Ref. No: 2024-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000245715

XXIAdults

Adaptation of the adult educational system to the XXI Century

The Good Practices Template

Co-funded by the European Union

Name of the Good Practice
Digital Ambassadors in the Neighborhood: Local Peer Support Networks

Summary of the Practice Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?
Digital Ambassadors in the Neighborhood is a grassroots initiative that trains adult learners—especially recently trained digital users—to become local **"digital helpers"** within their community. They offer informal support to peers, neighbors, and family members on basic digital tasks. The practice transforms learners into **change agents**, strengthens neighborhood ties, and extends the impact of digital education beyond the classroom. It supports the Adult Education goals by embedding learning within everyday life and activating social responsibility among adult learners.

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?
Improving digital skills through training is a crucial first step, but for many adults, especially those new to technology, the real challenge begins afterward. Without regular use or ongoing support, newly acquired skills often fade. Some learners lose confidence once formal courses end, while others feel uncertain about applying their knowledge to real-life situations. This can lead to frustration, dependency, or complete disengagement from digital tools. At the same time, adult education centers frequently lack the resources to offer continuous, individualized support after a course ends. Follow-up sessions, home visits, or one-on-one coaching are rarely feasible at scale, especially in underfunded or rural areas. Recognizing this gap, the **Digital Ambassadors in the Neighborhood** initiative was developed as a grassroots, community-based solution. The concept was simple yet powerful: empower trained adult learners to become **local digital supporters**—informal "digital first responders" within their families, buildings, or neighborhoods.

Co-funded by the European Union

These ambassadors didn't replace educators but provided timely, small-scale assistance that helped others apply basic digital skills in everyday life. Examples of support include:

- Setting up or troubleshooting an email account
- Helping someone access a government service online
- Sending a photo or message via smartphone
- Guiding a neighbor through making a video call

These peer helpers were trusted, approachable, and familiar, making them more accessible than formal institutions. By offering just-in-time support in real-world contexts, the initiative strengthened confidence, reinforced learning, and encouraged ongoing digital engagement.

The target group included both those receiving help and the ambassadors themselves, who gained leadership experience and reinforced their own skills by teaching others. This low-cost, informal model fosters sustainable digital inclusion from within communities—proving that sometimes, the best support is just around the corner.

2) Objectives

What were the goals of the practice?
What did it aim to improve or change?

- Encourage continued digital engagement and skill use after initial training
- Create sustainable, local networks of peer support
- Reduce dependency on institutions for basic digital help
- Foster self-efficacy and leadership among adult learners.

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: Selection and Motivation

- Adult learners - especially older adults - who successfully completed a digital course were invited to become **Digital Ambassadors**.
- Participation was voluntary and framed as a form of "giving back."

Phase 2: Preparation & Micro-Training

- 1–2 short workshops (2 hours each) were offered:
  - How to explain tasks simply
  - Setting boundaries (what to help with, what not to)
  - Encouraging self-learning in others
  - Using checklists or printed guides
- Each ambassador received a toolkit with basic tutorials, a help request log, and communication tips.

Phase 3: Community Outreach

- Ambassadors placed posters in community centers, libraries, churches, or cafés stating when and where they were available for help (e.g., "Every Wednesday at the local library – Digital Help Desk").
- Small support sessions took place informally—no fixed classroom, no formal structure.

Phase 4: Coordination and Recognition

- Monthly check-ins were held with ambassadors to share experiences, receive advice, and track impact.
- At the end of the 3-month cycle, a local recognition event was held to celebrate their contribution.

4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?

- Over 30 adults became Digital Ambassadors in their neighborhoods.
- Hundreds of micro-support interactions were logged (e.g., "helped someone upload ID photo to job portal").
- Learners retained their digital skills significantly better due to continued use.
- Ambassadors gained recognition and confidence, often becoming informal leaders in their communities.

5) Participants' Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

"I thought I would forget everything after the course. But helping my neighbor pay her bill online kept it fresh in my mind." – Yannis, 60, Greece.
"Now people ask me before going for an appointment at a public office. I feel useful again." – Rita, 66, Greece.

"It is so much more comfortable to learn from your peers, who understand your difficulties because they have gone through them themselves." – Vassiliki, 62, Greece.

6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?
Were there any unique or creative elements?

- Clear boundaries and support for ambassadors (they're not tech experts!)
- Public recognition and reinforcement
- Visible, easy-to-access locations for offering help
- The peer-to-peer aspect creates low pressure and high trust.

7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?
What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

Easily replicated in any community setting. Needed resources are minimal:

- Motivated alumni from adult education programs
- A central contact point or coordinator
- Public spaces or organizations willing to host drop-in hours

It works especially well in small towns or districts where word of mouth is strong.

8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional

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

Co-funded by the European Union

Co-funded by
the European Union

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):

Co-funded by the European Union

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

This document was created under the Creative Commons license:

Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA).

All or part of this document may be used, copied, and disclosed provided that the origin is mentioned, it is not used commercially, and its license is not modified.

All rights reserved.

© Copyright 2024 XXI Adults

Co-funded by the European Union