

## POLAND

# Social inclusion

### Location

Janów

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 10 394

EAFRD 6 614

National/regional 3 780

### Project duration

2017 – 2018

### Project promoter

LAG Northern Jura Partnership Association

### Contact

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### Website

[www.jura-ppj.pl](http://www.jura-ppj.pl)

A LAG organised a series of tailored workshops to combat digital exclusion among people over 50 years old.

## Summary

A local action group organised a series of 3-day workshops in nine municipalities for residents with limited computer skills who are over 50 years old. The workshops were conducted by a professional trainer. After passing a competency test and committing to 100% attendance at the workshops the participants received tablets and keyboards to continue practising their skills.



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These workshops were organised in response to the identified need to develop computer skills among inhabitants aged over 50 in the LAG area. The project promoter is the LAG Northern Jura Partnership Association.

## Results

90 people over 50 years old acquired, or improved their computer skills.

Participants learned how to carry out everyday activities, such as finding information on the web, searching for job offers, making electronic payments and online purchases or sending e-mails.

The new digital competences helped to improve the participants' quality of life and contributed to building social capital in the LAG area.

The project is an example of good practice that other entities can look to when organising similar initiatives for digital education, regardless of the target age group.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The computer workshops perfectly met the expectations of digitally excluded people aged over 50, a need diagnosed as part of the Community-Led Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the years 2014-2020.
- ❑ The project succeeded in overcoming fear new technologies and modern electronic forms of communication. Older people not only acquired knowledge but were also provided with equipment, thus removing another major barrier.
- ❑ Participation by local organisations in the project allowed for increased social activity, enhancing possibilities for mutual motivation among participants to undertake social initiatives. This is leading to the promotion of social integration with the aim of systematically strengthening and building social capital.
- ❑ The project has inspired local leaders to undertake similar activities, strengthening not only the digital competences of participants of various age groups, but above all building social capital.

### Context

People over 50 years old, especially in this territory's rural areas, have very limited knowledge of how to use computers and access the internet. This causes a significant number of problems in their daily life as they cannot take advantage of simple online services, e.g. to make online payments, shop online, or access various sources of knowledge and information. People who are not up to speed with technological progress are often afraid to use a computer and they often don't have the financial means to purchase one.

The PPJ Local Action Group (LAG) organised a tailored digital training programme to address the needs of this specific age group giving them the opportunity to participate in group training with peers who face the same challenges.

### Objectives

The project aimed to support digitally excluded people over 50 years old in rural areas to gain basic computer skills.

The workshops were held in nine partner municipalities, and aimed to raise awareness amongst local communities of the need to offer digital training to children and young people in addition to those over 50 years old. It is hoped that the workshops provide a successful example of how such training could be organised.

### Activities

The project enabled people with limited computer skills to overcome their barriers and fears related to the use of computers and supported them in taking the first steps towards improving their skills. The training was organised in each partner municipality in groups of 10, so that accessibility would not be a problem.

As a first step, PPJ LAG called upon an experienced trainer to work with the staff of the LAG on developing the thematic content of the workshops. The trainer then developed the training material in the form of a presentation, which was subject to approval by the LAG.

90 tablets with keyboards were purchased through a competitive bid process. These were to be used as training material and then loaned out to the participants. The choice of this training format was a deliberate one: enabling participants to continue practicing and developing their skills. However, in order to keep the tablet, participants were obliged to pass the competency test and to have attended all the training sessions.

The schedule for the workshops was established for each of the nine partner municipalities and the rooms were booked. The offer was advertised via announcements on the website of the LAG, through social media and the websites of the municipalities. The main tools to reach the target group, given the nature of the training need, were the municipal and village notice boards in each area.



A list of participants was established and 27 training sessions were delivered. A cycle of three workshops, each lasting two hours, was planned for each group of 10 people. The small number of people participating in each group enabled the trainer to better understand the specific needs of each individual participant. During the last workshop, participants took the competency test.

Each participant received a printout with information on how to use the keyboard, a list of keyboard shortcuts and basic functions. During the classes, participants learned how to browse, they received information about advertising, social media, shopping and employment portals. They were made aware of the functionalities of the tablets, as well as of the anti-virus protection. They also set up e-mail accounts, learned how to send e-mails, and discussed how to make electronic payments or shop online. Information was made available on an ongoing basis during and after the project through the LAG website.

### Main Results

#### Direct benefits :

The project allowed 90 people over 50 years old to acquire, or to improve their computer skills.

The participants learned how to carry out simple, everyday activities such as finding information on the web, searching for job offers, making electronic payments and online purchases or sending e-mails.

Gaining new digital competences has definitely improved the quality of life of the participants. In addition, thanks to the tablet they earned, the workshop participants have the opportunity to continue developing their skills.

Workshop participants improved their quality of life, "ceased to be afraid" of new technologies, touch screens, electronic banking, electronic mail, etc. They overcame the limitations of using a computer, tablet or even tactile mobile phones. They learned how to use electronic mail, to send mail, pay bills electronically, use available applications for communication, make online purchases, track events around the world, etc.

### Networking value:

- The workshops were organised in public libraries and local cultural centres, which provided an opportunity to present the scope of these institutions and an invitation to use their facilities after the end of the project. Many people taking part were not aware of the organisations represented by the workshop participants. Participants learned first of all about the functioning of the PPJ LAG. Many of the workshop participants have since been in contact with the LAG office asking about subsequent projects and declaring their willingness to participate.



- The beneficiaries of the project included people holding social functions: a village leader, a municipal councillor, the chairman of a municipal council; members of the local Village Housewives' Clubs (koło gospodyń wiejskich KGW), members of the University of the Third Age, members of a folk singing group, people running agritourism farms, firefighters and other residents and pensioners, members of parish choirs, orchestras, brass bands, seniors clubs, retired teachers, farmers and people with disabilities.
- Thanks to the project, participants representing different environments had the opportunity to exchange interests and experiences gained from their previous activities in their organisations and environments. They could learn not only basic computer skills, but thanks to mutual cooperation, have been helped to develop social competences, have the opportunity and pleasure to meet in a new circle, get to know each other, make friends and contacts that continue after project completion.

### Transferability:

The project is an example of good practice as it can encourage other entities to organise similar initiatives for digital education addressed to different age groups.

The project has already become an inspiration for one of the non-governmental organisations operating in the LAG area. The NGO is in the process of delivering digital workshops for children and young people. Their programme will range from an introduction to the basics of coding through to the use of innovative robots.

### Synergies with other EU policies :

The project implemented by the PPJ LAG was co-financed under sub-measure 19.2 of the Rural Development Program for 2014-2020.

The project has contributed to reaching the objectives of the cohesion policy for 2014-2020. It has increased the availability, use and quality of information and communication technologies, by investing in education, acquisition of skills and lifelong learning.

*"I will no longer have to be ashamed when dealing with my grandchildren"*

Participant

### Additional sources of information

[www.facebook.com/ppjianow/notifications/](http://www.facebook.com/ppjianow/notifications/)

\*This project has been categorised under 'Social Inclusion' by the nominating National Rural Network