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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
Latarnicy2020.pl – An Innovative Digital Education Project for Adults in Poland

Summary of the Practice Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?
The Latarnicy2020.pl project is a large-scale initiative aimed at improving digital skills among adults who face digital exclusion. The practice involves a network of trained educators known as Latarnicy, who provide personalized digital training within local communities across various regions. The goal is to help adult learners gain essential digital competences, increase their confidence in using technology, and promote social inclusion through practical, accessible education.

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?
The Latarnicy2020.pl project was created to address a pressing problem in Poland: many adults lacked the necessary digital skills to fully participate in today's increasingly digital society. This digital exclusion affected especially older adults, people living in rural or underserved areas, and other vulnerable groups who struggled to access or use the internet and digital technologies. Without these basic digital competences, many adults found it difficult to complete everyday tasks, access public services, or take advantage of educational and employment opportunities online. The project focused on adults aged 18 and above who were at risk of being left behind by rapid technological change. This included seniors, people with disabilities, residents of smaller towns, and others who had limited exposure to or confidence in digital tools. By targeting these groups, *Latarnicy2020.pl* aimed to reduce social inequality and help more people become active, informed digital citizens. *Latarnicy2020.pl* built on the foundation of an earlier initiative called *Polska Cyfrowa Równych Szans (PCRS*), which ran from 2011 to 2015 and was recognized as one of the largest digital education projects for adults aged 50+ in the European Union. *The PCRS* project laid the groundwork for effective teaching methods and organizational models, which *Latarnicy2020.pl* expanded upon. This new project was part of a broader effort to increase digital inclusion across Poland and was supported by the Ministry of Administration and Digitization as well as the European Union. By combining government backing, expert knowledge, and a wide network of local educators, *Latarnicy2020.p*l was able to reach

diverse communities and provide high-quality, tailored digital education. The project was implemented in 12 Polish regions, ensuring a wide geographic spread and local relevance.

In summary, *Latarnicy2020.pl* responded to the urgent need to close the digital skills gap among adults, especially those most at risk of exclusion, by mobilizing a network of trained educators to deliver accessible, community-focused training. This helped many people improve their digital abilities and participate more fully in the digital world.

2) **Objectives**

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

The main goal of *the Latarnicy2020.pl* project was to improve digital skills among adults who are at risk of digital exclusion. The project aimed to help people who struggle with using computers, smartphones, the internet, and digital services, so they could better participate in social, educational, and professional life. By providing practical training, the project sought to build confidence and basic competences in digital technologies, making everyday tasks easier and more accessible.

Another important objective was to create a strong network of local educators, known as "*Latarnicy,*" who would deliver this training directly in their communities. These educators were trained to use a special "lamplighter method," which focused on individual needs, practical learning, and close contact with participants. This method aimed to make digital learning more effective and tailored to each learner's pace and interests.

The project also wanted to raise awareness of the importance of digital skills and encourage more adults to engage with technology. It aimed to reduce social inequalities linked to digital exclusion by helping vulnerable groups such as older adults, people with disabilities, and residents of rural areas gain access to the digital world.

Moreover, *Latarnicy2020.pl* planned to support local institutions and communities by increasing their ability to offer digital education and by motivating local leaders, teachers, and officials to promote digital inclusion.

Overall, the project aimed not only to teach technical skills but also to foster social inclusion, active citizenship, and lifelong learning. By improving digital literacy, Latarnicy2020.pl helped adults become more independent, better informed, and more connected to modern society.

3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?
What activities or methods were used?
How long did it take?

The Latarnicy2020.pl project was carried out step by step to support digital education for adults across 12 Polish regions. First, 250 local educators called *Latarnicy* were recruited. These educators had to have basic digital skills and some training experience. They took part in a two-day training, often online due to COVID-19, where they learned the "lamplighter method" — a practical and personal way of teaching digital skills.

Each *Latarnik* created a Local Action Plan detailing where and when they would hold training sessions, who their target participants would be, and how many people they expected to train. This helped adapt the trainings to local community needs.

The training sessions lasted about 12 hours but could be shortened if participants learned quickly. Groups were small (up to 16 people) to ensure personal attention. Trainings focused on everyday digital skills like internet use, online public services, social media, and basic computer or smartphone use. The "lamplighter method" encouraged a friendly, informal learning atmosphere.

Latarnicy submitted monthly reports about their activities and participant progress. Learners took tests before and after training to measure improvement.

The project lasted until May 2022, with training sessions running until April 2022. Besides workshops, participants had access to webinars and regional meetings for further support and exchange of experience.

Overall, the project combined training of educators, local planning, small group workshops, and continuous evaluation to help adults develop digital skills and reduce digital exclusion.

4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?

The Latarnicy2020.pl project trained 326 digital educators, known as Latarnicy Polski Cyfrowej. These educators provided training to 17,864 participants, including 1,645 people with disabilities, helping them improve their digital skills and reduce digital exclusion.

Participants, many of whom were adults over 50 years old with limited prior experience using digital tools, learned essential skills such as safe internet use, accessing e-services, online communication, and handling digital devices like smartphones and computers. This practical training significantly boosted their confidence and ability to navigate the digital world independently.

The project also contributed to social inclusion by enabling participants to connect more easily with family, local institutions, and the wider community through digital means. This reduced social isolation and encouraged more active participation in society. Additionally, local government bodies benefited from citizens who could better use online public services, increasing overall administrative efficiency.

Evaluation through pre- and post-training assessments confirmed clear improvements in participants' digital abilities. Many expressed enthusiasm for continuing their digital learning journeys, while the educators valued the personalized "lamplighter method," which emphasizes individual support and tailoring training to local needs.

In summary, Latarnicy2020.pl effectively built digital competencies, promoted social inclusion, and established a sustainable network of trained educators committed to fostering digital literacy in their communities.

5) Participants' Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

"Basically, the training is tailored to the participant's needs. The participant declares what they want to learn, and that is what we teach. For many participants, these classes are very difficult at the beginning," says Tadeusz Ruchlewicz, a Digital Lighthouse educator. "Many of these people had very little contact with the internet before. The training mainly focuses on various tasks related to handling official matters using a computer, such as e-services or activating a trusted profile. These are topics that participants usually have little experience with. Do participants often have problems during the classes? Older participants often lack even the most basic skills, like how to click a mouse."

Source:
Ruchlewicz, T. (2020). Interview in the video: Latarnicy2020.pl – digital education project [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uQCSOrWrw8

6) Success Factors

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

The effectiveness of the Latarnicy2020.pl practice largely stemmed from its personalized, community-focused approach. Each participant's learning needs were carefully considered, allowing the educators, known as *Latarnicy,* to tailor their teaching methods to individual skill levels and interests. This personalized approach helped overcome the initial barriers many adults faced, especially those with little or no prior experience with digital technology.

Another key factor was the strong support network built around the *Latarnicy*. These educators were thoroughly trained and continuously supported through webinars, regional meetings, and access to a dedicated digital platform. This system ensured consistent quality and motivation among the trainers, which directly translated into better learning outcomes for participants.

Additionally, the "latarnicza metoda" or "lamplighter method" itself was innovative. It focused on integrating digital skills into everyday life tasks, making learning relevant and immediately applicable. This practical orientation made the training more engaging and meaningful, especially for older adults and those from vulnerable groups.

Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.
We recommend focusing on the following five key success factors as essential elements for effectively implementing this practice: 1. Well-trained local educators Having motivated and skilled digital educators (Latarnicy) who understand the needs of their community is crucial for engagement and trust-building. 2. Individualized learning approach Tailoring training content to the specific needs and pace of participants ensures better learning outcomes, especially for those with low digital skills. 3. Strong local support and community involvement Collaborating with local institutions and stakeholders helps create a supportive environment and promotes wider participation. 4. Continuous training and mentoring for educators Ongoing development and support keep educators motivated and improve the quality of training delivered. 5. Flexible training formats Offering both in-person and online training options allows access for diverse participants, including those with mobility or time constraints.
9) Lessons Learned - optional Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.
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	

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☒	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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