



XXI Adults

**Adaptation of the adult educational
system to the XXI Century**

The Good Practices Template



INSTITUTE for
ROMA and
MINORITIES
INCLUSION



**DIPUTACIÓN
DE VALLADOLID**



E-SCHOOL
EDUCATIONAL GROUP



EMPODERAR
DESENVOLVIMENTO ORGANIZACIONAL, SOCIAL, PROFISSIONAL E PESSOAL



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Name of the Good Practice

Digital Mentorship Program: Seniors Learning from Peers

Summary of the Practice

Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?

The **Digital Mentorship Program** is a structured peer-to-peer initiative where digitally competent older adults mentor their peers who lack digital skills. This model leverages peer credibility, empathy, and shared experiences to accelerate digital learning, improve confidence, and reduce the sense of isolation common among older adults unfamiliar with modern technologies. It aligns with the general Adult Education goals by modernizing adult education practices in a culturally sensitive, low-pressure way that emphasizes both empowerment and community.

Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters

1) Context / Background

What was the initial need or problem?

Who was the target group?

Was it part of a larger programme or project?

Across the European Union, a considerable percentage of older adults remain digitally excluded, even as digital tools become essential to everyday life. Despite the growing availability of formal digital education programs, many older individuals hesitate to participate. Factors such as unfamiliar learning environments, fast-paced instruction, and generational gaps between learners and instructors often create discomfort. Seniors may feel intimidated in traditional classroom settings or reluctant to ask questions, especially when taught by younger educators. This leads to low engagement, minimal retention of information, and limited development of practical digital skills.

To address this challenge, the “**Digital Mentorship Program: Seniors Learning from Peers**” was developed. This initiative offered an innovative and more approachable alternative by promoting peer-to-peer learning. Rather than relying solely on formal teachers, the program identified and trained older adults who already possess basic digital skills—such as using smartphones, accessing online banking, or sending emails—to become mentors for their peers.

These senior mentors were not professional educators, but relatable figures who understand the pace, concerns, and learning preferences of their fellow learners. After receiving mentor training,





they were able to provide informal support and guidance in adult education centers, community halls, libraries, and other accessible local spaces.

The target group included older adults with little to no digital experience who benefit from personalized, empathetic, and practical help. The program not only improved digital literacy but also built trust, confidence, and social connection among participants. Learning from someone with similar life experience often makes seniors feel more at ease and motivated.

This initiative contributes to broader efforts in promoting active aging, lifelong learning, and digital inclusion. By empowering older adults to support each other, it fosters community resilience and encourages greater participation in the digital society.

2) Objectives

What were the goals of the practice?

What did it aim to improve or change?

- Improve digital competencies among older adults using a peer-led format.
- Build learner confidence and reduce resistance to digital tools.
- Promote volunteerism and active aging.
- Strengthen the sense of purpose and societal contribution among senior mentors.
- Facilitate community-based education and digital inclusion in underserved areas.

3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?

What activities or methods were used?

How long did it take?

Phase 1: Mentor Recruitment & Training

- The center identified digitally literate older adults (aged 55+) with interest in volunteering.
- Short training (3 sessions) equipped them with teaching and communication strategies tailored to peer learning.
- Mentors received toolkits with step-by-step guides, common troubleshooting FAQs, and a mentorship manual.

Phase 2: Mentee Enrollment

- Participants with little or no digital experience registered via local centers.
- Learners were matched with mentors based on language, interests, and availability.





Phase 3: Mentoring Sessions

- Pairs met weekly for 1–2 hours over 6 weeks in familiar, informal environments.
- Curriculum was demand-driven: mentees chose focus areas (e.g., using government services online, video calls, photo sharing, video creation).
- Mentors reported progress to a program coordinator for feedback and support.

Phase 4: Group Reflection & Celebration

- Mentors and mentees gathered at the end of the cycle to share experiences and success stories.
- Certificates and recognition for both mentors and learners enhanced motivation.

4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?

- Over 30 mentorship pairs successfully completed cycles in the pilot phase.
- 87% of mentees reported feeling “more confident” using digital tools.
- Mentors reported increased self-worth and purpose.
- Many mentees went on to teach others informally—creating a ripple effect.

5) Participants' Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

“My mentor was just like me—same age, same struggles. That made me feel safe and encouraged.” – Stavroula (mentee), 67, Greece.

“Helping others made me feel useful again. I realized how much I already knew!” – George (mentor), 70, Greece.

“I felt that technology is not something that only concerns young people. My mentors were people like me, so why shouldn't I be able to learn too?” – Kostas (mentee), 64, Greece.

6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?

Were there any unique or creative elements?





- High empathy and relatability between mentor and learner.
- Focused, 1-on-1 attention—learners moved at their own pace.
- Low-cost, easily scalable using local volunteers and spaces.
- Fostered social bonding and interdependence among seniors.

7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?

What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

Easily transferable to adult education centers, NGOs, libraries, and senior associations across Europe. To succeed, implementers need:

- A pool of digitally capable older adults
- Basic coordination (one part-time coordinator per region)
- Accessible learning spaces
- Printed support materials and mentor training.

8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional

Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.

- Begin with tech-savvy retirees (e.g. former office workers, teachers).
- Use simple feedback forms to track progress and adapt sessions.
- Acknowledge and celebrate mentors—retention improves when they feel appreciated.

9) Lessons Learned - optional

Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.

- Some mentors needed support with teaching methods—ongoing training was essential.
- Group-based mentoring didn't work as well as 1-on-1.
- Allow flexibility—some mentees needed more time to absorb basic concepts.

10) Photos illustrating the described practice

Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice





PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice. You may choose more than one.

TYPE OF THE PRACTICE

- ☒ Learning by doing
- ☐ Intergenerational learning
- ☒ Community-based learning
- ☒ Digital / blended learning
- ☒ Peer learning
- ☒ Mentoring / coaching
- ☐ Cultural / creative approaches
- ☒ Collaborative / partner-based
- ☐ Other (specify):

TARGET GROUP

- ☒ Adults with low qualifications
- ☐ NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)





☐	Migrants / Refugees
☒	Older adults
☐	Women
☐	People with disabilities
☐	Other vulnerable groups
☒	General adult population
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
☐	Formal
☒	Non-formal
☒	Informal
SKILLS / COMPETENCES DEVELOPED	
☐	Literacy (reading, writing, comprehension)
☐	Numeracy (maths, logical thinking)
☒	Digital skills
☐	STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)
☒	Personal, social and learning to learn
☒	Civic competences
☐	Entrepreneurship
☐	Cultural awareness and expression
☐	Language skills
☐	Job-related / vocational skills
☐	Green competences
☐	Other (specify):
POTENTIAL USERS	
☒	Teachers / Educators
☒	Administrative staff
☒	School / Centre management
☒	Policy makers / Public administration
☒	NGOs / Community organizations
☐	Other (specify):

Glossary of Categories (Explanation of Checklist Items)

Type of the Practice

- Learning by doing – learning through hands-on activities, practice-based methods such as workshops or real tasks.
- Intergenerational learning – activities involving participants from different age groups learning from each other.





- Community-based learning – learning that takes place within the local community, often through real-life engagement.
- Digital / blended learning – education using digital tools (online), or a mix of online and face-to-face methods.
- Peer learning – learning among participants of similar status or experience, supporting each other.
- Mentoring / coaching – one-to-one support from a more experienced person to help learning and personal growth.
- Cultural / creative approaches – use of arts, music, theatre, storytelling etc. as learning tools.
- Collaborative / partner-based – practices involving cooperation between organisations or groups.
- Other (specify) – any other method not listed above.

Target Group

- Adults with low qualifications – adults who have low levels of formal education or basic skills.
- NEETs – people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (often young adults).
- Migrants / Refugees – individuals who moved from another country, often facing integration challenges.
- Older adults – Adults aged 65+
- Women – practices specifically addressing women's needs.
- People with disabilities – individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health disabilities.
- Other vulnerable groups – groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. long-term unemployed, homeless).
- General adult population – average adults not in specific categories.

Learning Environment

- Formal – learning within official education systems, certified courses (e.g. schools, universities).
- Non-formal – organised learning outside the formal system (e.g. workshops, community training).
- Informal – learning through everyday experiences, without a structured course (e.g. volunteering, family).

Skills / Competences Developed

- Literacy – reading, writing, and understanding texts (including functional texts like forms).
- Numeracy – using mathematics and logical reasoning.
- Digital skills – using digital tools e.g. CV creation, online tools, online platforms.





- STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Personal, social and learning to learn – self-awareness, motivation, teamwork, lifelong learning skills.
- Civic competences – active citizenship, understanding of democracy and social responsibilities.
- Entrepreneurship – creativity, innovation, project management, risk-taking.
- Cultural awareness and expression – appreciation and creation of cultural content (e.g. arts, music).
- Language skills – ability to communicate in one or more foreign languages.
- Job-related / vocational skills – practical skills useful in specific jobs or professions.
- Green competences – knowledge and behaviours supporting sustainability and environmental care.
- Other – any other skills developed (please specify).

Potential users – groups who could benefit from applying, adapting, or being inspired by this practice in their work context.

Note: These categories follow EU frameworks such as the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), the Action Plan on Basic Skills (2025) and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2025 – Glossary





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