



# Atlantic Social Lab

Cooperation for the promotion of Social Innovation

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## ATLANTIC SOCIAL LAB STUDY VISIT REPORT - STUDY VISITS HELD IN GUIMARÃES

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The project Atlantic Social Lab is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the INTERREG Atlantic Area Cooperation Program (EAPA\_246 / 2016).



| <b>A. GENERAL INFORMATION</b> |  |
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| <b>Date</b>                   | 17-03-2023   |
| <b>Location:</b>              | Guimarães  |
| <b>Name</b>                   | Creative Community for Digital Inclusion   |
| <b>Legal Status</b>           | Non-governmental humanitarian organisation   |
| <b>Contact Details</b>        | Rua Camilo Castelo Branco, n.º 1, R/C<br>4810-435 Guimarães<br><a href="mailto:dguimaraes@cruzvermelha.org.pt">dguimaraes@cruzvermelha.org.pt</a><br><a href="mailto:dguimaraes.cvp@gmail.com">dguimaraes.cvp@gmail.com</a><br>Tel: +351 253 412 522 |

| <b>B. SHORT DESCRIPTION</b>  |  |
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| <p><b>Objectives</b><br/><i>(identify the main goals of the project and target groups addressed)</i></p>                   | <p>In 2020, the delegation of the Portuguese Red Cross in Guimarães has implemented a social innovation project called "Comunidade Criativa de Inclusão Digital" (CCIDG) - Creative Community for Digital Inclusion.</p> <p>The project was approved by the Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Programme and received funding of 312,000 euros from the Partnerships for Impact programme, to which was added around 133,000 euros from the social investor, the municipality of Guimarães.</p> <p>This initiative aimed to create a creative community of digital inclusion, improve intergenerational work and, at the same time, contribute to greater civic participation of local youth through volunteering.</p> <p>This project is the result of a partnership with the local authority and is part of a strategy to combat isolation and to work more closely with vulnerable groups, such as isolated elderly people, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, the homeless and children and young people at risk. It aims to promote technical, pro-social and personal skills.</p> |
| <p><b>Methodology</b><br/><i>(identify the methodological principles, mode of operation and level of intervention)</i></p> | <p>It is an initiative supported by Portugal Inovação Social through the Partnerships for Impact Programme. It identifies the lack of citizenship skills as a social problem and digital inclusion as a field of intervention.</p> <p>The implementation of the project involves the transformation of a van into a mobile digital space having five workstations, with computers and tablets as digital tools and the dynamisation of digital inclusion sessions for the most vulnerable population groups.</p> <p>These sessions are carried out by young mentors in partnership with local schools, youth associations and universities and are adapted to the needs of each group of beneficiaries.</p>  |

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|  | <p>Having a van, the team goes to the different districts of Guimarães, to the institutions that contact them asking for their services, to users interested in learning to use and understand the functioning of the technologies.</p> <p>The process is simple. Two or three weeks in advance, those interested fill in a form and groups are formed and organised by day and time.</p> <p>Each team, usually made up of two members, accompanies an elderly person from the community who already has some technological equipment temporarily provided by the delegation. The aim is to encourage autonomous use and, at the same time, to clarify any doubts that may arise during use. The user is monitored on a weekly basis through personal visits and/or video calls.</p> |
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| <b>C. MAIN FINDINGS</b>   |   |
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| <p><b>Social Needs</b><br/><i>(identify the social needs the organisation intends to fill)</i></p>  | <p>Although this initiative was planned before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the digital divide in the most vulnerable population groups was highlighted by the pandemic. This reinforced the need for initiatives that would enable the digital and social inclusion of this social group.</p> <p>Most of the beneficiaries of this project with low digital literacy and apart from their family, especially at the beginning of the pandemic were willing to participate in the sessions offered by the Red Cross delegation, not so much to use technology in their daily lives, to find information or services, but to communicate with their family, particularly grandchildren.</p> <p>Since social exclusion, and consequently loneliness, is very common among elderly people, this project also contributes to their inclusion in society and keeps them active and up-to-date.</p> <p>The delegation also sought to address the low civic participation of young people and to prevent their social isolation.</p> |
| <p><b>Social Innovative Practices</b> <i>(identify the main social innovative practices developed and the extent to which the work developed responds to those needs)</i></p> | <p>By receiving vulnerable groups, that are at risk of exclusion mainly due to their limited digital literacy, in their van and carrying out dynamic activities to promote their digital literacy with a team of young people, the delegation of the Portuguese Red Cross promotes a bond between the younger and older age groups, but also combats loneliness and social exclusion.</p> <p>In this project, the beneficiaries are accompanied by volunteer "digital dreamers", who help to consolidate the knowledge acquired and help with any other needs that may arise, building bridges with local institutions.</p>   |

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|   | <p>Furthermore, this initiative includes significant investments in personal skills development activities and training in social innovation and entrepreneurship for young volunteers, with a view to empowering them.</p>  |
| <p><b>Collaboration and Networks</b> (<i>identify the main connections of the organisation</i>)</p> | <p>In addition to the municipality, which acts as a social investor, the Creative Community for Social Inclusion also has as its main partners POISE - Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and Employment; Portugal Social Innovation, the European Union's European Social Fund and Jorge Pinheiro Automobile.</p> |

| <p><b>D. MAIN CONSTRAINTS TO SUCCESS</b></p>   |   |
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| <p><b>Challenges and Barriers</b> (<i>identify the main problems that the organisation faces: financial resources, human resources, networks, innovative environment...</i>)</p> | <p>The most challenging aspect of this project was, above all, its launch at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which hampered its implementation in its main areas of action: digital capacity-building activities for the beneficiaries, since there was an increased need to have as limited direct contact as possible with these people; and in the voluntary activities, since the young people also had to be confined to their homes.</p> <p>The restrictions imposed by the pandemic led to restrictions on suppliers and companies. This slowed down the entire preparation process. Contact with users was very limited, only possible through video calls and other remote contacts.</p> <p>Recently, there have been two main challenges: expanding the network of young volunteers who are genuinely interested in being part of the initiative and maintaining the financial resources to support the expenses and, eventually, the scale-up of this initiative, namely the promotion of more vans dedicated to the activities carried out within the framework of this project.</p> |

| <p><b>E. CONCLUSIONS</b></p>       |   |
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| <p><b>Key Concluding Lines</b></p> | <p>The main objective of this project is to stimulate the civic participation of young people through volunteering.</p> <p>This is done by promoting the digital inclusion of people excluded from the information society, on the one hand by using a van equipped with a classroom with 6 computer workstations, and on the other hand, in the long term, by providing personalised follow-up at home and at a distance, particularly for older beneficiaries, using tablets with differentiated software.</p> <p>The project also provides a range of training activities in social innovation and entrepreneurship, enabling young people to develop their own ideas and projects for the benefit of their communities.</p> |

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| <p><b>Other information considered relevant</b></p> | <p>Feedback has been very positive from both users and volunteers. Users have highlighted the positive impact that the volunteers have had on their lives, particularly at the time of the pandemic. As well as the development of their digital skills, they have had someone to talk to and share stories and experiences with.</p> <p>Volunteers also emphasise the sharing of experiences. They feel motivated and happy to contribute to making these people feel more supported.</p> |
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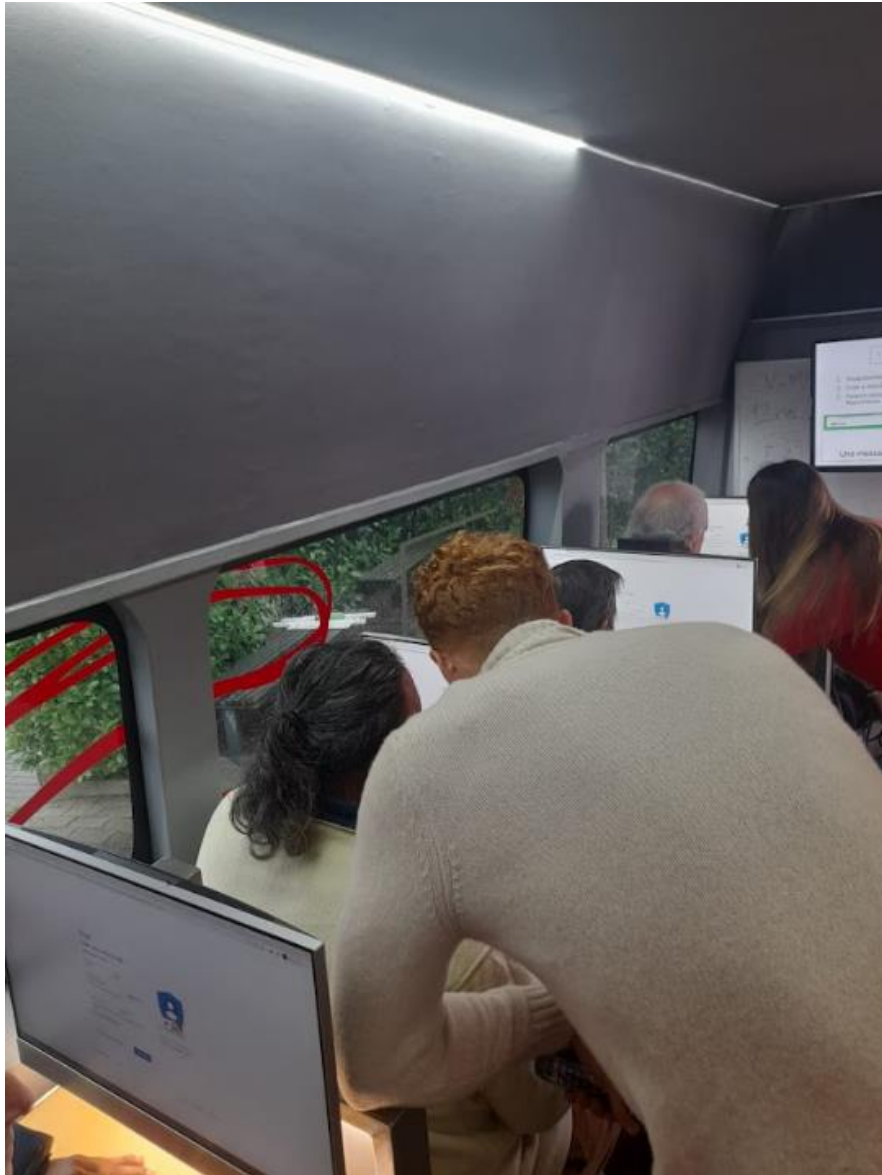
## Study Visit Photos



*Figure 1. ASL partners and members of the Red Cross at the van of the Creative Community for Digital Inclusion*



Figure 2. Van of the Creative Community for Digital Inclusion (CCIDG)



*Figure 3. Inside the van of the CCIDG during a digital training session at the Guimarães Social Shelter*

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