

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	KENTRO MERIMNAS OIKOGENEIAS KAI PAIDIOU (KMOP)
PIC number:	PIC 969224486
Project name and acronym:	[An intergenerational active debate on how countering disinformation to empower citizens] – [MEDIWISE]

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP12		
Event name:	Local Event in Greece "Intergenerational Dialogue and fake news"		
Type:	Mutual learning		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Greece, Athens		
Date(s):	3 rd April 2024		
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.mediawise-project.eu/		
Participants			
Female:	30		
Male:	10		
Non-binary:			
From country Greece:	40		
...			
Total number of participants:	40	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>The event was organized with 40 participants, including 17 young people and 23 older adults (65+), at the "Open Centre for the Protection of the Elderly (OCPE)" in Piraeus, Attica Region, specifically at OCPE-D1. The event included interactive sessions where younger participants guided older adults in identifying fake news. Participants were divided into small groups to facilitate intergenerational interaction, exchange thoughts and ideas about fake news as well as find common ways to tackle disinformation.</p>			
Agenda:			

09:30–10:00	Registration	
10:00–10:30	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcoming; - About MEDIAWISE/event; - Structure of the event. 	
10:30–11:30	Greek disinformation and fake news landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic definitions; - Current situation in Greece; - Recent examples of fake news. 	
11:30–11:45	Break	
11:45–12:45	<i>Interactive session 1 (1 young people per 1 person 65+)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Case study analysis;</i> 	
12:45 – 13:45	Interactive session 2 (1 young people per 1 person 65+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fake news game 	
13:45-14:15	Open discussion session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific needs and ideas; - Recommendations; 	
14:15 – 14:45	Conclusions	

The main attempt was to realise interactive sessions that would engage both groups and via their social interaction would lead to a better understanding for the topic of fake news. Besides the initial speeches that were organised in the beginning of the event the remaining components of the agenda were interactive sessions intermingling the two target groups. The envisaged interactive sessions were the following: (a) Interactive session 1 “Setting the criteria to identify fake articles”, (b) interactive session 2 “Deem fakes: Online game to identify fake videos” and (c) Open discussion session. For the successful implementation of the first two specific materials were prepared, while also a meeting with the young people was realised to inform them and coordinate the realisation of the interactive sessions prior to the local event. The prepared material entailed titles, pictures and a brief paragraph from fake news that could be found on the Greek media (blogspots, news platforms, social media) with a prompt question below the article asking if the news were true or not. In total, ten (10) such articles were identified and prepared for the interactive session. In the beginning of the document which included the fake news, a set of criteria were presented regarding the way that fake news can be identified. Indicatively, the criteria concerned the use of capital letters in the title; the prompt for sharing/spreading news (“Send this to X number of friends to win a coupon”); cross-checking the author/publisher; being cautious when incredible or vague claims were made, and also when emotional discourse was utilised. Similarly, at the end of the same document practical instructions were adapted from existing debunking platforms in Greece such as [“Ellinika Hoaxes”](#). Additionally, a second piece of material was also prepared which presented a table with “usually more credible” and “usually less credible” news platforms and an additional table which presented debunking platforms in Greece. Lastly, for interactive session 2 an online game that was prepared for a fake news exhibition ([“Fakeless”](#)) under the auspices of the Goethe Institute Athens was utilised. The online game “ORIGINAL OR NOT?” presented real and fake videos to help the participants identify deepfakes via specific ques that were connected to the underlying technology.

During the implementation of the sessions the participants were divided into smaller groups of 3-5 persons with at least one of the participants being a young individual. In this manner, it was possible to ensure that all older adult individuals were able to interact with young people and vice versa. Young participants provided guidance to the older participants by supporting them in identifying fake news based on the criteria that were previously set within the provided document. Similar to this, the second interactive session also had a common structure, with younger individuals acting in a way like “mentors” for the target group of 65+. In the end of each session all participants were able to share their stories, opinions, and thoughts for both the process and the general topic. The two interactive sessions facilitated the dialogue that took place during the last interactive phase of the local event. Due to the fact that participants had already met each other in smaller groups and had shared their ideas openly based on the provided material, they were able to engage in discussions more actively.

Results

The event revealed valuable insights into the experiences and needs of both older adults and younger participants regarding digital literacy and fake news. Older adults with limited internet use felt more secure but were less aware of digital threats, often lacking access to technological devices. In contrast, some older adults who are more familiar with using the internet and electronic devices expressed significant concerns about online scams and the difficulty of identifying fake news, despite their regular use of smartphones and the internet for various tasks.

Both groups emphasized on the importance of intergenerational workshops, where younger individuals as the ones that are more familiar with the technological means acted as digital mentors, facilitating a more fulfilling learning experience for older adults. Participants appreciated the use of case studies to explore specific instances of fake news in detail, which helped enhance their understanding and identification skills.

The discussions also highlighted the need for improved technology accessibility, including clearer instructions, help features, and better readability options. Additionally, frequent intergenerational training sessions and increased awareness of debunking platforms were recommended to help individuals navigate the digital landscape more confidently.

Overall, the event successfully promoted intergenerational collaboration as all the sessions were designed using participatory methods and interactive sessions in which all the participants were invited to share their experience, personal stories and needs on the topic of medial literacy and fake news.

In terms of best practices and certain needs/ideas, the participants were grouped into two categories – especially for the group 65+. The first category mentioned that they did not utilise the internet (much or at all), and for that, they reasoned that they were more secure than those who utilised it. Part of the older people in this group mentioned that they do not have any access to computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones. The second group (which also included all the young people) made use of smartphones and had access to the internet. The older people in the second group shared with us their experience and their fears, especially in terms of online and offline scams and difficulty in identifying fake news, even in cases when they were visible to younger people. Both groups stressed and shared their fear in terms of offline deception and scams (e.g., SMS and MMS from a seemingly real bank; phone call from relatives who were in a car accident and needed help etc.).

In more detail, the participants that can be roughly categorised in the first group, clearly mentioned that they “feel themselves protected from all these things”. The rationale behind this position was connected to the fact that they did not practically - and were not also interested to - utilise any technological equipment. When, during the discussion, the fact that fake news and disinformation can sometimes also come up on the television (TV), the reaction was either that they did not watch news on TV, or that they did not believe everything on TV. In this context, this part of the group was neither willing, nor interested to accept that it could fall victim of disinformation, or any scams.

The participants that can be categorised in the second group, were those that had a certain degree of affinity with technological equipment (e.g., smartphone or tablet and/or personal computer) and also had utilised internet for various tasks. Those tasks extended from simple tasks such as making internet phone calls, searching and watching videos and news up to the use of social media and also the use of governmental electronic services. The majority of the participants in this group had utilised social media and they claimed to be affected by fake news, with or without being sure of it. This group welcomed the criteria that were provided with on how to identify a fake article, while also they were very interested in fact-checking platforms/websites, their way of work and how they could further utilise them to identify fake news. Additionally, they also expressed their preference towards holding intergenerational workshops, as the engagement with young individuals supported them both in learning and also in having a more fulfilling meeting and discussion. One other aspect that was strongly suggested by both young people and elder individuals in this group was the use of case studies. Examining a specific case (e.g. a specific fake video, fake article etc.) in more detail and depth, in smaller groups, was deemed as a practice that would further facilitate the knowledge transfer in terms of effective fake news identification.

Some additional suggestions, were not articulated as such, but were mentioned more as complaints and problems the elder people faced with technology. Some of them referred to the complexity of technology and internet access, including news websites that were not very accessible. In this regard, both elder people and younger individuals agreed that clear instructions and help features (tutorials, FAQs) are needed along with better accessibility options (larger text, text-to-audio, better readability, simplified text).

In the same regard, the need for local community involvement in an intergenerational manner was equally stressed. As previously mentioned, both young and older individuals enjoyed this engagement and were eager to pursue this type of activity more often. In this, a suggestion that could be interesting refers to the creation of community support “chats” where older individuals and younger ones also participate and questions about fake news, scams, etc., can be answered by the young people directly. In a way, the young individuals will function as “digital mentors” for older people who need support. Nonetheless, it was stressed that the relationship between young and older individuals should not become digitalised; physical encounters are crucial.

Lastly, some common points mentioned by both the young people and the older individuals were connected to (a) the lack of frequent trainings, with an intergenerational approach, for the topic; (b) the limited or relatively unknown debunking platforms and tools, and (c) the lack of specific rankings for news platform based on their credibility. Especially the last two points, were deemed as important due to the fact that they can create a baseline via which all individuals, regardless of their age, can compare the news platforms and decide the most credible ones to follow them more actively.

Additional suggestions

During the discussions, some additional factors were noted:

- Trainings about the relationship between scams and fake news;
- Involve older individuals in the preparation of social media posts;
- Encourage young people to become “ambassadors” of digital literacy in their community;
- One additional suggestion referred to examine the role of AI chatbots in supporting older adults.

The current section concisely summarises all the suggestions that have been mentioned in the previous sections (except the additional suggestions):

1. Conduct more frequent intergenerational workshops on the topic;
2. Examine the possibility of having/creating intergenerational community support chats;
3. Introduce the role of “young digital mentors”;
4. Utilise and raise awareness on debunking platforms and tools;
5. Provide credible rankings of news platforms based on their trustworthiness;
6. Utilise interactive sessions for teaching e.g., group work, case study analysis, games, active discussion;
7. Enhance and sustain the involvement of local communities;
8. Simplify news websites and provide more accessibility options.