Easy Digital Access+
Itinerary to Easy Inclusive Access to Education in the Digital Environment
Project number 2022-1-ES01-KA210-ADU-000082559

Co-funded by the European Union

# NATIONAL REPORT ON EASY INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT- EXPERT FEEDBACK

## Slovakia

This report, compiled by CEDA, outlines the pilot testing process for the EDA+ tools, Training Itinerary and Training Content. The conclusions of the report focus to explore the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups in accessing digital skills training, identify successful approaches, and propose recommendations for effective interventions.

Compiled in September 2024 by

# Table of Contents



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# Introduction

In today's increasingly digital world, access to basic digital skills has become a necessity for participation in society and the economy. The COVID-19 pandemic's accelerated digital transformation has highlighted the dual nature of digital technology in education. While it offers unprecedented opportunities for inclusion, it can also exacerbate existing inequalities, emphasizing the urgent need for digital inclusion initiatives globally.

However, disadvantaged groups, including long-term unemployed individuals with limited digital skills, adults struggling with digital literacy, seniors, young undergraduates, immigrants and/or ethnic minorities, often face barriers to acquiring these essential skills.

This report, compiled by CEDA, outlines the pilot testing process for the EDA+ tools, Training Itinerary and Training Content. These tools aim to facilitate inclusive access to education in the digital environment for disadvantaged groups. The conclusions of the report focus to explore the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups in accessing digital skills training, identify successful approaches, and propose recommendations for effective interventions.

# Pilot Testing Methodology

The pilot testing involved a multi-faceted approach to gather feedback and insights from various stakeholders, with main aim to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the developed resources were well-suited to the target audience:

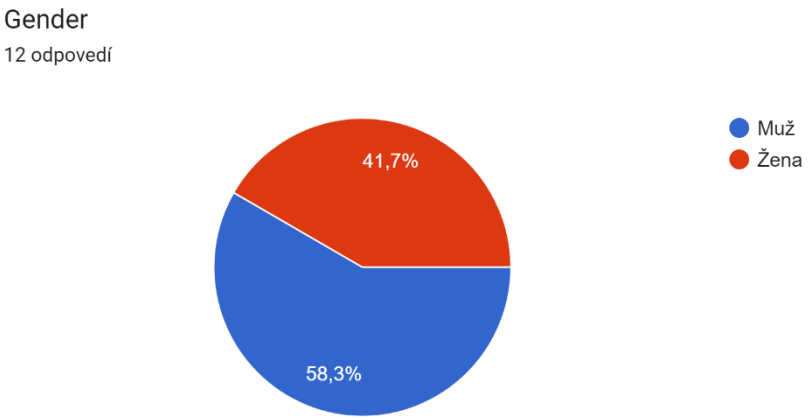
1. **Objectives:** CEDA conducted a pilot evaluation of the EDA+ tools, Training Itinerary and Training Content, to assess their efficacy in facilitating inclusive digital education for disadvantaged groups. Expert feedback was sought from adult education professionals, trainers, and relevant stakeholders with experience in methodological and practical preparation of training programs in the area of digital skills, regarding the tools' comprehensibility, usability, functionality, relevance, and overall effectiveness in meeting the specific needs of long-term unemployed individuals, adults with limited digital literacy, seniors, young undergraduates, immigrants, and ethnic minorities.
2. **Expert Review:** Stakeholders, including trainers, were introduced to the EDA+ project and its developed tools during several group and individual face-to-face meetings. Trainers were then tasked with incorporating these tools into their digital training sessions and providing feedback on their usability, effectiveness, and relevance to their target learners. This kind of approach - targeting professionals rather than students - is seen as an added value of the project. This input, in conjunction with the testing conducted by ADESOS and Rovnovazka with the end users- disadvantaged groups, provides a comprehensive perspective on the

tools' effectiveness. This feedback is also valuable for the Good Practice section, benefiting practitioners and organizations developing similar courses. Additionally, it serves as a foundational resource for future, larger projects, enhancing the project's multiplier effect.

3. **Participant Evaluation:** A total of 12 experts participated in the pilot testing and provided feedback through an online questionnaire (Annex 1). The online questionnaire was designed to collect feedback from adult education professionals on the essential digital skills needed by disadvantaged groups. The primary goal was to identify areas where digital skills training for these groups could be improved. The experiences and opinions of the participants in the pilot testing helped to assess the content of the proposed curriculum and learning content developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ project Easy Digital Access+ and to define the learning needs of disadvantaged groups in the field of basic digital skills.

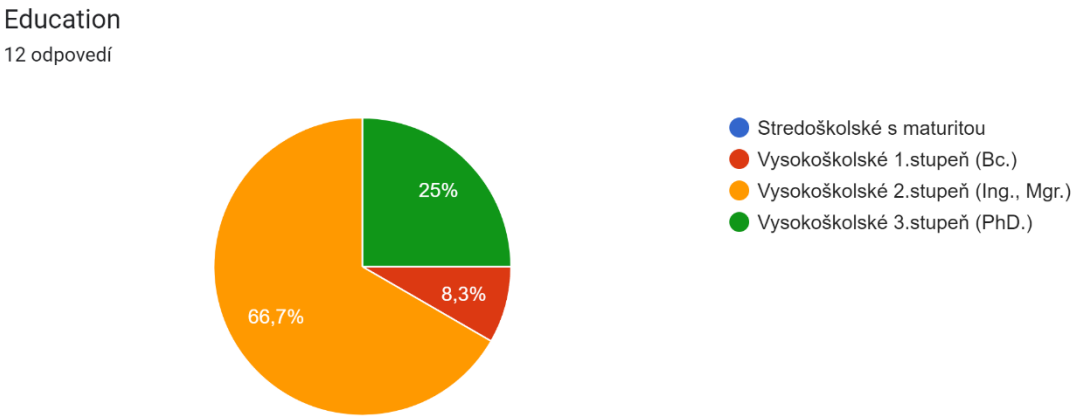
# Analysis of the responses from the experts

## General profile of the respondent



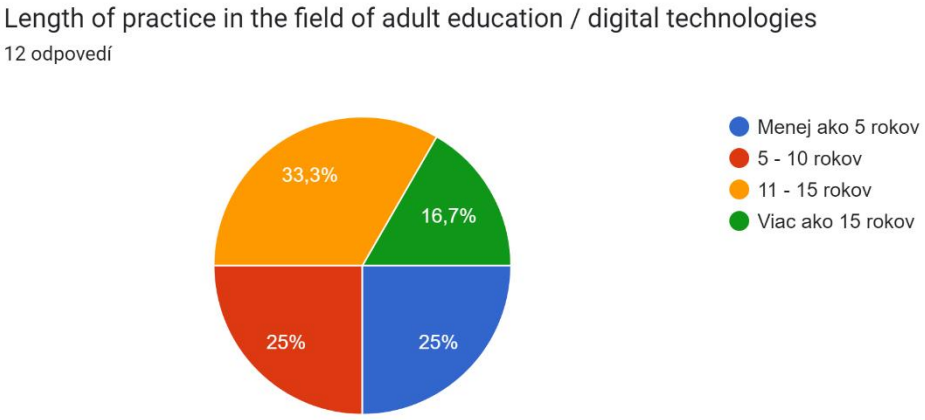

- Male: 7
- Female:5

**Education**




- Secondary or High school with graduation: 0
- University 1st degree (Bc.): 1
- University 2nd degree (Master studies): 8
- University 3rd degree (PhD.): 3

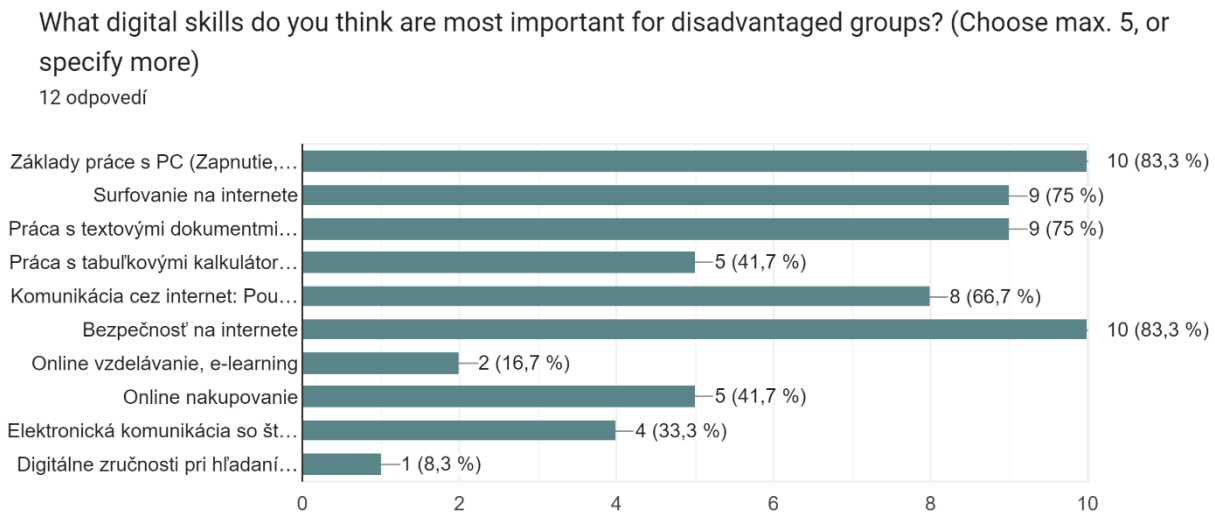
**Length of experience in adult education / digital technologies**




- Less than 5 years: 3
- 5 - 10 years: 3
- 11 - 15 years: 4
- More than 15 years: 2

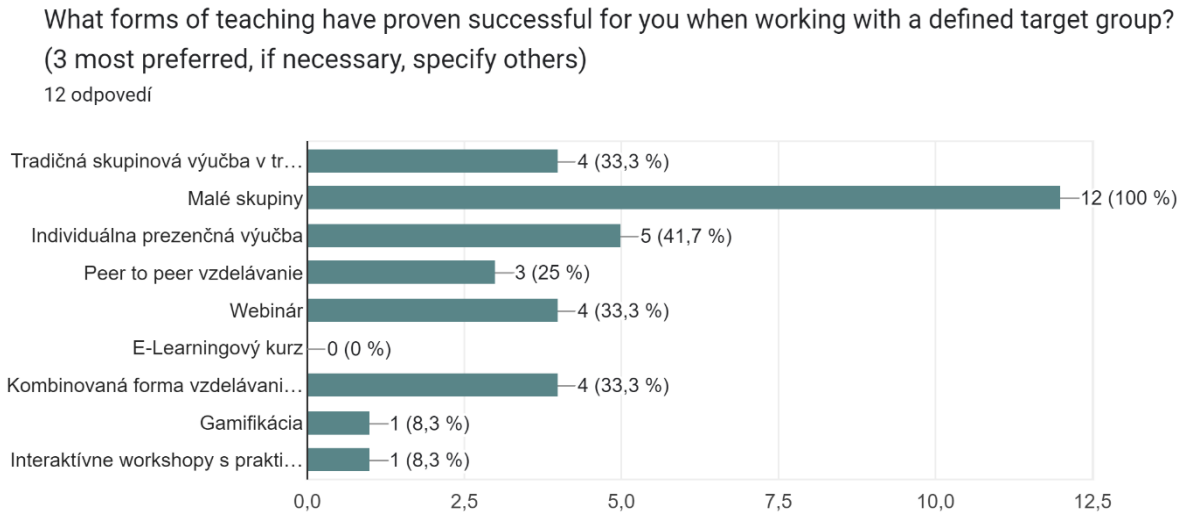
## Educational needs in the field of basic digital skills

*The main objective of this section was to obtain an expert opinion of specific areas in which training programmes for the development of basic digital skills should be focused on disadvantaged groups.*




Experts rated the following digital skills as the most important for disadvantaged groups:

- Basics of working with a PC (on, switching off, basic operating system control, mouse and keyboard use): 10
- Surfing on the Internet: 9
- Work with text documents (MS Word): 9
- Work with spreadsheet calculators (MS Excel): 9
- Communication over the Internet: Using e-mail, participating in video calls, using social networks: 6
- Security on the Internet: 10




Small groups were identified as the most successful teaching method for disadvantaged groups, followed by individual attendance learning. The traditional group classroom learning, Webinar and Blended learning each received the same rating: 4.

- Traditional group classroom learning: 4
- Small groups: 12
- Individual attendance learning: 5
- Peer to peer: 3
- Webinar: 4
- E-Learning course: 0
- Blended learning (distance and attendance form): 4
- Others: Gamification, Interactive workshops with practical demonstrations.

**In your opinion, what are the main barriers that limit the access of disadvantaged groups to education in the field of digital skills?**

Several barriers were identified that limit disadvantaged groups' access to digital skills education, including:

- Insufficient provision of information about educational opportunities, or information is available only in places where members of disadvantaged groups do not have access;
- A shortage of experts and educators in this field;
- Financial and time requirements;
- Restrictions on the part of members of disadvantaged groups themselves (language barrier, lack of motivation to learn);
- Ethnic, cultural and linguistic barriers;
- Standard access to a PC and the Internet;

- Barriers vary depending on the target group. For example, in the case of the long-term unemployed, it is often passivity on the part of individuals to acquire new knowledge, loss of motivation, financial reasons (travel costs to the course location and other related costs);
- Low non-digital skills and passivity;
- Access to hardware;
- From the students' point of view: Financial restrictions (costs of PCs, smart devices, course costs), time constraints (e.g. stay-at-home mothers), poor infrastructure (internet access), weak motivation to learn. From the point of view of organizations: Lack of educational programs in the field of digital skills development specific to the target group, lack of qualified lecturers;
- Lack of time Fear of new technologies Lack of equipment or internet connection Lack of motivation;
- Social and economic factors - low household income, lack of basic education Health restrictions for participation in face-to-face courses, especially in the senior group. Geographical factors - distance from the place of teaching;
- Lack of motivation, financial reasons;
- Insufficient digital infrastructure in students' homes.

**In what ways can we innovate adult education to meet the current needs of the labour market and society?**

Experts suggested a number of ways to innovate adult education to meet the current needs of the labour market and society, including:

- By focusing on the effectiveness and use of skills in real life (by following trends in the field of digital education; by demonstrating the importance of education in the given field also with concrete examples from life; by choosing a more individual approach to teaching);
- By providing access to the most modern technological equipment in the field of digital education for all target groups;
- Ensuring continuous education also for teachers;
- Functionally and content-wise take into account the current situation on the labour market and in society, take into account the dynamics of the world, the requirements of the labour market and the development of economic sectors;
- Precisely target training to the employer's requirements, SAP, Excel;
- The use of a distance form of education, as long as the profile of the target group allows it. Involvement of students in real projects in which they can test their newly acquired skills. Adapting courses to the specific needs of students;
- More individual approach to each of the student;
- Involvement of AI taking into account the abilities of the group and directly with examples of its use for solving specific problems;
- Training of lecturers: Providing professional training to lecturers who work with disadvantaged groups. Cooperation with community organizations Using distance forms of courses, which will increase the availability of education even for people in more remote

regions, who would otherwise not be able to travel to face-to-face courses for various reasons (financial, time, health...). Use of modern forms of education: for example, gamification, blended learning, eLearning, adaptive educational platforms;

- Personalized education according to the individual needs of groups/individuals, more flexible forms of education with regard to the level of digital skills - webinars, e-learning, blended learning. You should also focus on the practical skills needed to increase your chances of finding a job. The implementation of innovations requires close cooperation between educational institutions, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Cooperation with labour offices, employers;
- Monitoring trends in the labour market.

**What technologies and tools do you most often use when teaching digital skills?**

The experts mentioned a variety of technologies and tools that they use to teach digital skills, including:

- Computers, laptops, and smartphones are the most commonly used devices for teaching digital skills;
- Projectors, interactive whiteboards, and flipcharts are also frequently used to deliver presentations and visual aids;
- Digital tools such as Canva, Quizlet, Genially, Linoit, Clipchamp, and Bamboozle can be used to create interactive and engaging learning experiences;
- Learning Management Systems (LMS) can be used to deliver online courses and track student progress.

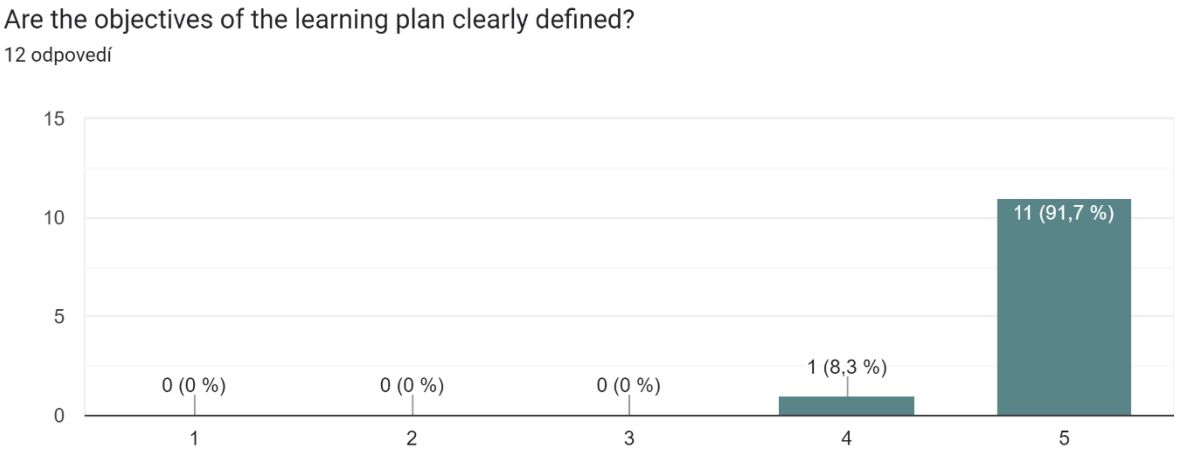
Here's a table summarizing the technologies and tools used by the experts:

| Category | Technologies and Tools |
|---|---|
| Devices | Computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets |
| Visual Aids | Projectors, interactive whiteboards, flipcharts |
| Digital Tools | Canva, Quizlet, Genially, Linoit, Clipchamp, Bamboozle |
| Learning Management Systems | Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas…. |

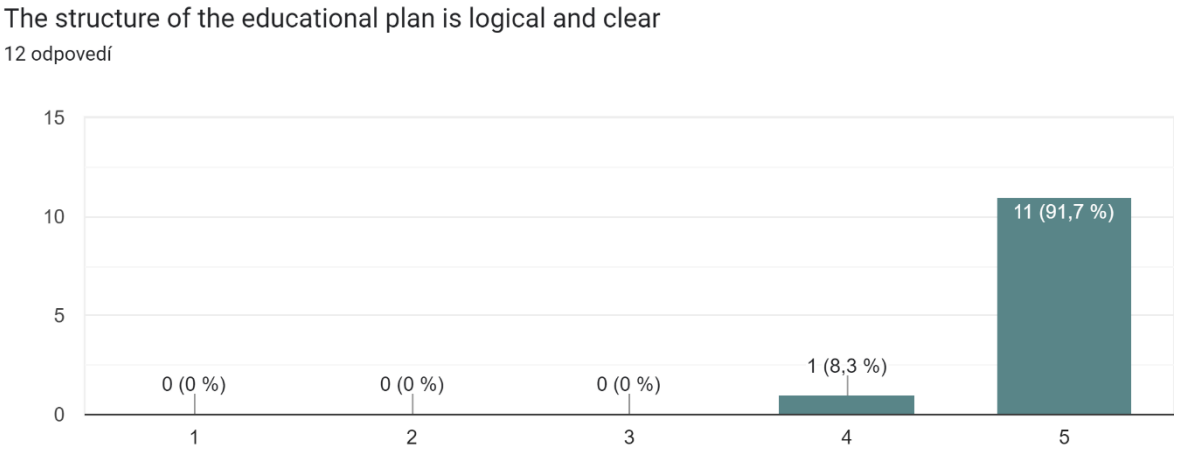
## Results of the EDA+ project

*In this section, the expert assessed the content of the proposed resources developed within the Erasmus+ project Easy Digital Access+: the training itinerary and training content.*

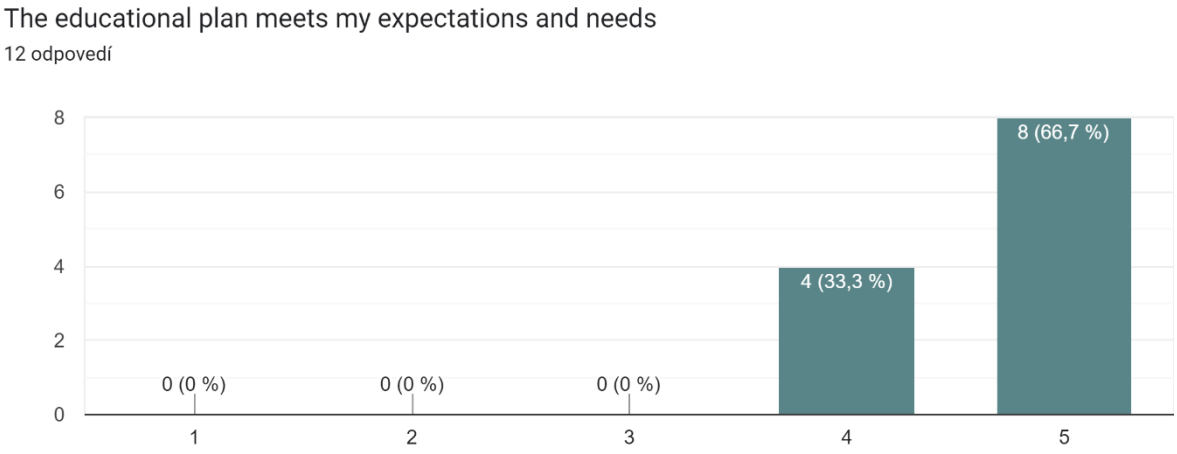
### EDA+ educational plan




- Completely agree: 11
- Agree: 1

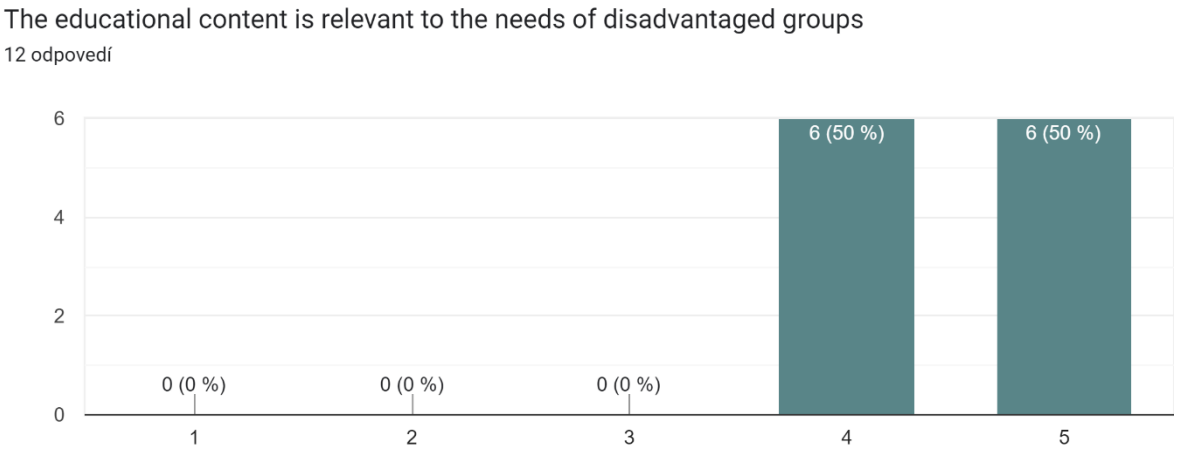


- Completely agree: 11
- Agree: 1




- Completely agree: 8
- Agree: 4

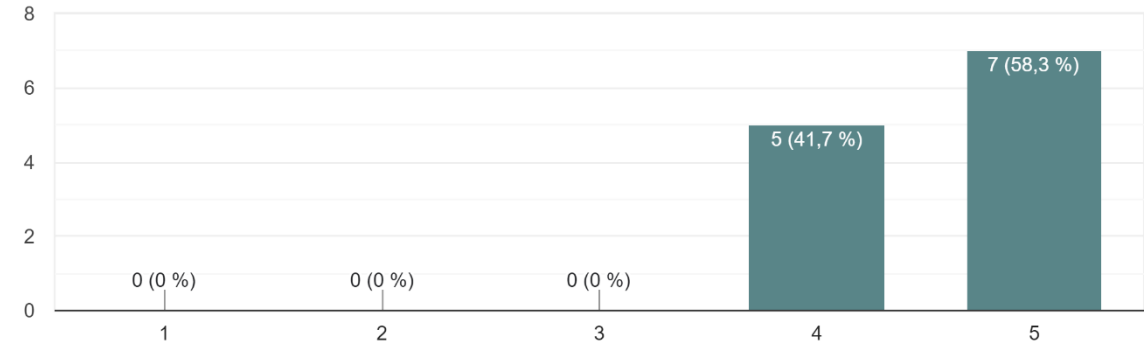
## EDA+ Training Content




- Completely agree: 6
- Agree: 6

The educational content covers a sufficiently wide spectrum of basic digital skills

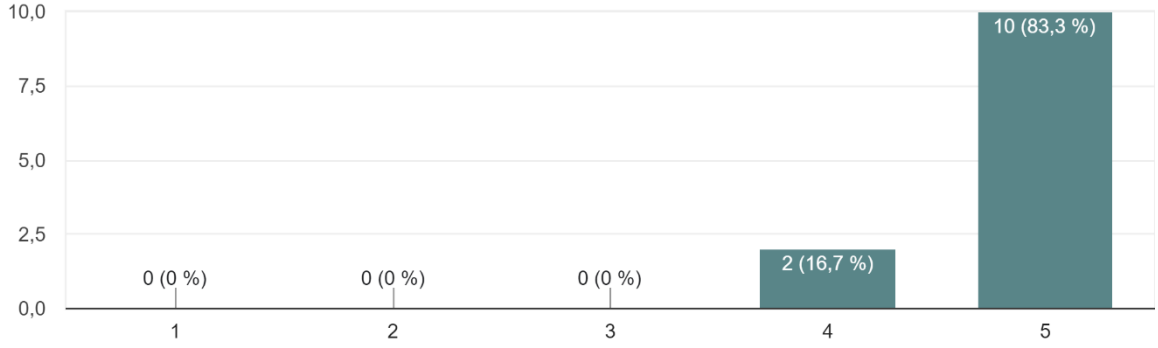
12 odpovedí




- Completely agree: 7
- Agree: 5

The topics are presented in a logical order and follow each other

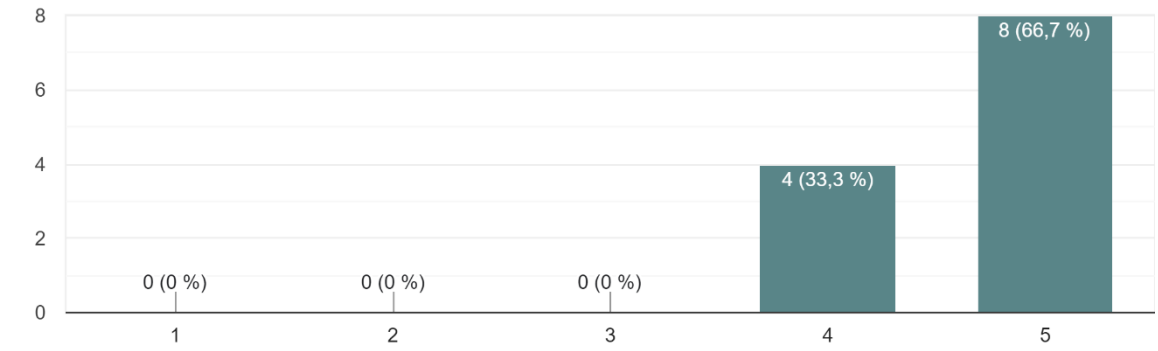
12 odpovedí




- Completely agree: 10
- Agree: 2

The content is presented in clear and understandable language

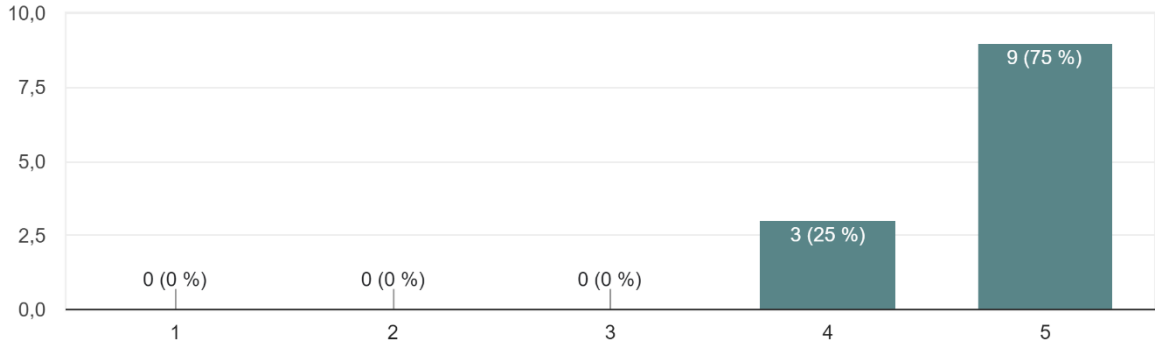
12 odpovedí




- Completely agree: 8
- Agree: 4

The educational content is flexible and can be adapted to the different needs and levels of disadvantaged groups

12 odpovedí




- Completely agree: 9
- Agree: 3

**Based on expert assessments of the EDA+ tools, the following key findings emerged:**

- **Usability:** The tools were generally user-friendly and intuitive to navigate.
- **Relevance:** The content of the tools was considered highly relevant and appropriate for the target audience.
- **Adaptability:** The tools demonstrated flexibility in adapting to various training contexts and learner needs.
- **Impact:** Participants reported significant improvements in their digital skills and confidence after completing training programs using the EDA+ tools.
- **Areas for Improvement:** While overall positive, there were minor suggestions for adjustments to further enhance the tools' effectiveness and inclusivity.

## General questions

### What other topics would you recommend being included in the educational content?

- Use of digital technologies when looking for a job (creating a resume, searching for job offers on portals such as Profesia.sk, LinkedIn);
- Media education, Multicultural education;
- More tasks with a sample solution;
- Using online tools for productivity - for example Google Docs Using mobile devices, smartphones;
- Use of AI in everyday life;
- Use of digital skills when looking for work, basic skills in editing graphic files, basic rules of communication and safety in cyberspace;
- Digital security and protection of personal data - passwords, phishing, detection of attacks and protection against them. Use of smart technologies in households;
- A special module dedicated exclusively to the use of smartphones. Installation of basic applications on smartphones. Registration and login processes on online portals.

### What areas would you recommend to improve / expand?

- General knowledge about computers, the Internet and the digital environment - to add basic information about working with touch-screen devices (tablets, smartphones), as they are more common today and initially using them can be problematic for people who have not encountered them before, e.g. seniors - include basic security rules in the social media section (restrictions on who can see posts/photos/videos/basic user information, etc.);
- Personality development;
- Add a video solution to problematic tasks;

- Basic PC skills should be described in more detail. I would recommend focusing more on security issues, especially privacy settings on social networks, cyber security when communicating on the Internet in general, security during payment transactions, etc.;
- Communication with the public administration;
- An individual approach must be chosen: Each target group has a different pace of learning and needs different support. In general, a combination of individual approach and small groups has worked well for me when working with adults with inclusion difficulties. Individual lessons enabled targeted work on the specific problems of each student, while small groups encouraged mutual cooperation and exchange of experiences. Project-based teaching, where students could learn the practical skills needed to find a job, also proved to be very effective. Flexibility and patience also played an important role, as each student has a different pace of learning and needs an individual approach;
- Practicing the use of acquired skills in a real environment - when communicating with family, friends, authorities. Practical use of smart technologies in households;
- Safe behaviour in cyberspace.

# Conclusions

The pilot testing of the EDA+ tools has demonstrated their potential to improve access to education in the digital environment for disadvantaged groups. By addressing the identified areas for improvement and promoting wider adoption, these tools can play a significant role in bridging the digital divide and fostering social inclusion.

This analysis of expert insights reveals the digital skill needs of disadvantaged groups and how educational programs can be improved to address them:

**Key Digital Skills**

- Basic computer operation (PC on/off, basic OS control, mouse/keyboard usage)
- Internet navigation (surfing the web)
- Document creation and editing (MS Word)
- Spreadsheets (MS Excel)
- Online communication (email, video calls, social networks)
- Internet security

**Successful Teaching Methods**

- Small group learning is the most effective approach for disadvantaged learners.
- Individualized learning also received positive feedback.

- Traditional classroom setups, webinars, and blended learning received lower ratings (but can be effective)

**Barriers to Access**

- Lack of awareness about available educational opportunities
- Shortage of qualified educators and experts
- Financial and time constraints
- Learner limitations (language barriers, low motivation)
- Cultural and linguistic challenges
- Limited access to computers and internet connectivity
- Socioeconomic factors (low income, lack of education, health issues)
- Geographical limitations

**Innovations in Adult Education**

- **Focus on Practical Application**: Connect skills to real-life scenarios and career advancement.
- **Modern Technologies**: Provide access to up-to-date equipment for all learners.
- **Continuous Development**: Ensure ongoing training programs for educators.
- **Personalized Learning**: Tailor programs to specific needs and skill levels.
- **Distance Learning Options**: Offer flexible learning opportunities for those facing geographical or time constraints.
- **Interactive Methods**: Utilize gamification, blended learning, and eLearning platforms.
- **Collaboration**: Partner with businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

**Technologies and Tools**

- Standard devices (computers, laptops, smartphones) are essential.
- Projectors, whiteboards, and flipcharts are helpful for presentations.
- Digital tools (Canva, Quizlet, Genially, etc.)
- Learning Management Systems (LMS) can facilitate online courses and track progress.

**Recommendations for Educational Content**

- **New Topics:**
    - Job skills: resume creation, online job search (Profesia.sk, LinkedIn)
    - Digital literacy: media and multicultural education, cybersecurity, AI in everyday life
    - Mobile technology: smartphone/tablet basics (apps, registration)
    - Productivity tools: online tools for work (e.g., Google Docs)
- **Improved Existing Topics:**

- Expand basic computer knowledge to include touch-screen devices (tablets & smartphones)
- Address internet safety and security issues (social media privacy, cybersecurity)
- Communication and daily life: integrate practicing acquired skills in real-world scenarios (communication with family/friends/authorities, using smart technologies at home)
- Teaching methods: personalize learning (individual and small groups), utilize project-based learning for practical job skills, provide additional resources (video solutions)

## Overall, a comprehensive curriculum is needed to empower disadvantaged groups with:

- Job-seeking skills for better employability
- Digital literacy for safe and informed online interaction
- Mobile technology skills for leveraging the convenience and functionality of smartphones and tablets
- Practical application of learned skills in real-world situations
- Flexible and adaptable teaching methods to cater to diverse learners

By implementing these recommendations, educational programs can bridge the digital divide and equip disadvantaged groups with the skills they need to fully participate in the digital age.

## Based on the pilot testing results, the following general recommendations are made:

1. **Continued Refinement:** The EDA+ tools should be refined based on the feedback received during the pilot testing.
2. **Wider Dissemination:** To maximize impact, the tools should be made readily available to a wider range of adult education providers and trainers, particularly those working with disadvantaged populations.
3. **Support and Training:** Additional support and training should be provided to educators using the EDA+ tools.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess the impact of the tools on learner outcomes.
5. **New opportunities for enhancing the results:** The knowledge and resources gained from this small-scale partnership project should be used to create larger-scale initiatives that can extend the reach and benefits of the EDA+ tools.