



Clube de Jovens
Europeus

NEW MEDIA in YOUTH WORK

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION



Erasmus+

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OUR PROJECT

New Media in Youth Work was a KA2 project for sharing of good practices in media literacy and digitalization of youth work. The aim was to take what is normally a chaotic, individually based approach to youth work and defining a common approach, one that can be standardized and easily shared between all members of organization, staff and volunteers.

The project targeted two different groups of people. On one hand it was aimed at youth workers and NGOs and the need to bring youth work to the future through digitalization thus avoiding its irrelevance towards youth. On the other hand, it aimed more broadly at youth workers, volunteers and young people themselves to have more media literacy and digital skills to be prepared to deal with all the risks that come with the fast-growing evolution of digital technologies, namely data collection, storing and handling, new types of crime, as well as the great danger of isolation and alienation of young people.

During the 24 months the project lasted we organized 3 mobility activities, 2 short-term joint-staff trainings and one blended mobility for young people. You can find more information about these activities in the project's [website](#).

THIS GUIDE

This short guide is one of the other results of this project and it aimed to create a common approach, a set of guidelines for NGO communication and promotion using various new media platforms. What you will find inside this guide is not written in stone, but it is what we found during these two years to be the best practice in our specific organization's needs and goals. In some of the cases there will be a video guideline to help you understand some of the tools used.

In support of this guide, you have a few different documents:

First a Project Promotion Plan. For the purpose of the example, we considered a specific project from one of our partners and explained the communication strategy around it as well as the publications we consider essential. Communication has many variables, and you can always try to innovate and add on it, we will focus mainly on what we find absolutely essential when communicating and promoting a project.

Secondly, we have produced a Schedule Planner Template, that calculates the dates of publications according to the dates of the project. In the future we would like to automatize this to work with our database and become even more automatized.

Lastly, but not least we have developed video guidelines about some of the tools presented in this guide.

You will find all of these materials together with this guide in the [project's webpage](#).

BASIC CONCEPTS/STEPS

These are some of the basic concepts you need to understand to prepare your communication in the best way. To better understand the way of doing certain things. So first of all, why do we communicate?

VISIBILITY (WHY?)

NGOs rely on their relevance to exist. In the end, the measure of the organization's value is how many people it can influence, how much people care. That's why visibility is one of the key aspects of any NGO's survival. Because if no one knows you, you can't really impact them at all.

It is therefore important to reach out to your audiences in general, even if you are not organizing a project or the NGO is having a quieter stage. You need to stay relevant. The same rule can however apply to a project scale. So, there are two levels of communication here. A general level, and a project level.

On the other hand, you need to connect to the right people, the people you want to impact. Of course, it can be more general the impact you want to have (you don't have to be super specific) but when it comes to projects helps to narrow down a bit and choose what you wish to impact, or at least what you wish to impact at that specific time.

TARGET AUDIENCES (WHO?)

This is where target audiences come in. What is a target audience? Well, Wikipedia says:

"A target audience is the intended audience or readership of a publication, advertisement, or other message catered specifically to said intended audience."

That certainly sounds complicated, so let's try to simplify it a bit. Let's call it the group of people to which your message will be relevant.

Still complicated? Let's try some examples:

"CJE is a youth organization. It is organizing events for young people." – clearly our general target group is young people, that's who we want to impact.

"The City Mayor is running for election. He hopes to get a good result with the voters from his city" – clearly, we can define the target group here as people from that city.

However, and this is where it does get complicated, "young people" and "voters from one city" are still very broad groups. If you manage to narrow them down into smaller groups inside that big group, you can use specific messages and be even more relevant.

These smaller groups can be defined by factors such as age, gender, location and mostly interests, although we can create these compartments with a wide variety of factors.

And let's be clear, you will have different target groups depending on the objective you set yourself up to. In the example of the City Mayor, most likely he will study the different parts of the city, the people who live there, what are their problems and then address each one of them differently, or more specifically.

The same can be done with youth work. It's different to communicate with a 13-year-old, than with a 25-year-old. Both are young people, but they are very different, they have different interests, experiences etc. It's different to communicate with a person from Portugal and a person from Hungary, most of their

references are not the same etc. And eventually you'll have to talk to other audiences too: local authorities, other NGOs, youth workers etc.

The bottom line is, in order to achieve a more effective communication, **you need to know exactly who you are speaking to**. All of this will define the strategy you use. The format you will use, where you will publish it, the way of speech etc.

CASE STUDIES (BAD PRACTICES)

From the discussions we had during this project what we realized is not so much bad cases, but very random approaches to communication. And of course, like everything sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. In anyway, here are some of the things you definitely shouldn't do:

POSTING FOR POSTING – Your content should have a meaning. Sometimes it's better not to post anything than to post something completely uninteresting just for the sake of being present. People will see, react negatively or not at all and connection is lost. Another good example of this is reposting content all the time. If it's not relevant, don't do it.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES – We know, sometimes there are more important things to do, but keep in mind that communication should be immediate. For example, when sharing a video recap of a mobility, if it's done 2, 3 weeks after the mobility is over, most likely it will not have as much impact as if it was shared on the last day of the project. Stay fresh, stay in the now. Do it when it's relevant.

YOUR CONTENT IS NOT FOR YOU – The dynamics of youth work and Erasmus+ projects sometimes end up making things narrow. You create groups in the projects, private jokes etc. and that's all good. But think that when you're communicating as an organization you are communicating to much more people. And you should be aware that the content you create is for them, not for you and your friends. Avoid to the max. private jokes in public channels, because simply put, most people will not get them.

RIGHT MESSAGE IN WRONG CHANNEL – It goes hand in hand with the one above. You might have the most amazingly written message ever. You have this amazing long text, it's written coolly, you have the best photos ever, but you post it to a place where people don't engage with long texts. In the end it means nothing. Know your channels, know who is in those channels, learn the language of those channels, so you can write the appropriate message for that channel. Don't be afraid of emojis if that's the case.

BEING INAPPROPRIATE – The internet can be a wild place, try to make it safer and not more dangerous. Consider carefully if what you write is appropriate. If you have second thoughts, it's probably not a good idea. Obviously avoid being racist, xenophobe, misogynous and all other kinds of offensive behavior. Be nice, be positive. And never, never engage with the trolls.

NON-COMMUNICATION – Ultimately the greatest mistake of all, is doing absolutely nothing. If you don't say anything, no one will hear you. Do not expect people to know what you're up to if you don't tell them.

LOCALIZATION

This topic was more discussable among all the partners. Localization means adapting content to the local area, namely it revolves a lot around translations. Being that we operate mostly in international network environments, with English being our main work language, it wasn't clear for everyone the advantage of communicating in local languages (using local expressions included).

The fact is, there are pros and cons:

PROS

- Increased local reach – this one is obvious, if you speak Portuguese in Portugal, you reach everyone and specially those who don't speak English.
- Use of local expressions – the fact you can use idiomatic expressions can give you the advantage of sounding more relatable.
- Non-discriminatory – you don't exclude locals from your activities based on their English level.
- Local synergies – meaning it will be easier collaborate with local businesses, authorities etc. if your communication is done in the local language.

CONS

- International Reach – should also be obvious but if you communicate in Portuguese then you won't be understood by many people outside of Portugal.
- It can be counterproductive – The use of local language might also give the impression that you are not an international environment, which might be what your target is mostly looking for.
- Extra work – one of the key discussion aspects. If you choose to localize your content, you will need to produce the materials in all different languages of the project, which in the end translates into more work.

CONCLUSION

As we said before, it's not unanimous between the team members, but we believe that the best strategy is probably to use a hybrid communication system. Somethings will be localized, and some will be global. It will all again depend on who you are trying to talk to. For example, if you want to organize a local activity, it might make sense to use only local language. But if you're promoting the international project in general, then it could be useful to communicate in English.

However, justice be made, many of the platforms already allow you to show the message in the preferred language of the person who is receiving it. You can do it in Facebook, with the option "write in another language" (although it's not always accessible), you can do it on YouTube (very easily) and services like Instagram for example have a pretty decent translation system.

If you do live streaming, podcasting or videos that involve speaking, then again consider who is it for, who are your guests, topics and choose accordingly. Some services already allow for the automated captions which might not be perfect but help to understand a little bit better if you don't speak the language.

WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

In this section we will focus on the new media tools that are available to us and how to use them. It will not be an extensive list as there are literally millions of possibilities, but more like the platforms and channels we find work the best for what we do, as well as some that could be useful but are not essential.

SOCIAL MEDIA

These are the most essential tools we are using in our communication. They are the most popular ones and where most of our targets exist online. They are however different from each other and different styles of communication on them. Below we expose some of the pros and cons of the platforms, what is the most present target audiences you can reach through each of them and some what we consider to be the best practices when publishing content there.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is by far the most widespread and well-established social media platform, at the moment. Therefore, it's absolutely mandatory to be present on Facebook if you want to have a strong digital presence.

PROS:

- Exposure: Facebook is one of the largest social media platforms in the world and automatically by joining it, you gain exposure to potential participants
- Drive website traffic: if you post links from your website, you can help increase online visits
- Content availability: it has a variety of options for posting (pictures, videos, texts, albums, events)
- Event exposure: It has the important option of creating events, that helps the prospective participants find clear information about the projects and it also shows who might be interested in participating
- Feedback: Facebook allows two-ways communication between the visitors of the page and the page administrator. The page has a "contact us" button that ensures a direct contact with the viewer of the page. Facebook also offers the feature of the comment section and "likes" so you would have direct feedback from the viewers.
- Monitor and Improve: From "Facebook Insights" you could interpret the data regarding your page to better understand what content works best and plan for the future.

CONS:

- Budget: Facebook is a good promoter of paid-advertisements and sometimes fails to expose non-paid ones to attract new viewers.
- Negative feedback: Being a two-ways communication tool, makes Facebook a platform accessible enough for people to comment and engage without any filters, so negative feedback is also expected. The negative feedback could deteriorate the image of the page.
- Time consuming: Once you gain followers you have to make sure you engage with them as much as possible, in order for them not to lose interest. That is why a lot of posting is required and that could be very time consuming since every post must be strategically planned.

AUDIENCE: Since the targeted group is mainly youth, we have to take in consideration the fact that Facebook is becoming less and less popular amongst teenagers. The statistics show that the targeted age group of Facebook is between 25-35 years old.

BEST PRACTICES:

- Always create a Page, never a personal profile
- Keep the page updated.
- Post frequently but don't over post
- Tag People and places
- Create events with clear information
- Check Facebook Insights to know your audience in order to shape your content
- Alternate pictures and videos to help the dynamic of the page
- Be responsive by answering to questions and interact with your viewers

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is becoming one of the most widespread social medias used at the moment. It is a very specific social media platform because it relies on visual content. Either photos or videos, nothing else. It is also one of the platforms where people engage the most, mainly because it is a very simple one.

PROS:

- Being able to customize your content, a very creative and original tool: Instagram has the feature of stories which can help the viewers experience your activity in real time and that helps with "relatable" factor. Via stories the viewers can interact the most with the administrators by replying to stories responding to Q&A's etc.
- Higher reach: By tagging places and people and also by using hashtags you can easily attract people to interact with your Instagram page.
- Drive website traffic: if you post link -Content availability: it has a variety is from your website, you can help increase online visits

CONS:

- Instagram is also a two-way communication tool, which could mean receiving bad feedback that could be visible to everyone
- Instagram promotes accounts with many followers and so a lot of businesses chose to buy bots which are basically fake followers
- The privacy on Instagram is very limited and could be very unsafe data wise and also you can receive direct messages from anyone.

AUDIENCE: Instagram's targeted age group is between 18-29 years old, making Instagram a platform more accessible to youth.

GOOD PRACTICES:

- Post frequently but strategically
- Tag places and people
- Post stories during events
- Post reels as recap
- Be responsive
- Organize your profile (Aesthetically pleasant)

CREATOR STUDIO (Manage and schedule Fb and IG)

Creator Studio is not a social media platform, but a tool within the Meta Universe of social media platforms that allows us to manage all our content on both Facebook and Instagram in one place. More and more they are pushing to connect both, and they offer all the possibilities to push content from one platform to the other.



VIDEO GUIDELINE

It allows us to schedule content for up to 3 months (which can be useful). On it you can also check how well your posts are doing with the Insights (you can check views, likes, comments but also who are the audiences looking at your content).

If you delegate work in volunteers or interns (which can sometimes be risky), it's also a great tool as they can do draft publications and you can then approve them or not. This way you have more control over what gets published on your social media.

LINKTREE (link manager)

Linktree is a link aggregator. There are other similar services, but this one works the best for us. Mainly used on Instagram (where links are not available within the publications), it allows us to gather all the possible links we would like to share with our audiences.



VIDEO GUIDELINE

This is useful if you have more than one project running or other links you would like to share. Easily adjustable and customizable, it creates a link that you put on your account biography which then leads us to a visually attractive yet simple page with all your links. "Link in bio" is a common expression on Instagram and an easy way to redirect people to where you want them to go.

WEB CHATS (Messenger and WhatsApp)

We use webchats for direct communication with selected participants. Although all of the official communication like info about schedules, travel and other logistical matters is done via Discord channel (see below) we like to have this group chats where people can easily interact with each other. Later we also use these groups to promote future projects.

PROS:

- Direct contact: The information gets directly to people through direct messages
- Targeting: Targeting is much easier by targeting specific groups that have a higher chance to be interested in youth mobilities
- Tracking: You have access into seeing who saw the information that you sent

CONS:

- Small reach: You can only advertise in small circles and you don't have the certainty that people click on the links you send
- Low impact: It doesn't have the automatic feature of showing you more about it so viewers might not be convinced from a first glance
- Time consuming and it requires building a networking so a lot of human resources.
- Mainly used as channels of communication

AUDIENCES: Has the broadest audience people of all ages use WhatsApp and Messenger but mainly adults

BEST PRACTICES:

- Keep track of Erasmus+ groups of previous projects and post them there
- Do not spam, keep it short
- Find contact people from each country to ensure the circulation of the information

DISCORD

It was only after the first joint-staff training of New Media in Youth Work that we considered creating a Discord Server and it was clearly a winning bet. With Discord what we are trying to do is to create a community between all the people in our network. That includes all of the team and youth workers, of course, participants in previous and future projects.

It's a space where we can better organize our communication, with channels specifically for each purpose, some more open and some more closed. It has been for us, one of the most useful tools in the past year and a half.



VIDEO GUIDELINE

PROS:

- You can advertise through community engagement- helps at maintaining a close relationship with the prospective, new and current and old participants
- It is very well organized and has clear content- channel for each important stuff and very esthetic looking
- Drives website traffic
- Sends notification whenever an event is posted
- Shows who is in charge of what so you would know exactly who to contact for confirmation
- The use of bots allows for some automatizations features

CONS:

- It has no native advertising tools like you find on Facebook or Instagram
- Your community might lose interest and without the community the app is useless
- Small reach- community based

AUDIENCE: Mainly youth, frequently used by gaming communities, used just a channel of communication

BEST PRACTICES:

- Have organized channels with clear information and visuals
- Convince all the participants to join the server and invite their friends to also join
- Do not spam
- Be responsive and active
- Post visuals and promote your project videos

OTHERS

Here are some of the social media that could be useful but are not essential. As we mentioned before you can't be everywhere, or you would have a full-time job as a social media manager and not as a youth worker. If you have the possibility to get someone to do that job full-time then maybe, it's worth pursuing more platforms.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the so-called "professional social media" as it revolves mostly around professional networking. An organized profile for the partner NGOs or the network could be a useful tool if we were planning on hiring people, or to network with other organizations. However, it is extremely directed at professionals, mainly looking and advertising for jobs, therefore it's not really directed at our main target audiences. Besides that, it is time consuming since you have to be very active on it to keep it relevant.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is one of those examples of "you don't need to be everywhere". To be honest most of us youth workers don't understand how it works. It could be a useful tool for building brand awareness because it connects users geographically and that would help them recognize the brand.

But here are some of the reasons we don't consider it useful for our work:

- Very time consuming - you need to constantly post snaps
- Doesn't dispose the right tools for promoting and could not dispose information properly
- The messages disappear if you don't save them
- Strictly used by teenagers for keeping up with their friends.

TIKTOK

Tik Tok has 1 billion monthly active users and it is a place to see and to be seen, a thing that gives the opportunity of having an effective engagement with the viewers and large reach. Tik Tok launched originally in 2016 but its success flourished once with the pandemic making it a continuously evolving platform. This platform is promising but the only 2 disadvantages would be the fact that is very time consuming, posting daily is quite mandatory, and the fact that the algorithm is unpredictable and it is only growing when more people are interacting with your content. So, to be visible and have views you will need a very active audience that would always comment like and share you content which is pretty hard to achieve. Regarding all of that Tik Tok still remains a future possibility after some more research into how does this platform works.

VIDEO (YOUTUBE)

Video is still king in our Communication, because it is the closest we can get (for now) to the real thing without being there. When it comes to video, there's nothing better than YouTube at the moment. It's the most widespread video streaming platform. It has impressive numbers such as: 500 hours of video being uploaded every minute, and around 2.6 billion users. You just can't run away from it.

PROS:

- It's a standard, very well built, both for creating content and watching it.
- "Everyone" uses YouTube and it's free.
- It has very good analytics, allowing you to really track how impactful your videos are being.
- You can embed the videos everywhere (websites, other social media, chats, e-mails etc.)

CONS:

- A lot of competition (as said before “everyone” is on YouTube and there’s a lot of available content)
- Algorithms that decide what is shown to people.
- Because it’s technically free, it runs on Advertising, which can be a bit intrusive some times.

AUDIENCES:

All statistics say that YouTube is pretty global, so all the audiences have great implementation on the platform. You will literally find everyone here.

BEST PRACTICES:

- Produce good videos, with quality image, quality audio and engaging.
- Keep it short (as in don’t make videos extremely long, learn how to separate what is important and what is not)
- Keep the captions engaging and funneling your audience to where they want them to go.
- Create playlists for specific projects where you will create a lot of videos.
- Make sure your channel is well setup (There are many options)

PODCAST/LIVESTREAM

Podcasts and Livestreams are very popular at the moment. During the pandemic, CJE organized a weekly livestream with some of its volunteers/participants and it was a way to keep in touch and do something. This type of content is good as it allows you to explore subjects in a deeper way than normal posts. By having more deep conversations we can produce more interesting or meaningful content. It is becoming easier and easier to produce this type of content and it could be an opportunity to have a more meaningful impact.

PROS:

- Allows for more meaningful content, with a deeper insight on topics
- a good experience for young people to practice public speaking and idea debate
- because it’s live, the audience can interact with hosts in real time, ask questions, comment etc.
- technically it is getting easier to organize
- a Livestream can easily be turned into a Podcast (just loose the video part)

CONS:

- It takes a lot of time in terms of preparation (deciding topics, choosing guests, etc.)
- It needs to be done regularly, like a TV show to be meaningful.
- The medium is so popular that you face a lot of competition.
- Your content needs to be interesting, or people will not stick around to see.
- Need for a good Internet connection.

BEST PRACTICES:

- Even if it’s possible to do it alone, I suggest you setup a small team to take care of the different tasks.
- Have a dedicated person taking care of the public interaction.
- Stream to multiple platforms at the same time, namely YouTube, Facebook, Twitch and even Instagram.
- Choose engaging topics.
- Setup nice visuals for your livestream (animations, transitions, backgrounds)
- A sound board, with sound effects can always come handy, and adds production value but it’s a bit more complicated and if not done properly can sound stupid.

VIRTUAL REALITY

VR as it's commonly called, can be in general a good way to stimulate learning environments, thus we can definitely see the potential applications it could have in youth work. From online and offline immersive sessions to interactive learning experiences like games or challenges, it can definitely be used to diversify the offer in youth work. But it's not quite there yet. Besides the challenging price ranges (although decreasing), the experience is by itself more alienating than anything else.

The idea that we can become avatars in a different world, free of physical limitations and prejudices like how we look, how we dress etc., is still closer to a fairy tale than reality. In most of the cases we observed, young people when engaged in VR, became more isolated from their groups. And sure, these groups can exist online as well, but it's not yet feasible for everyone to get access to these types of devices.

PROS:

- Extremely immersive environments – the person feels as if they are in the room
- Allows for interactive experiences – you get to actually move things around and decide by yourself.
- Simulating unfeasible realities – imagine a young poor person visiting all the museums in the world without leaving its living room
- Can be useful for productivity (namely with virtual office and meeting applications)
- In cases of isolation (weather geographical or sanitary for example) it can be a method to include people in activities.

CONS:

- Prices (still not affordable at a bigger scale)
- The technology is not there yet
- Escapism from reality, which can be counterproductive to the work we do.
- Physical contact is still better than virtual reality.

BEST PRACTICES:

At the moment we can't find any, as we don't find it useful or accessible in our work. However, the potential is there and for that we leave you a short video on the possibilities it can bring to education in the future.

[Metaverse for Education - 5 Ways to use Virtual Reality in School](#)

eBooks

By eBooks in the case of youth work we would consider materials such as this manual. And other manuals we have produced in the past for other projects. Resources that can be useful for our and other organizations. In the end they are a promotion tool as they give us visibility, but their main aim is not that.

PROS:

- very concrete and informative for everyone
- assures continuity of best practices
- gives the viewer the experience "behind the scenes" resulting in good engagement

CONS:

- it has a more internal purpose than to promote effectively our activity
- could have too many details that would make the viewer lose interest
- it is a challenging task for new youth workers since you have to expose things based on the past experience.

NEW MEDIA in YOUTH WORK

THIS PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



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Four Links



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