Inclusive digital youth work

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Digital youth work?

*“Digital youth work means proactively **using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work**. Digital media and technology can be either **a tool, an activity or content** in youth work. Digital youth work is not a youth work method. Digital youth work can be **included in any youth work setting** and it has the **same goals as youth work** in general. Digital youth work can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments, or in a mixture of the two. Digital youth work is underpinned by the same ethics, values and principles as youth work.”*

- Conclusions of the Council of the European Union, 2019

Digital youth work?

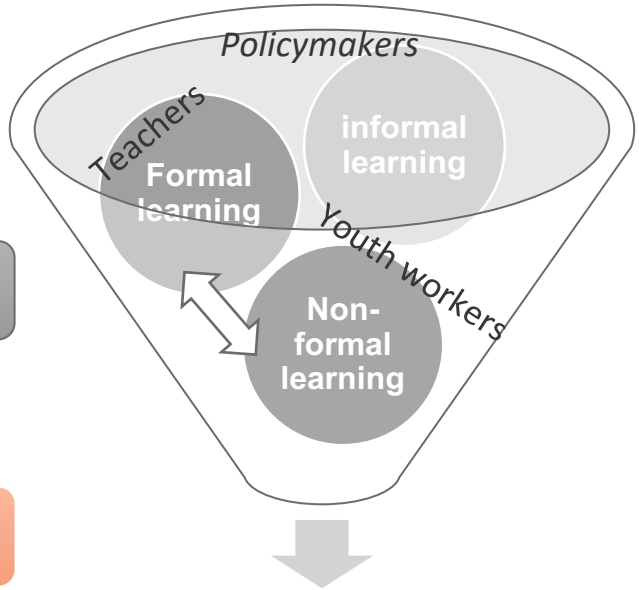
Digitalised society

- DYW no longer an 'exception'
  - Substantial part of youth work
  - Impact COVID-19

Council of the European Union, 2019

- Encouraging youth workers to organise DYW
- Investing in digital capacity building
- DYW to be included in youth work policy plans

- Erasmus+ research project – SNAC Digital Youth Work



Supporting youth in navigating the digital world

Digital youth work - types

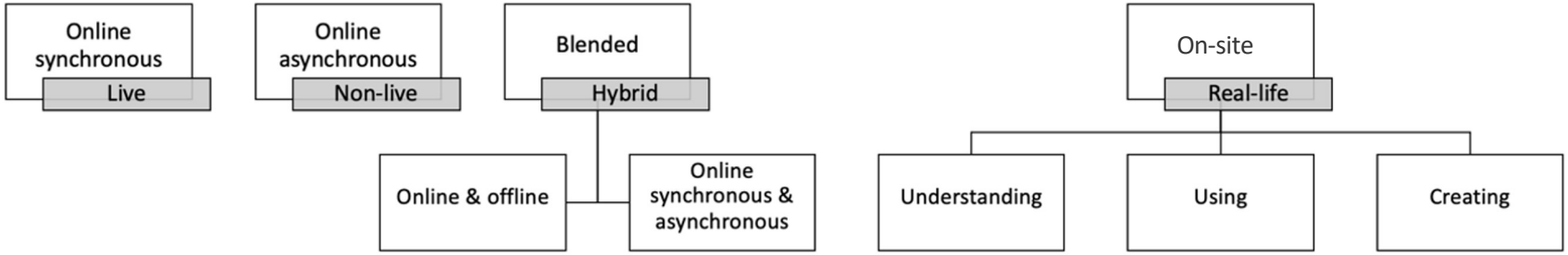


Figure 1. Types of digital youth work (Vermeire et al., 2022)

Digital youth work - types

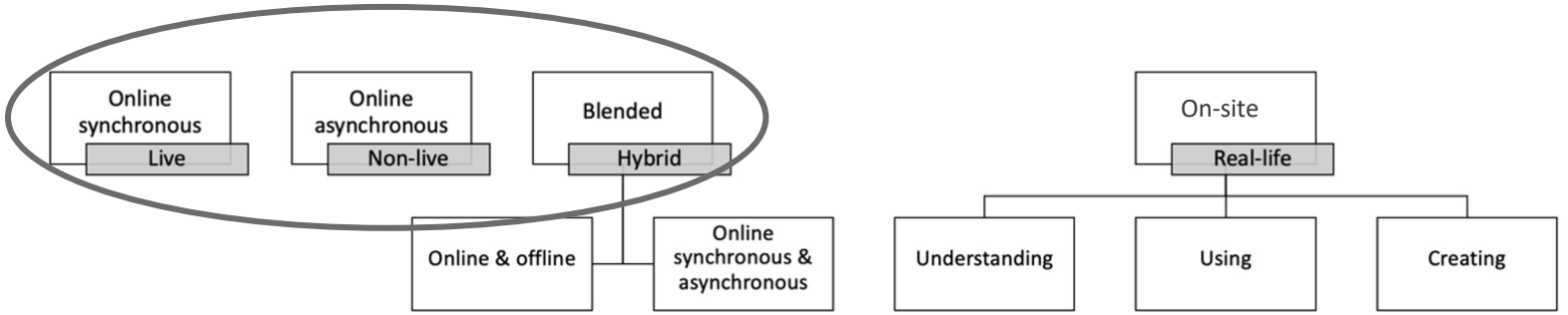


Figure 1. Types of digital youth work (Vermeire et al., 2022)

Methodology

Informed by previous mapping of digital youth work

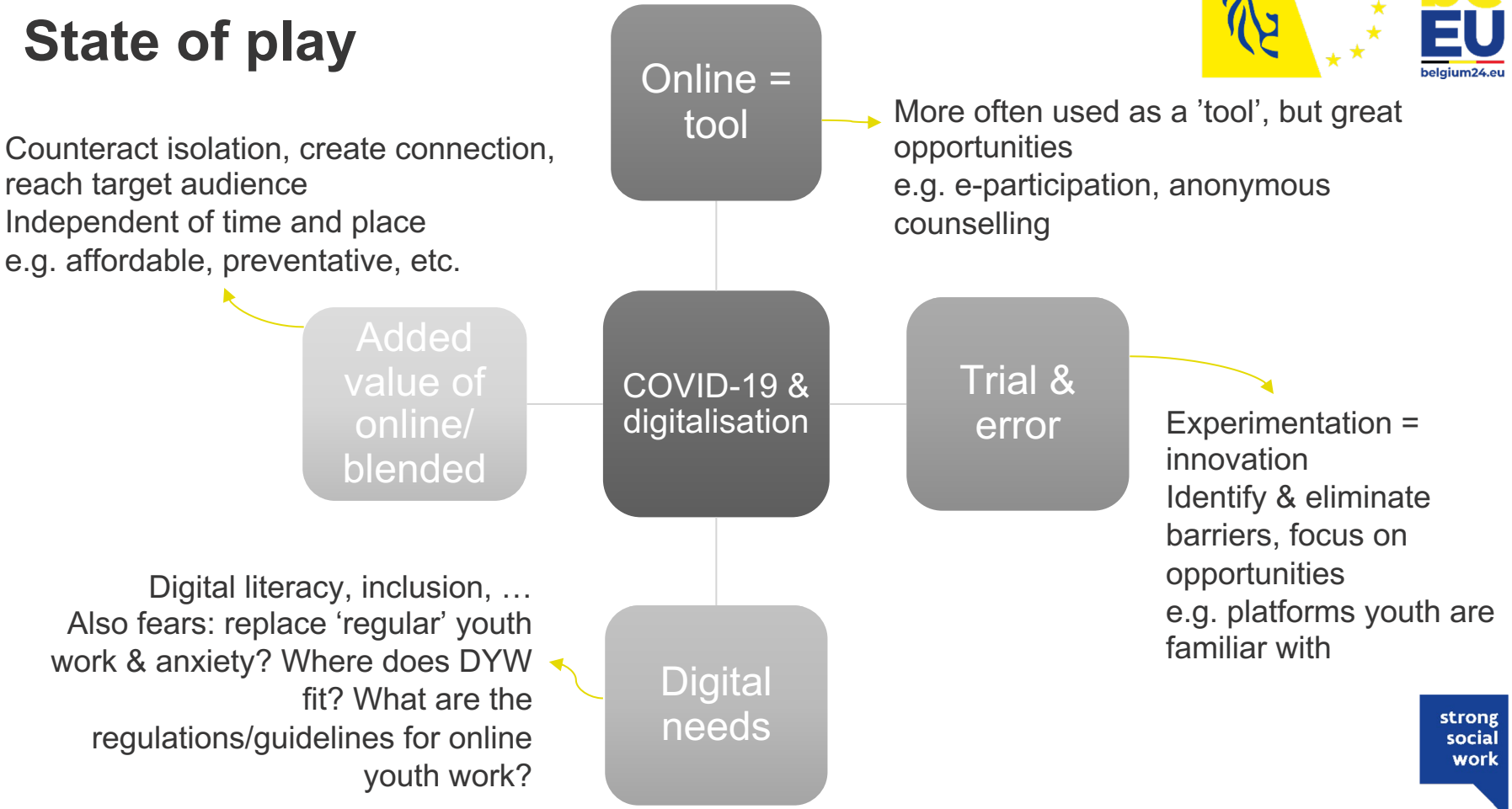
Twofold design

QuickScan method
- Database (N=55)
  - Selection initiatives (N=10)
- Desk research
  - Analysis matrix



Comparative case study analysis
- In-depth interviews (N=10)
  - project teams

State of play



Youth workers

Digital competences
- New competences & more training
- No expert, but support (anxiety)
- Lack of framework

Supporting DYW practices
- lack of support, need for strategy
- Low-threshold training
- Learning networks

Youth work as significant
- Learning & counselling (online) = effective

Youth

Digital competences
- ‘Digital natives’
  - Privacy management, information literacy
- Lack of resources

Support
- Need for policy, inclusion practices, effectiveness check, etc.

Accessibility & inclusion
- Active & immersive learning
- Participation/co-creation
- Bottom-up works better

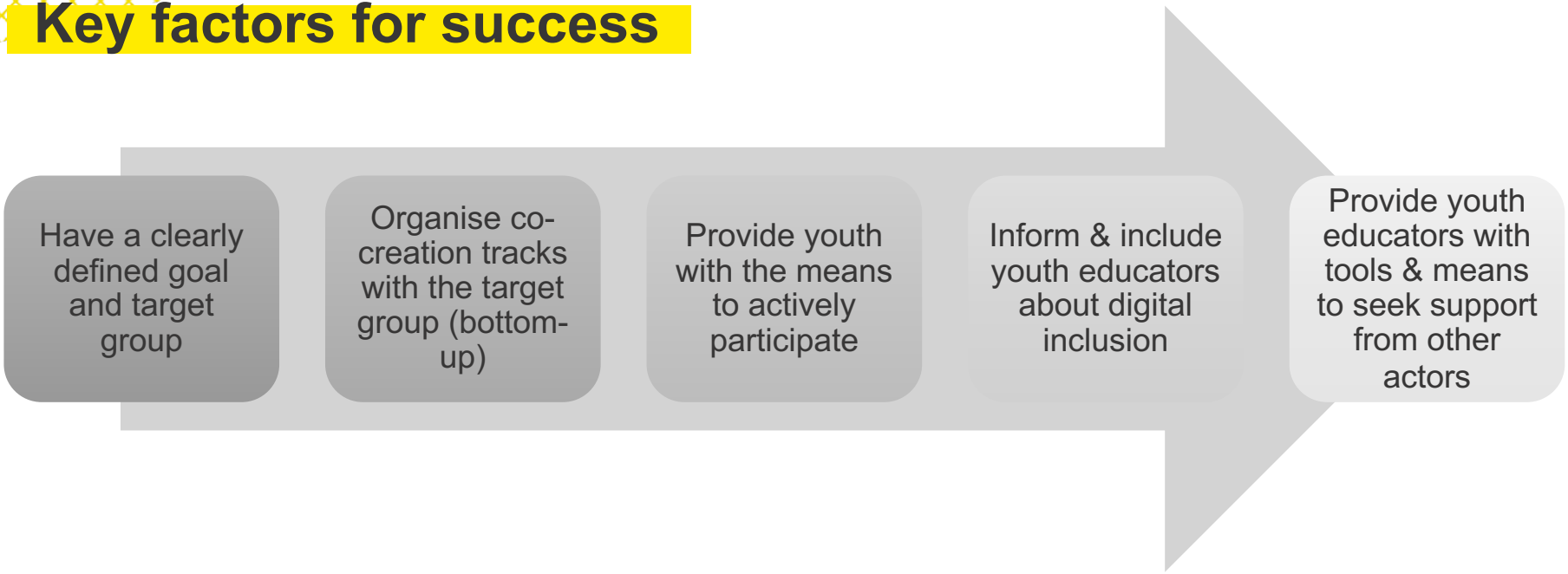
Key challenges

- **Awareness of ‘using’ >< ‘understanding’ media**
  - Idea ‘digital native’ & transferability skills
- **Require access/accessibility**
  - Hard-, software, internet connection, etc.
  - Blended: more nuance and guidance
- **Require guidelines**
  - Availability? Which tools? Anonymity? …
  - Ethical issues (e.g. online privacy, dataveillance)
- **Signal-based approach**
  - Expertise on target group, esp. for vulnerable youth
- **Involve different stakeholders (also youth)**
  - Collaborate to complement expertise
    - Use their strengths & knowledge to inform practice; remember needs (e.g. voice-over features, danger of gimmicks)
- **Bottom-up practices and regulation**

Key opportunities

- **Accessibility (low-treshold)**
  - Broader reach
  - Quicker support/response
    - Reactiveness youth workers
  - Own pace, own space
    - Comfort zone (e.g. anonymous)
    - Preferred tools/platforms (e.g. Discord)
  - Voluntary & open spaces
  - Enhancing engagement & e-participation
- **Good understanding of needs & trends**
  - Close relationship (mentors, friends, …)
    - Peer-to-peer (e.g. peer guidance)
  - Collaborative work & prevention
- **Facilitating communication & collaboration**
  - Bridging online-offline
  - More appealing & relevant, esp. e-participation
- **Fill gaps formal education**
  - Esp. for vulnerable groups
  - Provide resources (e.g. mental health)

Key factors for success



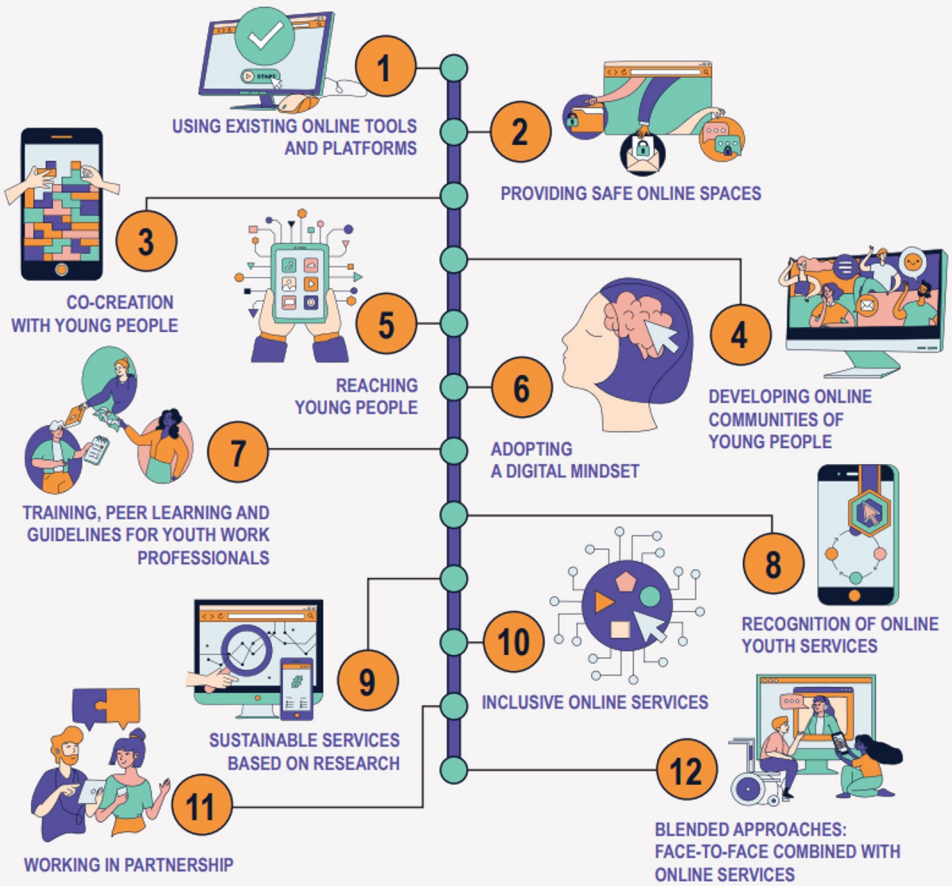
Results SNAC Digital Youth work 2021-2023

Partners: JINT vzw +

National Agencies Erasmus+
Germany, Finland, Estonia, Ireland, Romania, Turkey, The Netherlands,…

Experts: VERKE (Finland)**, VUB-SMIT** (Belgium)**, SALTO training and cooperation (Germany)**

- **12 Tips for online youth services, platforms and tools (based on mapping of national practices:** *LidK, Gamewise, Child Focus,...***)**
- **Digital Competence model for youth workers**



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Digital Competences Youth Workers

1. Supporting creative self-expression

1.1: Using devices and digital tools
1.2: Producing digital content
1.3: Digital craft and fun

2. Shared guidelines and peer learning

2.1: Availability of shared guidelines
2.2: Creating reliable knowledge through digital means
2.3: Using digital tools to share ideas and experience with peers

3. Digital Rights

3.1.: Digital rights as an opportunity in youth work
3.2: Awareness-raising on young people's digital rights and their risks
3.3: Supporting digital safety

4. Critical Digital Literacy

4.1: Searching, evaluating, and communicating information.
4.2: Critically reflecting on the impact of digital transformation

5. Identity growth

5.1: Digital youth cultures
5.2: Gaming, extended reality and youth identity
5.3: Identity growth of the youth worker



5 Competence areas

14 Competences

4 Proficiency levels

Elementary
Fair
Good
Excellent
*No competence option

3 Domain levels

Complexity of Task
Youth Engagement
Non-Formal Learning

More info, training and tips

- https://ambrassade.be/nl/kennis/digitaal-jeugdwerk
- https://www.jint.be/digitaal-jeugdwerk
- https://digitalinclusion.salto-youth.net/
- https://www.mediawijs.be/nl
- https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/guidelines/
- https://www.salto-youth.net/

Thank you!

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