does this mean we are destined to wait for these moments and they are at best sporadic? In a sense we can prepare for such moments, but we must acknowledge that all students and the disadvantaged who are the topic of this book will learn at different paces and in different moments. As a corollary, there is no one size fits all way of teaching knowledge and skills. Learning to include and being included in this learning requires an eye, let us call it *blikk for øyeblikk (an*

eye for the moment of contingency), that acknowledges and accommodates diversity.

With this in mind the chapters in this collection offer the reader when considered together a glimpse of a tapestry of difference, where moments of distraction and moments of on-task activity are clearly evident differentially among the book's subject, both the educators and the disadvantaged. Most importantly for a book exploring *with* and not *for* the disadvantaged, the roles of educator and educated can be exchanged, as they should be in a natural co-learning and mutually respectful sharing of knowledge and skills.

As McCallum et al. [9] conclude and we as editors would concur:

> The key lies in our definition of distraction. Screen learning must involve distracting students towards the things that really matter. In education, as in gaming, we can "court risk" without the fear of failing. Rather than admonishing learners for not focusing when sitting at desks in school or in front of screens, we should work within our distracted world. We need to play with distraction, work with distraction and learn with distraction.
>
> Paradoxically, distraction may not be the enemy, it could be the gateway to more attentive learning.

When we are using digital devices are we not willingly and, mostly, hopefully unwilling, serving globalizing and homogenizing companies? These companies thrive on algorithms and the mining of people's minds (as the last frontier, in a way) through cookies they accept and the data they provide (as well as shareholders)?

When walking through the forest or telling stories around the campfire (or anywhere), we are not making any company any money.

A point well-made about the 'globalizing and homogenizing companies that thrive on algorithms and the mining of people's minds'. However, we would also remind the questioner that this book is about speaking back, gaining and regaining a voice and equipping the disadvantaged to speak about matters that they define as important and close to hand or matters occurring globally, upon which they also wish to comment, irrespective of proximity to their own often more immediate life experiences.

For us as editors we are seeking to describe how social belonging can be achieved in an active sense, in spite of the forces you suggest. So, participants can at their own volition move from being digitally bystanders to digital upstanders and at times in the opposite direction. It is of course just as necessary to acknowledge that through watching, learning can take place.

Of course, walking through a non-digital and hence 'real' forests or telling stories around the non-digital and hence real campfire may be an opportunity to escape the grasp of those wishing to make money from our use and presentation of stories on digital platforms. Different permutations are also possible, such as recounting and making digital stories in and around real settings or making and sharing digitally mediated stories in digital settings.

For us, it is the quality of the stories, digital or not, and what they speak to and with whom that is the key.

As questioner, I do wonder how this edited collection would resonate in the global south in the slums of Mumbai, where access to clean drinking water is problematic; where many people may possess mobile phones and spend a large part of their limited income on feeding the phone? This is probably too much to bring in but—who is the 'we' in this book? How do you reflect upon your own positionality?

There is always a balance between spending and consumption and the choices this requires. If asked to weigh clean water on the scales against digital accessibility as a source of biological survival, all would presumably choose water in preference to the digital. Let us pause for a moment and consider what we can learn from Adorno's [12] famous essay entitled *Education After Auschwitz*, originally given as a radio talk in the 1960s, where he states that 'the most important demand placed upon all education is that Auschwitz [does] not happen again'. He concludes that education must work on different levels, so policy makers, corporate business, groups and individuals all share the responsibility to educate in a humanistic fashion and to not treat people as objects that can be sacrificed. In simple terms, all must join forces to resist the conditions that might lead to such an occurrence.

Taking this point on board, in this book we identify how our share of responsibility as educators entails weighing clean water above digital connectivity and in so doing highlighting how one is directly essential to life and the other less so. On the other hand, we would also note as educators how digital connectivity can be a means to supporting what Freire [7] called *conscientisation* as a conscious awareness of the choices at stake.

Lastly, I appreciate the editors make connections with some of the SDGs—but in the end again, it is about a more relational way of being in the world where the question is not: with what SDGs does the book connect most? But rather: how do all SDGs connect with this book? In the end they all do and where we find it hard to make the connection, the task we need to attend to requires putting in more effort to see it.

In all books about the Sustainable Development Goals choices have to be made [13]. Our book positions itself in the field of education and is most closely aligned to the SDG 4 about life long learning for all. In particular, we are interested in adult education and thus those who are already adults or those who will in the not-too-distant future crossover into the adult world, without making this age dependent. In the first part of the book, we consider the role of policy in learning inclusion and have cause to also reference SDG 3 with an emphasis on health and wellbeing. We also highlight the importance of SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities with a connection to social belonging. We identify UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities as an important initiative in this respect, but so too rural and remote communities. Cities and the rural and remote communities all share an interest in community, social belonging and the relations between peoples and cultures whatever their population size. And is it not the case that for some the city in which they have grown up in, is but made up of multiple re-assuring smaller villages that have grown into each others; simply put one community made up of many communities?

This book is about the concepts and theories that are important in understanding learning inclusion and how they help us understand how it exists as different lived *forms of life*. Embracing this by drawing upon Wittgenstein, concepts and theories 'bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life' ([14], p. 11). Moreover, as intimated throughout this conversation, the book is not merely about the science (*episteme*) of learning inclusion, understood as the concepts and theories. The chapters in Part II and III of the book are about showing how this knowledge is acquired and learnt and used/applied as skills (*tēchne*) through a number of different examples. Accordingly, digital storytelling and creating books to aid literacy in different languages occupy centre stage in this book.

We have also in the above conversation with the questioner considered the importance of different values, such as water vs. the digital to take an example. This echoes what Aristotle [15] many years before identified as the importance of *phronesis* i.e. the learned ability to make (ethically informed) judgements in a case-by-case manner, considering all the different sides of an argument with multiple forms of evidence, experience and insight. Simply put, the ability and confidence to make a well-founded judgement that is inclusive and sensitives to the interests of all. It is worth noting that the so-called modern call that students must develop critical thinking, is in many senses nothing more than a further twist or weave in the learned ability to acquire and demonstrate the use of phronesis. A phronesis that is sensitive to the needs of all but founded upon different forms of knowledge (episteme) and skills (tēchne) and the use of them.

So, it may well be, when you the questioner talks of a learned critique and we the editors of learning phronesis supported by an understanding of *episteme* and *tēchne*—our differences are actually less than our similarities, as we ultimately share the same language game and form of life, one based upon, 'Learning Inclusion in a Digital World. Belonging and Finding a Voice *with* the Disadvantaged.'

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Afterword

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Keywords

Digital storytelling · *Conscientization* · Critical pedagogy · Transformation · Voice · Sustainable development goals · Inequality · Stories · Empowerment

The United Nations estimates that all over the world, 147 million children have missed more than half of their in-class instruction over the past 2 years due to school closures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This means of course a significant loss of future earnings across their lifetimes. In addition, after schools reopened, only 20% of countries implemented measures to foster mental health and provide psychosocial support for students. School absenteeism rose to unprecedented level.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 [1], more than 4 years of progress has been erased by the pandemic. This, together with rapidly rising inflation and the impact of war in Ukraine, has led to an increasing number of people living in extreme poverty. As a result of forced migration and rising inequalities in income between countries, the number of refugees between 2015 and 2021 increased by 44%. With regard to well-being, the situation is far from comforting. A significant rise in anxiety and depression has been exacerbated by the shortage of healthcare workers both during and after the pandemic; this in turn has derailed progress against other infections such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.

In this complex picture, Europe is no exception, with inequality and social exclusion remaining among the main concerns of EU citizens. According to a 2017 Eurobarometer survey [2], income inequality was perceived by a vast majority as one of the main issues faced (84%) and this was even more evident in the post-Covid-19 crisis, with nine in ten Europeans (88%) considering a more socially conscious Europe to be relevant to them personally [3]. The European Pillar of Social Rights builds upon a set of principles that include access to education, training and lifelong learning; gender equality; health and safety; childcare and support to children; housing; the right to access basic services and an Action plan, comprising a set of investments with targets to be accomplished by 2030.[1] Among these, the three most ambitious are related to work, (78% of the population aged 20–64 should be in employment), training (60% of all adults should be participating in training every year) and a reduction of at least

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[1] https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/. Last accessed 22/05/2023.

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15 million in the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The implementation of the actions needed to achieve these targets is supported in each country by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and it is also the object of several international joint research projects funded under different EU Calls and programmes. These projects are intended to cast a light on good and innovative practices, which analyse each specific context to better understand processes and verify the quality of the results. Each project tackles the problem from a different perspective, telling a slightly different story.

Despite massive investments in Europe over the last decade to support social inclusion, gaps between policy and practice still appear across countries. Specifically, the projects funded by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) use a wide variety of methodological approaches to carry out different activities in the global and local context at the same time. These efforts are undoubtedly valuable; however, connecting the dots to frame a comprehensive picture is not always easy. A common strength identified across different marginalized groups is the importance of giving them a voice and valuing their skills and cultural background.

The idea of "giving voice" to underprivileged individuals assumes implicitly a deficit view that specific groups do not have any voice or that it is lost and not heard amongst the chaos of the current over-abundance of information. However, information itself it not enough; it needs to be transformed into knowledge as the common saying goes. The role of education professionals in this process is to mediate by facilitating a constructive dialogue rooted in an epistemic curiosity about experience and reality.

In this sense, the ultimate goal of education should be to allow people considered to be oppressed to develop a critical awareness of their social reality through reflection and action, in a *conscientization* process [4]. Disrupting social myths allows individuals to learn through a critical process aimed at revealing actual needs and being able to satisfy them. Thus, commitment and action are the unavoidable premises for a Freirean approach to teaching/learning. This approach is founded upon the view that people are involved as equally valued partners in whatever the enterprise, whether education, health, employment or citizenship to mention a few examples.

Digital storytelling is a creative media practice that draws heavily on Paulo Freire's philosophy of celebrating all humanity and, above all, his belief that empowerment was crucial in enabling people to become their best and most human selves. His practice of critical pedagogy supported people to change their living conditions by escaping illiteracy and oppression. Building on what people already knew in an appreciative sense, Freire supported 'the oppressed' to learn to read and write by using words that were part of their everyday life. His approach was transformative, affording dignity and the opportunity to create a better life.

Decades after Freire's ground-breaking work in Brazil, digital storytelling was developed in the mid-1990s as a democratic means of enabling ordinary people to tell their own, often extraordinary, stories in a way that enabled them to be shared widely. It is a practice that lives on, honouring and celebrating life in all its diversity and wonder, while at the same time offering opportunities to learn valuable new skills that enable storytellers to create the world and the communities of which they are a part.

According to Nobel prize winner Toni Morrison, 'Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is created' [5]. It might also be said that our lives are the pasts we tell ourselves. This is very much in the sense that each narrator 'imbues the past with significance—both personal and collective—and, in so doing constructs present and projected worlds' ([6], p. 37). With these thoughts in mind, it is crucial that people who are under-represented in society are given opportunities to remember and articulate those stories—to define who they are and where they have come from. Listening as well as speaking is crucial so that the privileged in society—those with money, education, housing, healthcare, etc. can better understand those who can often be invisible, or at least inaudible. Sharing stories opens the way to lives that are shaped by inclu-

sion and understanding rather than by exclusion and fear.

Rather than simply *giving* people a voice, the practice of digital storytelling offers people opportunities to *find*, *create* and *amplify* their own voice. Core digital skills acquired during the digital storytelling workshops, coupled with an emphasis on reflection, empower people to share their existential experiences in ways that amplify their voices and their stories. Common experiences and feelings can be acknowledged, and differences can be respectfully honoured.

Listening to the experiences of others may often illuminate one's own experiences and it is common for strong bonds to be forged in digital storytelling workshops. Recent research conducted at Durham University has found that these bonds often last for many years, leading to deep friendships and the formation of small, supportive communities and a sense of wellbeing that, in many cases, has also lasted for many years. The experience of creating a digital story that is heard, respected and understood, perhaps for the first time, is potentially as transformative as Freire's work on literacy teaching and learning.

The fact that digital storytelling can be—and is—undertaken by people across the spectra of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, educational attainment and ability is testament to the power of the process. It is a process that, while acknowledging challenges and weaknesses, actually builds on people's existing strengths, knowledge, resources and social networks. However, with the best will in the world, the reality for many people is that the cost of public transport, or caring responsibilities, or physical or mental ill health, may preclude their opportunity to benefit from community support services—or digital storytelling workshops. Any intervention needs to be tailored to or, preferably, co-designed with, citizens representing a range of abilities and needs. It will be essential to continue to adapt our digital storytelling practices in ways that suit the people with whom we hope to engage, and whose stories are so vital for the growth of healthy, diverse, compassionate communities.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in a world in which educational resources were accessible to everyone? This is the goal so clearly identified by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals [7]. Just because it is not possible at the moment, doesn't mean it won't be possible—and fruitful—in the not-too-distant future.

If everyone who reads this book did just one thing to realise this… what would that one thing be?

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Glossary of Terms

Belonging To belong, in this book, is understood as a way of experiencing existentially for others and for oneself. It can contribute to a sense of wellbeing. Slee [1] has suggested that belonging constitutes an operational value, an organising practice and a signifier or, quite simply, an indicator of inclusion with an infinite number of markers we use to recognise and manage the boundaries of our social relationships. These markers can be physical and also digital or combinations of the two as we include or distance ourselves from others.

Connectivism It was, at one time, enough to understand pedagogy and education as reliant upon the actions of the teacher, and the only the teacher, physically in front of the student, transmitting knowledge. Pedagogy was also considered as the co-construction of knowledge and skills with a more active student; sometimes known as student-centred pedagogy, long before the COVID pandemic, changes were afoot and intensifying what Siemens [2] called *connectivism*. This has led to the addition of a new layer to the practice and understanding of pedagogy. When knowledge is distributed widely in different networks, some conceptual (carried in our heads) and some external in books or on the internet teaching, learning is now about being able to connect different sources and networks of knowledge, residing in particular places and repositories, many of which are distributed across the internet.

The physically or virtually present teacher is now only one possible—although undoubtedly valuable—connection and source of judgement and valuation. We are thinking of Google, Siri, Chatbots and AI as both supporting and competing entities, along with community voices and networks. We must also consider the issues of inclusion and equity. What of those who are less able to join networks, lack suitable equipment, skills or a quiet place? During the Covid-19 pandemic, many commented on those who lacked access all of these.

Digital storytelling and digital stories First coined by Lambert and colleagues in the 1990 [3] digital storytelling described a creative workshop process that led participants through the process of creating a short video of 2–3 min in length using then-new technology in the form of laptop computers and digital video editing software. The process has been used in different settings and facilitated by people sensitive to the needs of those taking part, participants who are seldom supported to articulate and describe—in words and images—what on occasions might be their deepest pain and most heartfelt longings. Many of today's 'digital stories'—because everything is increasingly digital in the twenty-first century and disseminated on platforms such as Facebook or TikTok, have not necessarily been crafted in a shared and curated workshop process where personal wellbeing is paramount and protected.

Emancipation and finding a voice Learning inclusion, while referencing knowledge of the techniques and practices of inclusion and

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the knowledge of accompanying cultures of inclusion, seeks to go a step further to support emancipation. When this occurs, learning inclusion becomes a signifier of empowerment and finding a voice. It is not about banking knowledge and maintaining the status quo; it is about knowledge that can be used for problem-solving and promoting other goals, such as a sense of individual and shared identity and belonging. Freire [4] summarised this phenomenon in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and we acknowledge his legacy, along with that of Habermas [5], who argued that knowledge and, by extension skills, are never neutral. Knowledge can support different interests and values e.g. knowledge can support existing practices, understand their cultures or seek to change them to disrupt the *status quo*.

Funds of knowledge and funds of identity Funds of knowledge references accumulated knowledge which can remain invisible and tacit, resulting in intended or unintended (structural) discrimination for those involved. Alternatively, it can be a shared *fund of knowledge* based upon skills and experiences, in diverse contexts and across different national and international borders and contexts that can be policy-, professional-, family- and community-based ([6], p. 113). Funds of knowledge can become funds of identity when all the groups mentioned in the previous sentences appropriate them to define, consider and express themselves. As an example, professionals are able to convert *know-that* funds of knowledge into *know-how* funds of professional and community identity that lead to action and enhanced communication. Funds of identity have, with the digital revolution, are increasingly expressed in self-made videos and photographs, written diaries, blogs and other forms of multimodal self-expression. Digital storytelling is one such fund of identity-supporting resource.

Inclusion Inclusion is posited to counter processes and practices of exclusion in education and in other areas of society. It seeks to change the life circumstances of the mix of the adult population who are considered to be the 'surplus population' [7] and potentially subjugated to host and dominant groups of society. There is a perennial challenge that well-meaning inclusion may be only partially successful, resulting in what has been called 'inclusive exclusion' [8]. So, on the one hand, we hear the discourse of humanity, peace and inclusion and, on the other hand, competitive individualism plays out in institutions (education, employment, healthcare and so on) where disadvantaged people might compete, sometimes against each other, for scarce resources and so will undoubtedly experience occasional failure, disappointment and exclusion. Such a situation is a marker of the disjuncture between the language, the policy, the rhetoric, the communication strategy (the so-called 'comms' and the creation of the right narrative 'spin') of inclusion and the practice, existential experience and short-, medium- and longer-term consequences of exclusion.

Learning inclusion A central premise of this book is that is not enough to obtain knowledge of the techniques and practices by which people are included and excluded. Nor is it enough to understand the cultures of inclusion and exclusion that accompany the experience and practices of members of civil society, professions and policy makers. We need to understand how inclusion can be learnt (and taught), and in a sense how exclusion can be unlearnt (and un-taught).

Learning inclusion in the spirit of Freire [4] empowers participants and is not motivated by deficit terms; on the contrary, it is a form of appreciative pedagogy built upon and guided by the resources of those involved towards their growth and emancipation.

Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) Lifelong learning bridges the work of educational policy makers, education institutions and their professionals, as well as learners in educational and community settings. According to the Council of Europe,[1] the pedagogy of lifelong learning encompasses formal (in a

[1]Council of Europe: *Formal, non-formal and informal learning*. https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/definitions. Accessed 27 Nov 2021.

planned learning environment with a syllabus and resulting in some kind of assessment and certification), nonformal (structured learning that takes place outside of a formal learning environment and does not lead to assessment or certification, such us an amateur choir) and informal learning, which accompanies other activities (such as kicking a ball with friends in a street).

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) identifies inclusive education and lifelong learning as key strategic goals. All chapters in this book are emblematic of SDG4. Additionally, connections are suggested in the direction of other SDGs, such as SDG 3 on health and wellbeing, and *SDG 11* on sustainable Cities and Communities seeking to make human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. UNESCO's *Global Network of Learning Cities* are a good example bridging and connecting these SDGs.

Open educational resources According to UNESCO [9], Open Educational Resources (OER) refer to materials developed for learning, teaching and research purposes, and are available in different formats and mediums. This kind of material exists in the public domain or under copyright with an open license. Users are therefore allowed to access, re-use, adapt and share the material free of charge. Accordingly, OER are accessed and used through Information and Communication Technology (ICT), allowing their adaptation and sharing anytime by any user. Diverse formats of OER are available, ranging from single learning objects to Massive Open Online Courses [10].

People in situations of vulnerability The terms vulnerable people and vulnerable populations are commonly used in scientific literature and can be found in the policy guidelines of many institutions and organisations. The definitions are a point of contention and, despite being well intentioned, may actually reinforce some counterproductive social representations and understandings of social change and intervention. These signifiers or labels can prevent societies from questioning who is responsibile for the structures and processes that oppress citizens.

The United Nations [11] recognises that it is difficult to define vulnerability and its determinants. However, it draws upon a definition of vulnerabilty that labels specific groups as low social class/poor, older or younger, with or without disabilities and as migrants or ethnic minorities. The expression people in situation of vulnerability underlines that people belonging to those groups are not inherently or universally vulnerable. It means that societies are labelling and positioning them in a situation of disadvantage and/or are not doing enough to extricate them from accompanying experiences [12].

Professional activism Professional activism refers to the ethical-political engagement of professionals working in educational, social, and community contexts, particularly when dealing with vulnerability. Being addressed in the literature through diverse terminology (e.g., social and political action, advocacy, workplace activism, policy practice), it includes a variety of practices questionning the well-established forces that create and maintain exploitation, inequality, and oppression. Professional activism seeks to create opportunities that foster change, promote inclusion, equity and social justice [13–15].

Resilience It is no doubt possible to find as many definitions of resilience (or resiliency) as writers seeking to understand it. Its etymological origin is associated with bouncing back (*bouncebackability*), strongly refusing, and/or quickly returning to a previous state. This mechanical metaphor remains a constant in the literature on psychological resilience [16]. However, people do not merely react to external stimuli. They have agency and the ability to select and shape their own environments. In order to do that, people do not depend merely or mostly on themselves, on their innate intra-individual or motivational features, as suggested in an initial wave of research on psychological resilience.

Nowadays, empirical evidence supports the idea that resilience is a process, potentially developed in any person throughout the life cycle *if and when* the proper resources are available. Authors in this book suggest that it

emphasises interaction between internal and external resources to modify the effects of risks and promote successful adjustments to changing and challenging environments [17]. When faced by significant and chronic adversity, people benefit from proper socio-economic, cultural, and political protection and mechanisms that support the growth of resilience [18].

Stories The Eurocentric definition of a story dates to Aristotle [19] in *On the Art of Poetry*, where he proposed that a narrative structure required a beginning, middle and end organised in a causal direction with events that are joined together to reveal a plot. Ricoeur ([20], p. 3), the French philosopher, still felt compelled to draw upon Aristotle's perspective to offer a more existential and phenomenological understanding of narrative, 'time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence.' In this sense life and story can mirror each other. In research with refugees, Dobson [8] found instances of stories where a single narrative beginning was unclear or authorship could not be traced to a single origin. Instead, the stories were multi-punctual in origin and multi-accented with a polyphonic presence of several voices. Moreover, stories can be multi-directional in pursuit of an origin as much as an end point. In an attempt to distinguish between stories and narrative, Haigh and Hardy suggest that 'Stories are reflective, creative and value-laden, usually revealing something important about the human condition' [21].

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Learning inclusion in this book is inspired by terms found in UNESCO's conceptualisation of Sustainable Development Goals [22]. In particular three goals are in focus: SDG 4 highlights the global need to ensure education is inclusive for all and that it promotes, 'equitable quality education' and 'lifelong learning opportunities for all.' SDG 3 is also relevant with its focus upon wellbeing. We consider how the concept of wellbeing has been taken up in global education debates e.g. how the prevalence of bullying in schools is now framed in a growing number of jurisdictions as an indicator of wellbeing—or its lack. With the location of learning inclusion across physical space and not simply digitally, SDG 11 is in focus, as it directs attention to how we might 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

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