



The MELIA Observatory Project

**Media Literacy Observatory for Active
Citizenship and Sustainable Democracy**

**Output T3.3 Evaluation report on quality of
learning interactions and materials**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	AIM OF THE EVALUATION	5
3	FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION.....	6
4	EVALUATION CRITERIA AND INDICATORS.....	10
5	EVALUATION – RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
6	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	17

1 Introduction

Within the WPT3 – MELIA Literacy Training Network, the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation was created. Its objective is to establish durable framework for continuous developments of civil skills, especially among youth, that would enable them to play active role in democratic process. It consists of four activities. First activity covered the development of capacity building tools on media for youth and youth educators. Under the coordination and supervision of Edhance Plus, learning tools were developed within the activity in interactions with stakeholders, followed also by the guidelines provided by best practices of other EU states and adapting them to culturally and systemic specific circumstances of formal and informal education system in states of Danube region.

Second activity within the WP focused on covering the learning interactions for development of media literacy training network. Within the project it was developed transnational network of media literacy educators, particularly those dealing with youth, involving educators from formal educational system as well as educators working in civic organizations dealing with media issues, as well as media practitioners and policy-makers from the relevant fields. This network was formally interconnected at the set of workshops.

As the third activity within the WPT3 the evaluation of learning interactions and materials was scheduled. The main aim of this activity is to conduct the learning interactions assessed with suggestions for improvement reflecting different aspects and concentrating on the general goal – the subsequent pilot implementation with high school students from vocational schools in two countries of the Danube region, Czech Republic and Croatia with an aim to receive feedback on their usability and applicability.

For the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation methodology was developed during February 2022 under the leadership and coordination of Metropolitan university Prague and in the cooperation of several project partners – REGLO, SASS, FAM, UBB, Edhance, and SoWiBeFo. This methodology was than in March 2022 applied within the evaluation

process reflecting the comprehensive material collected for the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation

This document reflects the evaluation process and presents the results of the evaluation including specifically the recommendations for the next phase of the project implementation. Primarily, the evaluation reflects the necessity to adapt the materials before they will be used within the Pilots included into the WP4 of the MELIA project.

2 Aim of the Evaluation

The main general aim of the evaluation was to reflect whether and how the prepared learning interactions as well as prepared materials can contribute to the achievement of the main goals of the project – i.e strengthening the media literacy and democratic citizenship in the Danube region, specifically within the group of young people. Based on this general aim, the partial criteria selected for the evaluation should primarily defined the degree to which the learning intervention was successful in producing a desired result in an optimal way. Nevertheless, the evaluation was also placed into a more general context, assessing how learning interactions and materials contribute to recommendations of European Commission, pushing its member countries to make media education available to all citizens and include it as mandatory in the school curricula, as well as adopt media literacy as a key pre-requisite for active citizenship. Such approach grew up from the assumption, that media literate citizens, who can access, analyse, and evaluate information, are better equipped to make informed choices and opinions and become a critical component of a pluralist, democratic, participatory public sphere.

Since the media literate society presents one of the key elements of stable democracy, we need to raise awareness of media literacy and its impact on development processes and establish a multi-stakeholder approach to affect policy change. To achieve this, the evaluation tries to define best learning practice and quality criteria that categorize the various practices.

The methodology of evaluation outlines the criteria for analysing usefulness and effectiveness of learning interactions organized to the desired results. The methodology and evaluation criteria developed help us to identify the possible areas for improvement and ultimately help to realize the MELIA project goals more efficiently. Evaluation methodology focuses on activities and results of learning interactions; but it also places these elements of the project into a broader socio-cultural and policy context. Thus, the learning interactions are observed from the perspective of national, regional and European socio-cultural and policy environment to critically assess efficiency of learning interaction contribution to policy developments and implementation efforts in fostering of media literacy and active citizenship.

Within the process of elaborating the evaluation methodology, Metropolitan university Prague (MUP) played the leading and coordinating role. Nevertheless, all project partners included into this activity (REGLO, SASS, FAM, UBB, Edhance, SoWiBeFo) contributed based on their specific knowledge and experience to develop the partial and tailor-made criteria and tools for the evaluation implementation.

3 Framework for the evaluation

As already mentioned, within the WPT3 – MELIA Literacy Training Network, the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation was created. This bulk of MELIA capacity building tools should primarily enhance the knowledge and skills required to efficiently build resilience against negative phenomena constructed by the contemporary media, strengthen youths' ability for critical thinking and empower them for political participation. All these partial goals follow the general aim – the strengthening of the civic skills and boosting the democratic awareness of new generations of European citizens.

Within the WPT3 – MELIA Literacy Training Network, the comprehensive set of following innovative educational toolkits in the field of media literacy and active citizenship have been produced in the framework:

- Toolkit for training of pupils in higher years of elementary school (eighth, ninth class year),
- Toolkit for training of high school students (with focus on vocational schools),
- Toolkit for training of youth educators (teachers, tutors, coaches).

Each of the mentioned toolkits contains curriculum of training program and the set of learning materials – interactive online presentations, handbooks and brochures.

The investigating team led by the Edhance Plus pre-selected and thoroughly processed six topics that – in our opinion – the target groups may encounter most often in their daily lives. Through these six selected topics the curriculum of training program envisages teaching media literacy. These selected and elaborated topics are:

- behavior on social networks
- critical thinking skills
- marketing and advertising
- news and hoaxes
- manipulation and propaganda
- politics

Each of the mentioned curriculums includes contents of knowledge, skills and competences according to the needs of two specific target groups – the youth and their educators. The curriculum is the basis for the preparation and implementation of training programs for capacity building. Its main purpose is to develop the competences in the field of media literacy, in the relation to active citizenship.

In sum, the material for the evaluation consist from:

1. Three Curriculums, namely:

- Curriculum of training program on media literacy and active citizenship for elementary school pupils (D.T3.1.1)
 - Curriculum of training program on media literacy and active citizenship for high school students (D.T3.1.3)
 - Curriculum of training program for educators on media literacy and active citizenship (D.T3.1.5)
2. Three Media literacy capacity building toolkits, namely:
- Media literacy capacity building toolkit for pupils (T3.1.1)
 - Media literacy capacity building toolkit for high school students (T3.1.3)
 - Media literacy capacity building toolkit for educators (T3.1.5)
3. Three sets of learning materials on media literacy and active citizenship, namely
- Learning materials for elementary school pupils on media literacy and active citizenship for elementary school pupils Learning materials on media literacy and active citizenship (D.T3.1.2)
 - Learning materials on media literacy and active citizenship for high school students (D.T3.1.4.)
 - Learning materials on media literacy and active citizenship for educators (D.T3.1.6)
4. In total 40 annexes to the previously mentioned materials, mostly the interactive presentations that might be used within the Pilots and also beyond the recent project frame, i.e. as the supportive materials for the sustainability of the project.

The learning materials are designed in an adaptive manner in order to be successfully and efficiently used under different circumstances. They are also prepared in fashionable interactive manner to attract the young generation, usually properly handling with the relatively advanced technical equipment and software. Thus, the materials are prepared digitally in order to stimulate interactive learning process including interactive exercises.

It is important to periodically assess and adapt activities of the project to ensure that they are as effective as they can be and that they correspond to the original goals set by the project. Thus, the evaluation of learning interactions and materials has to support primarily the process of designing sustainability and transferability tools. It is organised as the process that will critically examine activities and deliverables of learning interactions. It involves collecting and analysing information about activities, characteristics, and outcomes of learning interaction with an aim to make judgments about them, to inform decisions and improve relevance of final conclusions.

The methodology of evaluation aims to outline criteria for analysing usefulness and effectiveness of learning interactions organized to the desired results. Methodology and evaluation criteria developed should help us to identify the possible areas for improvement and ultimately help us to realize our goals more efficiently. The evaluation is included into the project before the set of following innovative educational toolkits in the field of media literacy and active citizenship will be used in the pilot testing and its aim is to prevent the gaps, confusing or inappropriate frames or examples, inadequate demands, technical reliability of the toolkits etc.

The evaluation methodology primarily focuses on the activities and results of learning interactions. Indeed, it also places these elements of the project into the broader socio-cultural and policy context. Learning interactions are observed from the perspective of national, regional and EU/European socio-cultural and policy environment to critically assess efficiency of learning interaction's contribution to the policy developments and implementation efforts in fostering of media literacy and active citizenship.

Metropolitan University Prague played the leading and coordinating role within this activity and is responsible for its implementation, but all project partners contribute in their own roles. Partners with competencies in evaluation methodology development (REGLO, SASS, FAM, UBB, Edhance, SoWiBeFo) developed criteria and tools for evaluation

implementation. Feedback on the developed materials was organized to ensure quality control loop.

As far as the partners responsible for the preparation of the evaluation methodology and the following implementation of this methodological framework are also actively involved into the pilot testing, each pair of the partner institutions specifically uses this evaluation framework within the partial toolkit where the active role of implementor is ascribed to the institution, i.e.:

- the Toolkit for training of pupils in higher years of elementary school (eighth, ninth class year) / Pilot 1 that will be conducted in Hungary and Germany, specifically to SoWiBeFo
- the Toolkit for training of high school students (with focus on vocational schools) / Pilot 2 that will be conducted in Czech Republic and Croatia, specifically to MUP
- the Toolkit for training of youth educators (teachers, tutors, coaches) / Pilot 3 that will be conducted in Bulgaria and Slovenia, specifically to SAAS, FAM and also REGLO who is also the leader of the following WP4 (Pilot testing)

Of course, this does not mean the exclusivity, but only strengthening of the expertise applied within the evaluation process and also the logical interconnection between the process of preparation and – based on the evaluation – the revision of all materials within the three toolkits and the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation as a whole. Such approach also applies the combination of general and tailor-made expertise and measures applied within the evaluation.

4 Evaluation criteria and indicators

Regarding the specific objectives of the MELIA project and the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation that was created and has to be evaluated, the quantitative methods can be only hardly used. Thus, the methodological framework is developed from the qualitative perspective and

primarily focus on the content of the training network. For such purposes we select here the main criteria that are included into the evaluation:

1. Intelligibility of the content

The intelligibility and clarity of the message/s shared with the different types of stakeholders included into the pilot / training activities seems to be the key pre-condition for the successful implementation and sustainability of the MELIA project. The main project partner responsible for the preparation of all toolkits, Edhance plus, regularly and continually communicated with the partial project members included into the WP3 the content including the general structure of the toolkits, selection of cases presented, proper and correct terminology etc. Nevertheless, important aim of the evaluation must to be the revision of the material in partial manner (focus on each individual document, slide, material etc.) as well as generally (possible contradictory notions and arguments, etc.).

2. Accuracy of the content

This task and criteria are strongly interconnected with the previous one. Each document has to be approved regarding the accuracy of the content; even more such assumption is valid for such a comprehensive material presented in the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation that was created. The aim of the evaluation is to detect any possible mistakes in facts such as data, personal and topographic names, chronological information etc. Furthermore, the aim of the evaluation is to detect any conflicts related with such possible mistakes, i.e. two different data related to the same issue, person institution, event etc.

3. Logical structure of the materials

As repeatedly mentioned, the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation is a comprehensive material consisting from big amount of data presented in various styles and using various types of message

such as text, pictures, tables, charts, links, interactive tools etc. The aim of the evaluation is to detect and prevent the argumentation gaps or any other signs of non-logical structure.

4. Appropriateness of education materials

The transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation consists from very different types of material and is generally abundant in textual, pictorial, photographic or motion-picture materials. These materials originate from very different environment in which case it is worth to examine the appropriateness of the materials regarding the specific composition of the persons undergoing the training with the support of these materials. We have to handle with children and youth which might be specifically sensitive regarding the violent, abusive, backhanded etc. content.

5. Language and terminological accuracy

Despite the fact that the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation was created with the support of translators and proof-readers, still there exist the possibility of language mistakes such as typos, but specifically wrong transcription of names and topoi, but also unclear or even multi-reason content. The aim of the evaluation is to detect and correct (changes, rewrite, etc.) such mistakes and/or unclear parts.

6. Technical functionality

Specifically, the methodology for evaluation stresses the technical component of the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation. Namely, after the evaluation and adjustment of the material/s the content has to be translated into different national languages based on the three pilots. As far as the materials are prepared with the use of relatively demanding software the evaluating team will approve the functionalities and general suitability regarding the further use not

only vis-à-vis the pupils and teacher within the three pilots planned, but also regarding the needed adaptation of the training network and materials.

5 Evaluation – results and recommendations

As previously mentioned, all materials constituting the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation (MELIA Literacy Training Network), within the consortium of seven projects partners – MUP, REGLO, SASS, FAM, UBB, Edhance, and SoWiBeFo – all materials were evaluated based on six main criteria pre-selected and presented in the evaluation methodology (D.T3.3.1).

1. Intelligibility of the content

The intelligibility and clarity of the message/s shared with the different types of stakeholders included into the pilot / training activities seems to be the key pre-condition for the successful implementation and sustainability of the MELIA project. As repeatedly stressed, the main project partner responsible for the preparation of all toolkits, Edhance plus, regularly and continually communicated with the partial project members included into the WP3 the content including the general structure of the toolkits, selection of cases presented, proper and correct terminology etc. Furthermore, series of discussions about the content, selection of cases and examples, etc. were organized between Edhance (Lukáš Rejchrt and Radka Musilová) and MUP (Ladislav Cabada).

Indeed, the consortium of partners responsible for the evaluation went conscientiously thorough all materials prepared. As regards the general comments, the evaluation team declared that the prepared materials follow the main goals and aims of the project as well as the priorities declared by the political and other public actors at the European/EU, regional and national levels. Derived from the dutifully prepared curriculums including the syllabuses for the six pre-selected topics, the toolkits develop the argument, knowledge, examples of good practices and lessons learned, as well as the typical examples of misleading and confusing strategies. All the materials, including the annexes (mostly the interactive learning materials), are structured in very logical way, proceeding from the general objectives towards the more subtle and tailor-made examples and cases

illustrating the issues examined and presented.

Furthermore, the interactivity offers the space for different modalities within the individual examples.

As the critical segment the evaluation team detected and declared the examples. Firstly, also the very general (“global”) examples (such as for example the use of fake news or hate speech by some of the leading global populist actors) might happen unintelligible within a few years, i.e. with the entrance of new generation of pupils / students. Furthermore, some of the examples do have national or other spatially limited collocation. Here, the evaluators recommend to re-think the issue and either select another example / case, or discuss with the partners responsible for the partial pilots the adaptation of these examples / cases reflecting the specific knowledge of the course attendees.

2. Accuracy of the content

This task and criteria are strongly interconnected with the previous one. Each document was approved within the evaluation regarding the accuracy of the content. Some minor mistakes and unclear and/or multivocal meanings and content, as well as partial conflicts in argument of data were detected during such review and discussed with the authors and within the evaluation team; finally, the discussed issues were modified or changed in the materials.

3. Logical structure of the materials

As repeatedly mentioned, the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation is a comprehensive material consisting from big amount of data presented in various styles and using various types of message such as text, pictures, tables, charts, links, interactive tools etc. The aim of the evaluation within this specific objective and criteria was to detect and prevent the argumentation gaps or any other signs of non-logical structure.

The evaluation team was divided into three working groups that meticulously went through the three sets of materials – one for the elementary school pupils, the second one

for the high school students, and the last one for the educators. The aim of the cross-checking and subtle control was to detect and prevent any un-logical collocation or connotation within the three mentioned sets of materials. As far as each set of materials was perused by at least two members of evaluation team and in a whole, it was possible to detect also very minor divergences in message shared and offered with the partial materials, as well as minor factual mistakes and unclearness.

4. Appropriateness of education materials

The transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation consists from very different types of material and is generally abundant in textual, pictorial, photographic or motion-picture materials. These materials originate from very different environment in which case it is worth to examine the appropriateness of the materials regarding the specific composition of the persons undergoing the training with the support of these materials. We have to handle with children and youth which might be specifically sensitive regarding the violent, abusive, backhanded etc. content. This is, why we specifically approved the appropriateness of all partial materials regarding the general expectations related with the (un)suitability. Within the set of materials, we did not have found and detected any visible use of materials with violent, abusive or backhanded content, as well as any materials explicitly portraying inappropriate sexual content, promotion of prohibited activities, hate speech, content disturbing the personal integrity and equality.

Some examples used for the illustration of questionable behavior of public actors include such content, specifically the hate speech, polarization tendencies, assaults against the belief opponents, argumentation fouls and similar arguable sorts of behavior and stances. Indeed, in all these cases the questionable attitude if framed with the logical grid detecting the foundation of such problematic stance, explaining the reasons, why this stance does not meet the “acceptable” standards, presenting the juxtaposition explaining on the example/s the good and bad practices. Without such typical examples it would be hard to clarify the difference between the good and bad practices, acceptable and unacceptable behavior, as well as sometimes unclear division line between these two idealtypes.

5. Language and terminological accuracy

Despite the fact that the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation was created with the support of translators and proof-readers, still there exist the possibility of language mistakes such as typos, but specifically wrong transcription of names and topoi, unclear or even multi-reason content. The aim of the evaluation was to detect and correct (changes, rewrite, etc.) such mistakes and/or unclear parts.

We have to stress that English was – logically – chosen as the language of all materials prepared within the MELIA Literacy Training Network. For the majority of the individual project members, it is not their native language. The authors of the individual materials used the terminology present in the contemporary scientific literature, where appropriate. Indeed, the materials consist also from the examples taken from different language and social environment, including specific slang, idioms, non-standard language etc. Furthermore, we reflected also the matter of fact that after the evaluation and final check, all material will be translated into the national languages related with the different environments for the pilots. Several problematic collocations, unclearness, polysemous forms etc. were detected and adjusted after the discussion in the team. Some expressions and sentences in the presentations were found unclear, not well worded and formulated; again, after the debate in the evaluation team these parts were modified.

6. Technical functionality

Specifically, the methodology for evaluation stressed the technical component of the transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation. Namely, after the evaluation and adjustment of the material/s the content has to be translated into different national languages based on the three pilots. As far as the materials are prepared with the use of relatively demanding software the evaluating team approved the functionalities and general suitability regarding the further use not only vis-à-vis the pupils and teacher within the three pilots planned, but also regarding the needed adaptation of the training network and materials.

Already the first check of the materials exposed that some presentations do not work as they should, i.e. not all graphic layers were displayed on the server. Specifically, in some cases the images were not complete in the web view, compared with the printed handbooks. It was recognized that the graphic code does not work properly and with the support of a graphic designer this problem was fixed and solved.

Furthermore, it was recognized during the evaluation that only some files included in the training network are fully editable, while in some cases it is not the case. The interoperability was discussed between Edhance and the other project partners, specifically regarding the used Adobe InDesign program, as well as presentation in the Adobe Animate settings. The discussion about the most appropriate and generally acceptable technical solution for the presentation, but also for the translation spilled over into the WP4 and became an important component of the preparations not only for translation, but specifically for the pilots. Together with the project leader as well as the WP4 leader, the evaluators asked for the fully editable text (preferably from the MS Office package), so it will be universally accessible.

6 Summary and conclusions

The transnational training network for upgrading the level of media literacy and boosting civil participation presents a comprehensive material consisting of about 50 partial materials – written documents, interactive presentations, learning materials etc. The evaluation focused on six individual criteria, but followed also a more general context, assessing how learning interactions and materials contribute to recommendations of the European Commission, pushing its member countries to make media education available to all citizens and include it as mandatory in the school curricula, as well as adopt media literacy as a key pre-requisite for active citizenship. To achieve this, the evaluation tried to define best learning practice and quality criteria that categorize the various practices.

The evaluators agreed that the training network generally clearly follows such general goals. Within the six topics chosen for the presentation (behavior on social networks; critical thinking skills; marketing and advertising; news and hoaxes; manipulation and propaganda; politics) the network generally and also the partial material follow the intention to boost the awareness about the risks and problematic ways related with the contemporary media, and specifically with the social media, as well as the strengthen the resistance against the manipulation including the capabilities of detecting the fake news and hoaxes, as well as propaganda. Last, but not least, the material also stresses the nexus between the media education (and literacy) and civil participation, i.e. pro-active approach. All the materials are appropriate regarding the main target groups, the pupils and students (generally the young generation), as well as their educators.

Based on the reports of the learning interactions we made an evaluation on how these actions as well as prepared materials can contribute the achieve goals of the project. The criteria defined the degree to which the learning intervention was successful in producing a desired result in an optimal way. Evaluation was also placed into a more general context, assessing how learning interactions and materials contribute to recommendations of European Commission, pushing its member countries to make media education available to all citizens and include it as mandatory in the school curricula, as well as adopt media literacy as a key pre-requisite for active citizenship. Media literate citizens, who can access, analyze, and evaluate information, are better equipped to make informed choices and opinions. They are a critical component of a pluralist, democratic, participatory public sphere. Because we need a media literate society, we need to raise awareness of media literacy and its impact on development processes and establish a multi-stakeholder approach to affect policy change.

To achieve this, the evaluation defined best learning practice and quality criteria that categorize the various practices. Further, a methodology to evaluate learning materials and practices collected against those quality criteria was developed. Finally, evaluation of MELIA Observatory web platform serves as a base for further development and improvement of the platform from the content and user point of view. Final evaluation

report serves as a resource platform which will pool together a wealth of best learning practices in the fields of media literacy, in relation to active citizenship. This output directly contributes to PS01, since it serves as the instrument for assessment of activities, directed towards the establishment of transnational report on quality of learning interactions and materials establishment of transnational training network. However, it also contributes to the improvement of learning and analytical tools (cf. PS02, PS03).