



***Mapping the Evolving Digital Inclusion  
landscape to support Cohesion and  
Integration***

**TRANSFERABILITY TOOLKIT  
SECTION 1: DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT**



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## **INDEX**

SUMMARY.....	4
Ten Steps to Transferability .....	4
SECTION 1: DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT .....	5
Step 1: Understanding the MEDICI platform and tools .....	5
Step 2: Designing your Digital Inclusion Project .....	14

## SUMMARY

The MEDICI Transferability Toolkit aims to help stakeholders working in the field of digital inclusion for vulnerable groups apply the good practices in the MEDICI Catalogue to design and implement effective interventions to support digital inclusion. It is essentially a 'User Manual' – or 'Handbook' - that provides Guidelines, procedures, tools and practice examples to support the successful transferability and implementation of the MEDICI good practices within organisations who work with vulnerable groups.

The Toolkit approach is based on 'Ten Steps to Transferability' each of which takes the reader through the process of developing and customizing the digital inclusion project to suit local needs, from familiarization with the good practice cases contained in the MEDICI Catalogue, through adaptation and customisation to evaluation and sustainability.

### **Ten Steps to Transferability**

Each step involves a 'primary task' which in turn links to activities that are required to complete the task. To support Toolkit users in completing the task each step provides:

- guiding principles to perform the task;
- a checklist of activities to be carried out;
- pitfalls and trouble-shooting tips, including good practice examples of how to carry out the task and activities successfully;
- list of resources (from the 'Resources' folder on website) to support the task and activities.

The ten steps are incorporated into five sections (chapters). The section you are about to read, entitled **Designing your Project**, is made up of two steps:

**Step 1: Understanding the MEDICI platform and tools**

**Step 2: Designing your Digital Inclusion Project**

## SECTION 1: DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT

### Step 1: Understanding the MEDICI platform and tools

#### Primary Task of this Step

The Primary Task of Step 1 is to familiarize yourself with the MEDICI platform and tools, so you can access, review, learn from and understand how you need to adapt the good practice cases in the MEDICI Catalogue to meet the needs of your organization and the vulnerable people it aims to support.

#### Guiding Principles

- Make sure you and relevant people in your organization familiarize yourselves with the MEDICI and the tools and services it can provide
- Understand that the MEDICI Catalogue is designed to be flexible - its good practices are adaptable to suit the needs of different organisations and user groups
- Consult the Learning Materials that are provided on the MEDICI website so you know how to access and learn from the good practices in the Catalogue
- Take a tour of the platform and explore the different tools available
- Be clear who your users are and what are their needs
- Compare your user needs against good practice examples in the Catalogue
- Use 'design thinking' to develop a vision for your digital inclusion project that is user-led and applies 'out of the box' thinking
- Use 'Theory of Change' to translate this vision into an action plan for your project

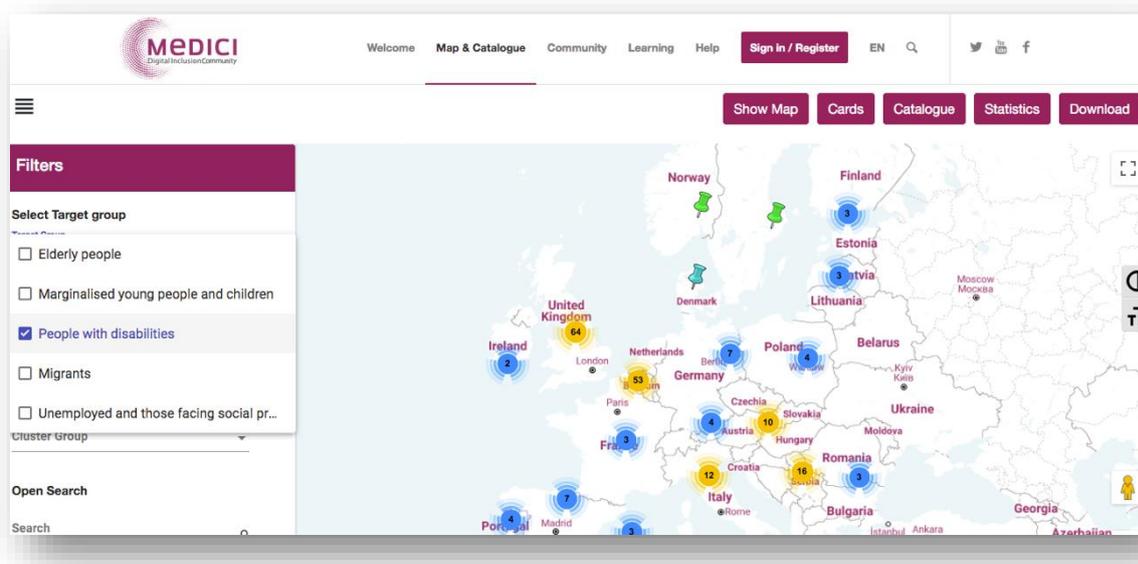
#### Checklist of Actions

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Read the MEDICI Tour Guide below  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Download and read the relevant resources provided on the MEDICI website | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Take an online tour of the MEDICI website                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Produce a user needs analysis   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| List the good practices you can learn from and what needs to be adapted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop a vision for your project using Design Thinking                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Create a Theory of Change plan for your project                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Tools to help you position your organization

##### MEDICI Tour Guide

The MEDICI Interactive Catalogue and Map can be accessed via this link:  
<https://digitalinclusion.eu/digital-map/>



Source: MEDICI Interactive Catalogue and Map

The MEDICI Digital Inclusion Atlas, available at <https://digitalinclusion.eu> includes:

- The Digital Inclusion Map and Catalogue and
- The Digital Inclusion Knowledge Community

The [Digital Inclusion Map & Catalogue](#) represent the ‘state of the art’ in Digital Inclusion ‘good practices’: projects and interventions for the Digital Inclusion of vulnerable groups in the EU Member States and the UK.

The kinds of good practices included in the Catalogue have been running long enough and have some evidence to suggest that they have made or will make a difference to the *digital exclusion* of the following **vulnerable groups**:

- **People with disabilities**
- **Older people**
- **Marginalised young people and children** (based on socio –economic status)
- **Unemployed or those facing social problems**
- **Migrants**

The Good practices that you can find in our Catalogue provide **knowledge about what works, for whom and in what circumstances** and what learning can be transferred and applied in other contexts. The Map enables to **see gaps in the provision** of initiatives to tackle the digital exclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The Catalogue and Map can be used as tools for capacity building.

*STEP 5 OF THIS TRANSFERABILITY TOOLKIT PROVIDES FURTHER DETAILS ON HOW TO USE THE CATALOGUE AND MAP TO LEARN FROM MEDICI GOOD PRACTICE CASES*

The **Knowledge Community** is aimed to stimulate collaborative learning, exchange of experiences and good practices and knowledge creation among all the stakeholders engaged in the fight against digital exclusion affecting vulnerable groups, ranging from policy makers to researchers and to practitioners carrying out projects and initiatives in this field in the 27 Member States and the UK.

The MEDICI **Knowledge Community** creates a space for stakeholders working in the Digital Inclusion field to access the good practice cases in the Interactive Catalogue; apply them in their practice; share experiences and create new ways of applying the practices and submit and review their own good practice cases of Digital Inclusion.

Anyone interested can become a member of the Knowledge Community by registering for free [here](#).

Members of the Community are offered the following opportunities and services:

- **Learn about initiatives showing evidence that they have made or can make a difference** in the fight against digital exclusion in Europe by browsing our **Digital Inclusion Atlas**, a [map and catalogue](#) of Good Practices in Digital Inclusion, in Europe and beyond.
- **Share their Digital Inclusion initiatives** with the members of the Community in the [Digital Inclusion Stories Space](#), if compliant with othe MEDICI selection criteria for good practices, they might become part of the MEDICI Map and Catalogue!
- **Engage in the events** organised locally and internationally by the community on Digital Inclusion challenges, led by key experts and practitioners in the field.
- **Share knowledge and experience** with peers, and discuss about challenges, pitfalls and lessons learnt in the Community [Forum](#).
- **Check and upload interesting news on Digital Inclusion** (news, documents, videos and podcasts) in our [What's new](#) page.
- **Benefit from our learning opportunities:** [MEDICI webinars repository](#); [Evidence Digests](#) on key Digital Inclusion issues, [Podcasts](#) on evaluation and replicability of good practices, [Videos](#) on key concepts emerging from good practices.

The two main channels of interaction with Community members are the Digital Inclusion Stories Space and the Learning activities and services, described more in-depth below:

### Digital Inclusion Stories Space (DISS)



The [DISS](#) enables members of the Community to share their own good practices and get inspiration from other members' projects and initiatives. It acts as an incubation area for projects that aspire to become part of the MEDICI Catalogue and map. The DISS also enables members of the Knowledge Community to review and **rate** how innovative, inspirational and useful the stories **showcased** are.

## Learning Activities and Services

The MEDICI Knowledge Community supports a wide range of knowledge provision, sharing, collaboration and learning and training activities, from experience sharing about the challenges, pitfalls and lessons learnt on digital inclusion in the MEDICI [Community Forum](#), to providing information on **Digital Inclusion** (news, documents, videos and podcasts) in MEDICI's [What's new](#) page, to a series of trans-national and local learning events including the [MEDICI webinar series](#) on Digital Inclusion challenges, led by key experts and practitioners in the field. Additional learning opportunities include:

- The [Evidence Digests](#), a series of five reports on best practices on Digital Inclusion, summarising the evidence behind these practices and the areas for improvement on key Digital Inclusion issues,
- [Podcasts](#) featuring discussions with leading experts on Digital Inclusion and some of our fantastic projects
- A collection of short and snappy animated [videos](#) on key concepts from the MEDICI catalogue on 'replication', 'evaluation' and 'standards of evidence' to help you engage in improving your evidence
- A [glossary of definitions](#) about evaluation and replication as well as general concepts related to digital inclusion.
- A collection of [external resources](#) (webinars, reports and websites) helpful to the knowledge community on evaluation and replication

Source: <https://digitalinclusion.eu/about-our-learning-opportunities/>

## User Needs Analysis: Design Thinking

There are many ways of finding out what your target user group needs are, including: surveys, focus groups, literature review. One of the most effective overall approaches to use is based on 'design thinking' – to make sure that users and their needs are placed at the heart of project design - and two specific tools – cultural probes (lifeworld analysis) and co-creation workshops - to gather and assess information on user needs.

### Design thinking

Design thinking applies a five-stage process to develop solutions to a 'presenting problem' in 'human-centric' ways, by focusing on what's most important from the perspective of 'users' and by applying 'out of the box' and 'disruptive' ideas to address the presenting problem.



- Empathise - this involves gaining an 'empathetic' understanding of the presenting problem, through consulting experts, users and stakeholders, with the emphasis on immersion in the physical environment – the location in which the digital inclusion project is planned - to gain a deeper personal understanding of the issues that affect vulnerable people.

- Define - this involves synthesising the information gathered in Stage 1 to define the problem statement in a 'human-centred manner' – in a digital inclusion project, this would focus on defining 'in what ways is our target group(s) excluded and how can these problems be solved?'
- Ideate - this involves 'thinking outside the box' to identify new solutions to the problem statement created in the preceding stage and looking for alternative ways of viewing the problem – in a digital inclusion project, this would involve collaborating with the target group and with experts and practitioners to think of creative ways to solve digital problems that affect them.
- Prototype - this involves creating a mock-up of the proposed solution to the problem, which can then be investigated by sharing with users and stakeholders.
- Test - this involves validating the prototype to assess its potential effectiveness, usability, and scalability, through action research experiments.

### **Cultural Probes (Lifeworld analysis)**

Cultural probes are used to create a deeper understanding of the context of the users and to map their needs within that context. With a cultural probe, participants record any information about their day-to-day activities or environment which they feel is important to them and which reflects their 'lived experience'.



Source: Mattelmäki 2006

Cultural probes can range from writing a diary, taking pictures, from using postcards to notebooks or cameras to take pictures of relevant moments of a user's everyday life. The idea is to capture the 'lived experience' of the user – for example getting vulnerable people to record a video of problems they face accessing e-services

In a number of the projects we've been involved in working with vulnerable groups, a particular form of cultural probe we have used is based on 'Lifeworld analysis'. Its objective is to record 'descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience' (Patton, 1990; Schutz and Luckmann, 1995). Lifeworld analysis aimed to answer the following questions: What does it feel like to be digitally excluded? What are the most difficult issues and problems vulnerable people face in trying to access online services? What are the main factors that create these problems? Lifeworld analysis aims to record this 'lived experience' in terms of five constructs:

- *Life-world*. This focuses on people's lived experience of digital exclusion.
- *Temporality*. This focuses on how digitally excluded people experience time, both in terms of their broader historical position (for example how does being a migrant in the 21st century affect access to digital tools?) and in an everyday sense, as part of their experience of 'lifeworld' (for example what events are important in shaping digital inclusion?)

- *Spatiality*. This focuses on how people make sense of the world through geographical structures and boundaries (for example, how does the way the neighbourhood is constructed shape peoples' access to digital tools?)
- *Embodiment*. This focuses on the body and the physical space in which the body operates. On the one hand, it refers to the capacities of the human body - for example how people with disabilities experience the internet. On the other, it refers to how people acquire 'embodied skills' - for example how vulnerable people are prevented from acquiring digital skills.
- *Inter-subjectivity*. This focuses on how the everyday, inter-subjective world is constituted - for example how lack of access to digital tools and services affects vulnerable peoples' social and civic participation.

Whatever the type of cultural probe used – diary, video, or even an interactive focus group – the collection of data would cover these five elements. Analysis of the results of the cultural probe will be very useful in subsequently identifying and listing the key needs of the participants in a digital inclusion project.

### **Co-creation workshop**

The aim of co-creation workshops is to involve the project users and other stakeholders directly as active collaborators in developing your project. These workshops are not just a mechanism for listening to their points of view. They are intended to involve users and stakeholders as equal partners in the design and delivery of a project. Co-creation workshops are normally used in three stages over the life cycle of a project:

- in the 'Empathise' stage – primarily to explore the needs of users and stakeholders
- In the 'Ideate' stage – developing 'out of the box' solutions to deliver the project
- In the 'Test' stage – implementing and evaluating how the project works.

There are many ways to design and run a co-creation workshop to explore and work with **user needs**. These include:

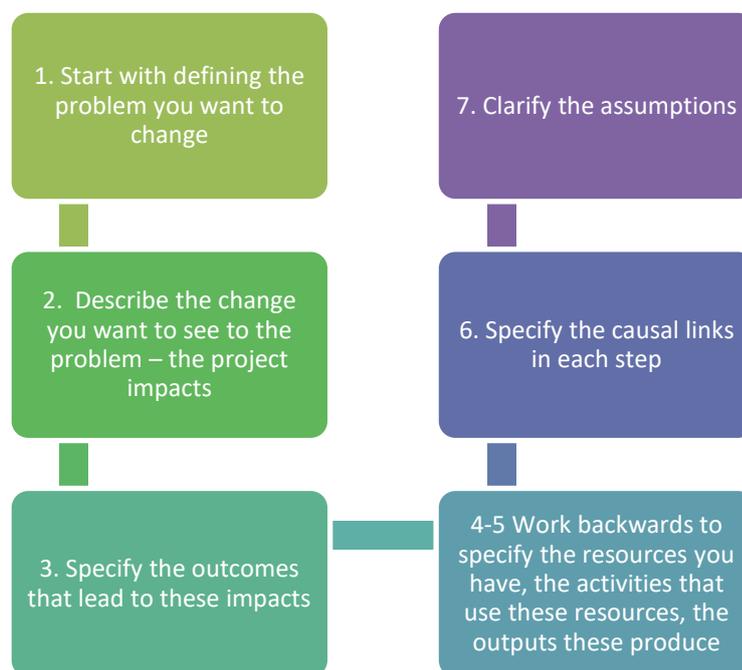
- Using post-it notes and flip-charts
- Presenting a visual story of ideas for the project that can then be explored together
- Getting participants to tell stories from their own life experience
- Taking a walkabout in a particular area of the community in which the project will operate and then discussing people's thoughts and observations.

Whatever tools are used, the format of the workshop would typically go like this:

- An introductory session
- A motivational session (what the problem the project addresses is and how it might be addressed)
- Icebreakers and short presentation round of participants
- Production session(s) & co-design activity
- Specification of challenges
- Mapping exercises – needs analysis
- Project Vision storyboard
- Feedback
- Wrap-up and next steps

### **Theory of Change**

This tool helps you convert the project vision into a roadmap for delivering the project. It's a way of presenting the project 'journey' – from the challenge it is presented with at the start of the journey to where it hopes to be at the end. Connecting the presenting challenge to the journey's end- the impacts and changes the project hopes to make to the existing problem - are: inputs (the resources available to deliver the project); activities (the actions carried out by the project); outputs (things produced by these activities); immediate outcomes, (changes in awareness and knowledge); intermediate outcomes (changes in behavior and structures). Underlying this 'change journey' are 'theories' (assumptions and hypotheses), for example a theory of what is causing the 'presenting problem'; a theory of what is needed to bring about the desired solution; assumptions that if we take Action 'X', this will produce Output 'Y', which will then lead to Outcome 'Z'.



The illustration below shows how to produce a Theory of Change for a digital inclusion project using a simple template filled in with 'post-it' notes.

<b>Presenting problem</b> What problem and underlying causes will you address?	<b>Inputs</b> What will you invest?	<b>Activities</b> What will you do?	<b>Outputs</b> What concrete 'things' will you produce?	<b>Outcomes</b> What immediate and intermediate changes will you affect?	<b>Impact</b> What is the long-term aim for your project?
<p>Young people are increasingly disengaged</p> <p>They need to be included in Europe's transition</p> <p>Current approaches don't work</p>	<p>funding for prototype development</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary team</p> <p>The lab as a 'scaffolded' blended innovation space</p>	<p>workshops run</p> <p>Design training programme</p> <p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Apps and other solutions developed by young people</p> <p>Lab design and implementation plan</p> <p>Development programme for local stakeholders</p> <p>Pilot results and sustainability plan</p>	<p>YP apply their talent to solve community problems</p> <p>Young people improve digital and social competencies</p> <p>Stakeholders improve skills in design thinking</p> <p>More effective youth services</p>	<p>reduced social exclusion of vulnerable young people</p>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>Assumptions</b> The community lab design achieves a holding environment	<b>Assumptions</b> We are able to engage disaffected young people	<b>Assumptions</b> Stakeholders are prepared to change their ways of working		<b>Assumptions</b>

### Pitfalls and how to survive them

- Don't assume MEDICI is the answer to all of your prayers. MEDICI provides a framework and tools to reach out to vulnerable people who have been failed by the digital economy and society. You'll need to do some hard work to make sure you understand your users' needs and to adapt the framework and tools to suit them
- Don't assume your user group will welcome the project with open arms. Vulnerable people are – understandably – suspicious of projects and typically have been let down before by projects that promise much but fail to deliver. It takes time to win the trust and commitment of marginalized people. You'll need to engage them as active co-collaborators in the project. It helps if you include within your resource group mentors, experts and creatives who have credibility with your user group and who can act as role models.
- Make sure the devices and platforms you choose to deliver the project fit with the devices and platforms your users routinely use on a day-to-day basis. For example, at risk young people are used to using Snapchat and WhatsApp rather than Facebook.
- The project is likely to fail unless it gets the commitment of existing networks and stakeholder groups. Unless you are in the enviable position of having access to significant funding to start the project from scratch, you'll need to get partners on board who have the resources you need – for example by offering existing premises to use as the location for a digital skills training project. Use a co-creation workshop to demonstrate your project's potential to stakeholders and raise their interest.

## Resources

Digital Inclusion Atlas: <https://digitalinclusion.eu/glossary-of-terms/>

Digital Inclusion Atlas: <https://digitalinclusion.eu/faqs/>

## Step 2: Designing your Digital Inclusion Project

### Primary Task of this Step

The Primary Task of Step 2 is to use the results of Step 1 – ‘Understanding the MEDICI Platform and Tools’ – to begin to design a digital inclusion project to suit your own needs and the needs of your users. In particular this Task aims to convert the overall project vision and Theory of Change developed in Step 1 into your own specific project design and implementation plan

### Guiding Principles

- The project should be user-driven and co-designed in collaboration with participating vulnerable people
- The project should clearly incorporate the specified needs of the user target groups
- The project should reflect the ‘lived experience’ of vulnerable people in the locations in which it is implemented
- The project should ideally incorporate a project of action research to enable participating people to apply what they have learned – for example new digital skills – in real life
- The project should include developmental activities that take participants out of their normal routine and allow them to expand their experience and horizons – for example using new digital skills in everyday life
- The project should be designed to reflect the profiles of the stakeholders that need to be involved and maximize their strengths and the resources they can bring to the table

### Checklist of Actions

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Identify the stakeholders and what they can bring                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Produce a categorisation of the user groups and how they are involved | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop an implementation plan for the project                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Review the project in collaboration with users and stakeholders       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Revise the project design and implementation plan                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Tools to help you design your own project

#### Stakeholder Mapping

A Stakeholder Map - or actor network map - is a tool to create an overview of all stakeholders who may have an interest or a role to play in the project. Examples cover:

- potential partners who could provide resources – e.g., premises to host a digital skills training programme
- networks of organisations/people who could help reach vulnerable people
- mentors, experts, creatives who could deliver relevant activities, like training

- funders

This tool helps identify who these stakeholders are; what resources they could bring to the project and the relationships between them. Stakeholder maps can be produced in a number of ways, but the most often used are either a Stakeholder Table or Network Map.

The **Stakeholder Table** shows:

**Names** of key potential stakeholders in the project

**Type** of stakeholder – e.g., NGO/civil society; civic authority; Business

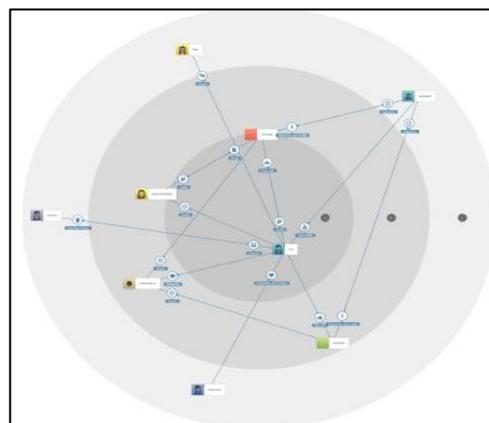
**Assets** – the resources they could bring to the project – e.g., funding; learning content; extra-curricular activities

**Role** – the potential role they could play in the project – e.g., contribution to a training programme; funding provider.

The **Network Map** shows a visual representation of the location in which the project will be delivered, with the key stakeholders situated within it, in approximate distance from each other.

Each type of stakeholder can be represented by a different colour and/or symbol.

Lines show how these different stakeholders are connected.



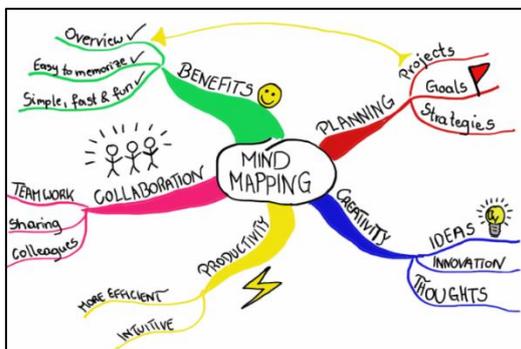
### Personas

A persona is a fictitious description of an ‘archetype’ person who represents a user or a stakeholder involved in a project. The aim is to provide a vivid representation of the user, so that the project can be designed in light of these representations. The persona can be described in just a short sentence but typically includes more detail, sometimes supported by visual content, like a photograph or cartoon. Typical elements that could be included in the persona are:

- Fictional name
- Personal information (e.g., age, gender, education, ethnicity, family status, location)
- Profile (e.g., their background, their use of digital technologies)
- Motivation for getting involved in the project
- Concerns and needs
- Likes / Dislikes

### Mind Map

Mind – or Concept – mapping is a graphical technique aimed at illustrating how the design and implementation plan of a project works through showing the relationships between concepts, actors and activities. Most mind mapping approaches start with the 'problem statement' at the centre of the map. The project design team then write ideas/solutions to the problem around this central statement, concentrating on 'thinking outside the box' to identify new solutions to the problem statement, and looking for alternative ways of viewing the problem. The ideas/solutions are then connected together using lines/curves. There are a number of software projects available to do this – some open source (e.g. [bubbl.us](http://bubbl.us); [www.mindmeister.com](http://www.mindmeister.com); <https://coggle.it/>)



The MindMap typically starts at the centre with the problem or solution (project). Brainstorming the problem then reveals the things that need to go into the design and implementation of the project – like products, benefits, resources – rather like in the Theory of Change. The mind map then shows the interconnections between these things.

Source: Mindmesiter.com

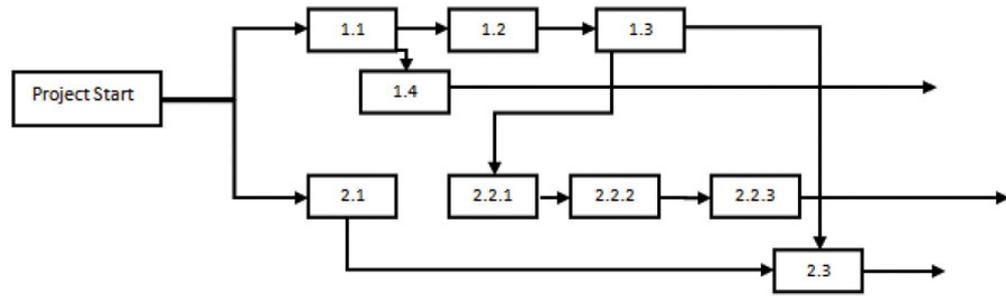
### Project Implementation Tools

Project implementation tools translate your project’s Theory of Change (Step 1) and Mind/Concept Map into an implementation plan that has a logic, a sequence of steps/activities and outputs and a timeline. Typical tools used are:

- Logic Network
- PERT chart
- GANNT chart

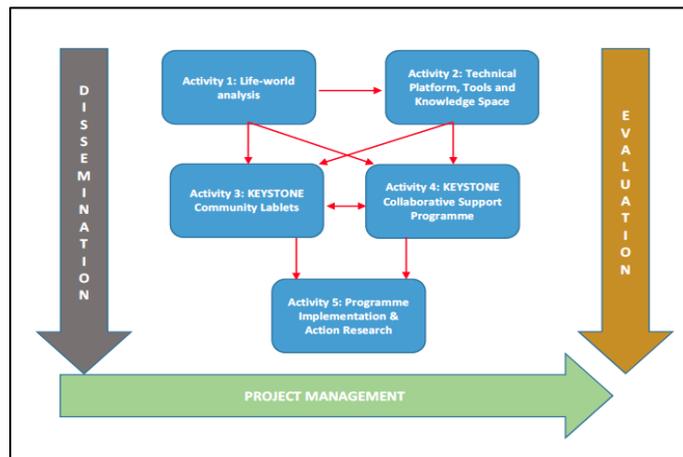
### Logic Network

A Logic Network indicates the sequence of activities in a project over time. It shows which activity logically precedes or follows another activity. It can be used to identify the milestones and critical path of a project. It will help you understand the dependencies in your project, timescale, and its workflow.



### PERT Chart

Like a Logic Network, PERT is a method for analysing the tasks involved in completing a given project, especially the relationships between tasks and their inter-dependencies. It shows which tasks need to be done first and which tasks are dependent on others.



### GANNT Chart

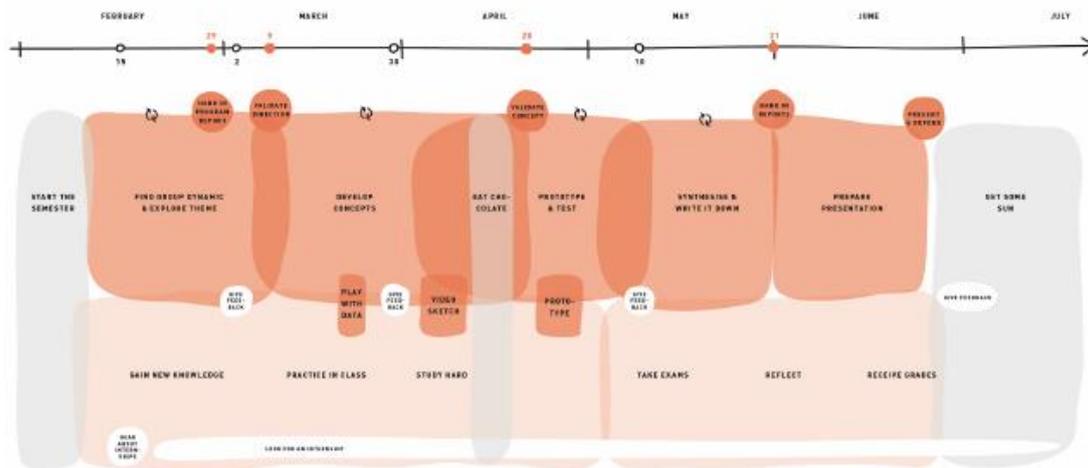
A Gantt chart is a project management bar chart that tracks tasks across time. It shows the phases, tasks, milestones and resources needed to deliver a project. The tasks are set out in linear format across the project timeframe from start to finish, with a start and end date shown for each task.

Work package (Task) - Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>1. Scoping and Set-up</b>										
1.1 Pilot Study Review										
1.2 Stakeholder motivation analysis										
1.3 Co-creation workshop										
<b>2. Lab and Programme Adaptation</b>										
2.1 Lab migration strategy and implementation plan										
2.2 YP Blended Learning Programme										
2.3 Stakeholder Workshop Programme										
2.4 Action Research design										
<b>3. Lab and Programme Validation</b>										
3.1 Run Blended Learning Programme										
3.2 Run Stakeholder Workshop Programme										
3.3 Action Research experiments										
<b>4. Evaluation</b>										
4.1 Evaluation design and Toolkit										
4.3 Evaluation implementation										
4.4 Evaluation Reporting										
<b>5. Scaling, Transferability and Sustainability</b>										
5.1 Sustainability co-creation workshop										
5.2 Scaling Plan										
<b>6. Reporting and Dissemination</b>										
6.1 Final Report										
6.2 Dissemination workshop										
<b>7. Project Management</b>										
7.1 Project Management Plan										
7.2 Project Monitoring										

### Storyboard/Journey Mapping

Storyboards represent the project ‘journey’ – as described conceptually in the Theory of Change outlined above in Step 1 – as a series of key actions the project participant takes as they progress through the project. They help to customize the overall process of the project to the individual needs of participants/users. You could develop different storyboards for each of the ‘Personas’ developed (see previous section) so you have a clear visual picture of how different types of user progress through the project.

Journey Mapping is a more detailed application of the storyboard approach. The map models the ‘user experience’ of a potential project participant so the project design can be customized to represent a step-by-step model of how different types of user experience the project. A journey map represents a sequence of events, the interaction between the user and the project, the user’s mood in each of the events delivered by the project and the ‘touchpoints’ – the moments or spaces in which the user and project interact - that support the interaction between the user and the services provided by the project. This step-by-step description is based on the user’s point of view. A journey map is a powerful tool for visualising the user experience. It helps the project designer to understand the context of users, to identify possible gaps in the services the project intends to provide, and a clear perspective on what potential project users are looking for and what they want to achieve.



Source: DesignscapesToolkit

The customer journey can be used in developing a new or adapting an existing project to ensure that different user needs are built into the project from a user perspective and identify possible opportunities for innovation of the project. In the example shown above, the journey map represents the student journey through a semester of a Masters course, including indications about the timing of each phase, the milestones and the characteristics of the activities. In a digital inclusion project, this journey map could model a user journey through a digital competences training course.

### Co-creation workshop

In Step 1 above we outlined how co-creation workshops can be used to involve the project users and other stakeholders directly as active collaborators in identifying user needs. Co-creation workshops are also useful for developing your digital inclusion project and adapting the good practice cases in the Catalogue to your needs. The workshop could be used to review and if necessary revise the project personas, storyboard, journey map and implementation plan.

### Pitfalls and how to survive them

- Over-ambition – digital inclusion projects are often highly resource-intensive that need equally high levels of engagement and commitment from potential users and key stakeholders. Make sure you factor the level of potential demand for your project and the potential contribution stakeholders can make into your project design and implementation plan.
- Relevance – no matter how well you capture the user experience, through using tools like personas and journey maps, projects rely for their success on the active engagement of vulnerable people. You can model their lived experience, but you won't recruit or retain them unless they see your project has relevance for their lives. Project design and implementation therefore needs to avoid too much conceptual thinking and focus instead on creating an 'active learning' experience that opens their horizons and opportunities. They need to take home skills they can use in real life.
- Awareness-raising – many projects fail because they are developed in a bubble. It's essential from the outset to engage users and stakeholders in the project design and

implementation plan. This means active outreach from the start. Even if you only have a sketch of the project, get it out there – through consultation workshops, social media, informal canvassing - so you can judge the potential level of support and commitment early on.

- Risk aversion – a design thinking approach means thinking outside the box, being creative, taking risks. A lot of projects aimed at vulnerable people are worthy, but are unexciting. Successful digital inclusion projects aim to stretch people by putting them in situations that challenge their ingenuity. Project design should reflect this. Don't be afraid to tap into the ideas of vulnerable people.

# Risk- taking case

**POWERCODERS** : <https://digitalinclusion.eu/digital-map/1221>

Website: [www.powercoders.org](http://www.powercoders.org)



Powercoders founder, Christian Hirsig, met two entrepreneurs during a trip to the USA in 2016: one was running a cooking school for refugees, one a coding academy for women. At that time, Europe was in the middle of the refugee crisis, and on the labour market side suffered from a lack of IT talents. By connecting the dots between these business experiences, the refugee situation in Europe, and the need for IT staff by the EU and Swiss labour market, Christian

developed the Powercoders idea.

The mission of Powercoders is to help displaced people regain their place in society and their independence by offering them training in the most sought-after skills so that they can achieve a professional profile suitable for IT companies and departments in Switzerland looking for talented, trained staff.

The Powercoders target groups are men and women of diverse backgrounds – the majority of whom have a refugee status - who are facing barriers to enter the labour market.

Participants are offered an intensive 3-month coding bootcamp – organised in cooperation with IT companies - where they learn the main programming languages (HTML, CSS and Javascript) along with soft skills - which are fundamental to achieve a successful professional career – and attend workshops on the local culture and work environment to facilitate their cultural integration in the Swiss society.

After the course, Powercoders offers participants a 6 to 12-month internship – accompanied by a job coach - in IT companies to validate the training they received and to further support their employability in Junior positions, Apprenticeship, or further studies at University supported by an IT part-time job, based on the participants’ profiles, attitudes, and expectations.

In order to extend the opportunity to as many participants as possible, the Powercoders courses are held in English. So far, Powercoders has trained more than 200 refugees across Switzerland (Lausanne and Zurich) and Italy (Milan and Turin), 90% of whom have started an internship and more than 60% of them is now working in the IT sector.

**Resources**

Example- theory of change: [https://digitalinclusion.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Planning\\_tools/Example%20Theories%20of%20Change\\_Project%20Oracle.pdf](https://digitalinclusion.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Planning_tools/Example%20Theories%20of%20Change_Project%20Oracle.pdf)

Innovation Process- steps [https://digitalinclusion.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Planning\\_tools/Innovation-Process-Steps.jpg.webp](https://digitalinclusion.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Planning_tools/Innovation-Process-Steps.jpg.webp)