TOOLKIT

"Mentoring and supporting seniors and adults with different abilities for digital social entrepreneurship start-up"

Contents

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project title: Digital Social Entrepreneurship of seniors and adults with different abilities"

There are lots of seniors and adults with disabilities who lack employment and regular salary/income. With the current situation of Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that due to the lockdown, isolation and other measures followed by citizens, lots of employers have fired their employees at the start of the pandemic measures or are not having enough revenues to keep the employees sufficiently paid. So, even with the economic help from the governments, we still find ourselves with higher unemployment rates and with lower economic levels now (especially of our target groups) than before the pandemic measures started.

Quite often, both salaries of the employed citizens, as well as the pensions for the retired seniors, where exist - are not fully sufficient for the high costs of life in those "older" ages when their youngsters have left households to pursue their own career and life in separate households of their own. More and more seniors and adults (with disabilities), thus, are looking forward to another way of regular money incoming into their households. In addition, persons with disabilities often face societal barriers and disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination in many societies.

For this target group, formal education takes too much time and is not a preferred option to take, nor is feasible for them for different reasons often. Adult education is a very appreciated option both for seniors and adults with disabilities and is perceived as a better option, as it is easier to enrol in an adult education programme, as well as the courses last shorter and are following the latest trends and needs of society and opportunities existing.

The project meets the needs of our beneficiaries and organisations, as it responds to the outcomes of the survey implemented and regular work with our beneficiaries and educators/members/staff of our organisations; by empowering and promoting digital social entrepreneurship among them.

Motivation of partners in this project is to "equip" seniors and adults with disabilities with a set of skills needed to work on personal development in fields of digital-social-entrepreneurial intelligence and creating (self-)employment opportunities proactively in today's reality of employment uncertainty and the world of extinction of many known jobs and occupation now and even more in the future. With this project, we want our beneficiaries, seniors and adults with disabilities, to improve their digital social entrepreneurial skills, and we also aim to empower more adult educators for organising digital social entrepreneurial learning activities, in line with the newest updates.

Therefore, objectives of the project are:
- Empower seniors and unemployed adults with disabilities for digital social entrepreneurship start-up through development of inspiring, innovative and up-to-date handbook, as well as the online course.
- Empower our adult educators and improve knowledge management of our organisations in theory and practice for building competences of educators in digital social entrepreneurship for seniors and adults with disabilities, through LTTA, innovative curriculum for educators' training and useful toolkit with workshops for beneficiaries.
- Exchange good practices and further develop quality strategic partnership among partners from 4 European countries with different realities in regard to employment and digital/social entrepreneurship.

Project activities are:
➢ A1 – Project Management
➢ M1 – Kick-off meeting

- ➢ O1 – Handbook "Exploring Digital Social Entrepreneurship for seniors and adults with different abilities"
- ➢ M2 – Second meeting
- ➢ O2 – Curriculum "Empowering adult educators to encourage Digital Social Entrepreneurship start-ups among seniors and adults with different abilities"
- ➢ O3 – Toolkit "Mentoring and supporting seniors and adults with different abilities for Digital Social Entrepreneurship startup"
- ➢ M3 – Third meeting
- ➢ O4 – E-learning course "Digital Social Entrepreneurship start-up course for seniors and adults with different abilities"
- ➢ C1 - LTTA Training of trainers
- ➢ E1, E2, E3, E4 – Open conferences in HR, RS, IT, DE
- ➢ M4 – Evaluation meeting M3 Third meeting

At the end of this project, the project partners, as well as other organisations and stakeholders, will have at their disposal more effective tools and more competent staff to engage in education for digital social entrepreneurship of adults with different abilities.

Project partners are:
- ▪ Outreach Hannover e.V., Germany
- ▪ LINK DMT SRL, Italy
- ▪ Learning Wizard d.o.o., Croatia
- ▪ Association for improvement of modern living skills "Realization", Croatia
- ▪ Company for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities ITECCION, Serbia
- ▪ Centre for Non-formal education and Lifelong learning (CNELL), Serbia
- ▪ Fondazione Don Giovanni Zanandrea Onlus, Italy
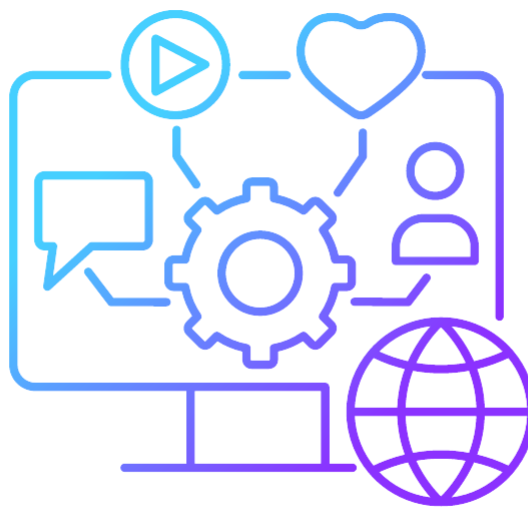
BACKGROUND OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit "Mentoring and supporting seniors and adults with different abilities for digital social entrepreneurship start-up" is envisioned as a resource material that will serve as a theoretical and conceptual resource for andragogic workers in adult education institutions, educators and professors who work closely with seniors and adults in organisations, schools and institutions.

The education and teaching methods for adult learners are quite controversial as the classical methods used do not bring practical approaches to their learning and needs. They do not engage them sufficiently and are considered rather invaluable. For this purpose, adult educators need to equip themselves with innovative skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to transform their "teaching" method to a more of a "facilitator" one, in order to exploit the characteristics of adult learners. They need to pledge in favour of change, avoiding dogmatism, and promoting dialogue and participation of learners not only to recognize the differences between their own goals and expectations from those of learners but also to provide critical thinking about their own and learners' assumptions in order to fulfil the process of learning and induce positive change. Thus, the adult educator, except from having sufficient knowledge about his subject area, must also have a set of knowledge, skills and abilities concerning adult education.

This toolkit will provide tools and methods which educators can use in order to diagnose and utilize learners' needs and expectations, adjust the educational process according to learning needs, communicate efficiently using digital tools and encourage active participation. The Toolkit comprises of two parts. The first part covers theoretical concepts and recommendations for adult educators and trainers working with seniors and adults with disabilities on the topic of digital social entrepreneurship and supporting/mentoring them in creating their own digital social enterprises. More specifically, the first part of the toolkit consists of the following chapters:
- o The specificities of organising local workshops with seniors and adults with disabilities;
- o Needs and level of skills of seniors and different abilities' adults for digital social entrepreneurship education;
- o Recommendations for adult educators working with seniors and different abilities adults on the topic of digital social entrepreneurship;
- o Mentoring the beneficiaries (seniors and adults with disabilities) as a follow-up after the workshops, in the process of establishing their Digital Social Enterprises.

The second part consists of 12 different tools explored and adapted for using in NFE when directly educating and mentoring seniors and adults with disabilities for digital social entrepreneurship (DSE) start-up. The tools that will be presented in this toolkit are:
- o Crowdfunding
- o Sponsorship of posts, columns, or videos on YouTube channels
- o Brand awareness
- o Storyboard
- o Video pitch
- o Blogging
- o Creating Rich materials (e-books, spreadsheets, infographics, tests, tutorials, comparisons, etc.) in DSE
- o Product Hunt
- o Quora
- o BetaList
- o ECommerce/online stores for DSE
- o Using social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok) for the benefits on social capital of the DSE of seniors and adults with disabilities

PART 1: Concepts and Recommendations

1. The specificities of organising local workshops with seniors and adults with disabilities

Disability among seniors and adults is more prevalent comparing to young people. Thus, the approaches and specificities of work with this target group should be different from the ones designed for young or kids with disabilities. When organising local workshops with seniors and adults with disabilities there are certain specificities that need to be taken care of and adapt, including external factors/environment. The most common specificities are related to community assessment and segmentation of specific groups and their disabilities for better addressing their needs through workshops, the knowledge on types of disabilities, assessment of the needs and level of skills of seniors and adults with disabilities, awareness of the digitalisation's risks, and so on. All the mentioned specificities including related existing models and theories for better illustration of organising local workshops with seniors and adults with disabilities are presented in this section.

Image: Moving Forward to support community living, *Source: CHCR (2022, May 19). Retrieved 2022, from* *https://www.chcf.org/resource/focus-on-calaim/seniors-people-with-disabilities/*

1.1 Overall assessment of the community – segmentation of groups

Adult educators and trainers working with seniors and adults with disabilities are on daily basis informed about certain cases of marginalisation and different forms of discrimination that these groups face. Therefore, when organising local workshops with seniors and adults with disabilities, it is essential to conduct an assessment in the community and gather relevant information about the realities of these marginalised groups. This assessment should be organised in small neighbourhoods or places/municipalities for more detailed information and better segmentation of each group. The community assessment should involve collecting data about existing marginalised groups of adults with disabilities, their involvement in education activities (especially non-formal education), their challenges, motivations, and the causes of their marginalisation. Obtaining this information is crucial and serves as a good foundation for all other aspects of the organisation process of the workshops, as well as for working with adults with disabilities and their caregivers. This direct communication with the marginalised individuals or groups provides updated information and creates a space for establishing the first contact with these groups.

1.2   Knowledge on types of disabilities

When organising workshops for adults with disabilities, it is essential to have a good understanding of the different types or categories of disabilities that exist. This helps creating workshops that are accessible and effective for everyone involved. Some of the most common categories and types of disabilities that educators should be aware of are:

- Intellectual disabilities: These are characterised by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. Seniors and adults with intellectual disabilities may have difficulty learning and processing information and may struggle with activities of daily living.
- Developmental disabilities: These are disabilities that affect a person's physical or mental development. Examples include autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.
- Sensory disabilities: These include hearing and visual impairments. Seniors and adults with sensory disabilities may require accommodations such as sign language interpreters or assistive technology to participate fully in workshops.
- Mobility disabilities: These include physical impairments that affect a person's ability to move around or use their limbs. Seniors and adults with mobility disabilities may require accessible facilities and accommodations such as ramps, widened doorways, and accessible seating.
- Mental health disabilities: These include a range of conditions such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. It is important to create a supportive and non-judgmental environment for participants with mental health disabilities.

When organising workshops for seniors and adults with disabilities, it is important to keep these different types of disabilities in mind and make accommodations as necessary to ensure that everyone can participate fully. This may involve providing accessible facilities, materials, and technology, as well as creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that takes into account the unique needs of each participant.

1.3   Assessing the needs and level of skills

As mentioned above, various marginalised groups of seniors and adults with disabilities encounter varying forms of discrimination or exclusion. This implies that they have unique circumstances, educational levels, skills, and abilities. Hence, when arranging local workshops or events for them, it is crucial for educators and trainers to conduct individual or small group assessments to gauge their skills accurately. This will ensure their effective participation or support in organising workshops in case they are involved in the organisation process.

1.4   Involving cross-sectoral cooperation

Addressing the inclusion of marginalised groups is a worldwide concern that spans multiple industries. Education, in particular, plays a crucial role in empowering and integrating these groups. Organisations, trainers, and educators who work with these target group must have knowledge of existing programs, governmental support, and public services available to them. Effective cross-sectoral collaboration is essential in supporting marginalised groups in both formal and non-formal education settings and other activities organised. Depending on the unique circumstances, various stakeholders and sectors should be engaged. Possible stakeholders and sectors may include elected officials/community leaders, health and safety professionals, law enforcement officials, faith leaders, corporate and business professionals, mental health and social service professionals, educators (including special education professionals), parents and guardians, social activists and organisations, and city/county recreation professionals.

1.5   Specificities during the implementation of the workshops

In addition to the crucial elements and considerations to keep in mind when organising local workshops with and for seniors and adults with disabilities, there are specific factors to consider during the implementation of non-formal education workshops. These factors are important for promoting better inclusion and participation among these groups and include the following:

- Time flexibility: There should not be a strict schedule for each activity, and there should be room for flexibility between exercises to allow the group to enjoy the energy and activity as well as increase their engagement.
- Inclusive approach: Seniors and adults with disabilities do occasionally face exclusion and marginalisation, and an inclusive approach is necessary for them to feel comfortable in the workshop.
- Interactive and fun methods: Seniors and adults with disabilities are often less engaged in socialising and may be asocial, so choosing some interactive and engaging methods are necessary for them to participate.
- Agility during implementation: The trainer should remain focused and attentive during activities to identify if a particular topic or method is sensitive to some of the participants.
- Encouraging free expression: Groups that face marginalisation or discrimination may hesitate to speak up, and the trainer should use mixed methodologies such as small group discussions or pair work to allow them to express themselves freely.

1.6   Raising awareness about risks of digitalisation

Seniors and adults with disabilities who have limited exposure to digital content are more vulnerable to potential risks that digitalisation might bring, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful online content, information bubbles, and lack of critical thinking, as well as questions of privacy and data protection. Mainstream seniors and adults who have greater exposure to digital content may be more aware of these risks, but they are still vulnerable to various forms of misuse and cyberbullying. It is essential for trainers and educators working with seniors and adults with disabilities to be aware of these risks and work on raising awareness to minimise the chances of exposure. The risks of being more prone to these phenomena are higher when individuals have limited digital skills. Being exposed to any kind of risks mentioned above can lower motivation for participation and development of necessary skills to engage with digital content, especially for seniors and adults with disabilities who already face different forms of exclusion, bullying, and discrimination. Moreover, considering the promotion of their involvement on digital entrepreneurship, the raising awareness about risks that can come from digitalisation and their prevention/minimisation has an outmost importance.

2. Needs and level of skills of seniors and different abilities' adults for digital social entrepreneurship education

As digital technology becomes more global, digital social entrepreneurship has emerged as a promising way to create positive social change and generate income. For seniors and adults with different abilities, digital social entrepreneurship can offer an opportunity to develop new skills, generate income, and make a meaningful impact on society.

To succeed in this area, they need a range of skills that are both technical and non-technical. Technical skills include basic computer skills such as using the internet, word processing, and spreadsheet applications. They also need to be able to navigate social media platforms, create and publish digital content, and use digital marketing tools. Additionally, they may need to learn more advanced technical skills like web design and programming if they plan to build a website or develop a software application. Non-technical skills are equally important and include skills like communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability. These skills are necessary to identify and address social problems, develop innovative solutions, and effectively communicate their ideas to potential customers, partners, and investors.

Finally, it's important to recognise that seniors and adults with different abilities may have unique challenges and requirements when it comes to digital social entrepreneurship education. Educators and trainers need to be aware of these differences and create a supportive learning environment that caters to their specific needs. By providing the necessary technical and non-technical skills and creating an inclusive learning environment, seniors and adults with different abilities can unlock the potential of digital social entrepreneurship to create positive social impact and economic opportunities.

2.1   Needed skills of seniors and different abilities' adults for digital social entrepreneurship education

It is difficult to generalise the level of skills that seniors and adults with disabilities have in terms of the specific skills needed for digital social entrepreneurship education. The skills of individuals with disabilities can differ widely depending on the type and difficulty of the disability, as well as factors such as access to education, training, and technology.

However, it is worth noting that people with disabilities have historically faced barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities, which may have limited their opportunities to develop digital skills. Below are presented different set of skills that this target group needs to have for pursuing digital social entrepreneurship education:

- Basic computer literacy: Adults with disabilities should be comfortable with basic computer skills, such as typing, using a mouse, and navigating software interfaces.
- Digital communication: Strong communication skills are essential in the digital world. This includes email etiquette, social media communication, and online networking.
- Digital marketing: Adults with disabilities may need to be trained how to use digital marketing tools to promote their businesses online.
- Time management: Effective time management skills are essential for digital entrepreneurs to ensure that they can manage their workload and meet deadlines.
- Problem-solving: Digital entrepreneurs need to be able to identify problems and find innovative solutions to overcome them.
- Resilience: Starting a business is challenging, and setbacks are inevitable. Adults with disabilities need to be resilient and able to bounce back from failures and setbacks.

- Social media marketing: Understanding how to use social media platforms to promote their product or service is essential for digital social entrepreneurship.
- Community building: Being able to build a community of customers, supporters, and collaborators is crucial for digital social entrepreneurship.
- Networking: The ability to network and build relationships with others in the same field or industry is important for accessing resources and expanding their business.
- Social impact analysis: Assessing the social impact of their business and incorporating it into their marketing and branding can help attract socially conscious customers and investors.
- Customer service: Providing good customer service is critical for building a loyal customer base and maintaining a positive reputation. It is especially important when the enterprise is created by supporting a social cause and thus increases the number of the supporters and the loyalty of existing customers.
- Flexibility and adaptability: The digital world is constantly changing, so digital entrepreneurs need to be adaptable and able to keep up with new technologies and trends. Being able to adapt to changes in the market or industry and being flexible in their business approach can help ensure long-term success.
- Financial management: Basic financial management skills, such as budgeting, forecasting, and tracking expenses, are necessary for any type of entrepreneurship, including digital social entrepreneurship.

3. Recommendations for adult educators working with seniors and different abilities' adults in the topic of digital social entrepreneurship

Adult educators are already informed on the realities of their target group and know how to tackle their challenges and address their needs. However, depending on the topic and needs, educators surely need to be equipped with specific knowledge that better addresses certain issues. When working with seniors and adults with different abilities in digital social entrepreneurship, there are several recommendations that adult educators can follow. It is important to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment that accommodates the needs of all learners, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. This may involve utilising assistive technology or alternative learning methods to ensure that everyone is able to participate and learn effectively.

Educators and trainers should recognise that seniors and adults with different abilities may have different learning needs and preferences than younger learners and should therefore design the curriculum accordingly. Using age-appropriate language and engaging teaching methods can help to ensure that learners are able to understand and retain the material.

Foundational digital skills are also important for this target group to develop. That includes basic digital skills such as using email, navigating the internet, and creating and sharing digital content. By providing a solid foundation in these skills, learners will be better equipped to pursue more advanced learning in the field of digital social entrepreneurship.

When working in the digital social entrepreneurship as a relatively new concept, educators can use real-world examples and case studies to illustrate the principles of digital social entrepreneurship and help participants to see the potential for creating positive social change and generating income. Encouraging creativity and innovation in problem-solving is also important for this target group to develop, as these skills are essential in the field of digital social entrepreneurship. Providing opportunities for learners to develop and test their ideas and products, as well as offering feedback and guidance, can be beneficial in this regard. Of course, this element is more relevant for long term programmes that tackle this topic. Finally, promoting collaboration and networking is important for participants to build supportive relationships that can be valuable throughout their careers.

Besides these general recommendations, it is useful to equip educators with recommendations for technical issues and the overall organisation process when working with seniors and adults with different abilities on the topic of digital social entrepreneurship. Some relevant recommendations can be the following:

- Assist with technical issues: Educators should be aware that seniors and adults with different abilities may encounter difficulties with software or hardware. It is essential to provide technical assistance and troubleshooting to learners, in person or remotely, to ensure that they can use digital tools effectively for their social entrepreneurship projects.
- Flexible scheduling and format: To accommodate the needs of seniors and individuals with different abilities, educators should be flexible in scheduling and class format. This may involve offering evening or weekend classes, online or hybrid options, or classes that can be easily accessed through assistive technology.
- Simplifying complex concepts: To ensure that learners can comprehend and apply information effectively, educators are supposed to break down complex concepts and jargon used in digital social entrepreneurship. Using simple, concise language and providing practical examples is essential to help participants understand the context.

- Incorporate assistive technology: When working with seniors and adults with different abilities it is recommended to use assistive technology in the learning process to support them with varying abilities, such as screen readers, speech recognition software, or other tools. This will also help them in accessing and navigating digital content.
- Encourage peer learning and mentoring: Peer learning and mentoring is essential when entering a new topic or process. Educators should promote and encourage participants to learn from each other and to also mentor one another. This can include pairing participants with different levels of experience, offering opportunities for participants to teach and support one another, and providing access to a network of mentors and industry experts.
- Provide practical application opportunities: Educators and trainers should allow participants to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained to real-life situations, such as internships, collaborative projects with local businesses or organisations, or other experiential learning experiences.
- Recognise and celebrate success and progress: Celebrating the success or progress of participants in a certain topic or process is highly important as they progress through the learning process and develop their digital social entrepreneurship skills. This may involve certificates, awards, or public recognition and ongoing support and encouragement as learners work towards their goals.

4. Mentoring the beneficiaries, (seniors and adults with disabilities) as a follow-up after the workshops, in the process of establishing their Digital Social Enterprises

Providing activities, workshops, and courses that empower seniors and adults with disabilities to create Digital Social Enterprises is effective for their education, employment, and digital empowerment. However, to have a greater impact and long-term benefits, it is necessary to have follow-up actions and long-term programs that further support them. Mentoring programs are particularly beneficial for seniors and adults with disabilities who need personalized assistance to address their specific needs and challenges in creating new products/services in their communities. Mentoring can be a crucial component of the process of establishing digital social enterprises among seniors and adults with disabilities. Active participation and engagement from both the mentor and mentees are essential for a successful mentoring experience.

Additionally, there are eight crucial elements that ensure successful mentoring, as shown in the image below.

Image: 8 elements of Mentoring, Source: Washington State University, Carson College of Business. (2020, July 21). 10 Things To Consider When Looking For A Professional Mentor. WSU Online MBA. Retrieved 2022, from https://onlinemba.wsu.edu/blog/10-things-to-consider-when-looking-for-a-professional-mentor/

The Washington State University, Carson College of Business (2020) presented an image in their article on mentorship, highlighting the crucial elements necessary for successful mentoring. These elements include direction, coaching, support, goal-setting, training, motivation, and advice, all of which are important qualities to look for when seeking a professional mentor. By incorporating these elements, a mentoring program can provide quality support for seniors and adults with disabilities to promote their needed education and establishment of digital social enterprises.

4.1 Seven key steps of a mentoring programme

The above image portrays a model of mentoring that outlines eight crucial elements, including direction, coaching, support, goal-setting, training, motivation, and advice, which ultimately lead to the successful outcome of mentoring. While this is one of several existing theories that describe the elements and process of mentoring, it is a useful model to consider as it is practical and easy to understand. However, to design an effective mentoring program, it is important to tailor it to the specific topic or situation and the needs of the individuals involved, such as their acquired skills, knowledge, attitudes, and realities. To develop a mentoring program that addresses the needs and inclusion of seniors and adults with disabilities in establishing their own digital social enterprises, experts in this field have designed a seven-step mentoring process. This process includes fostering personal contact between the mentor and mentee, empowering education and orientation, setting goals and objectives, designing an action plan, implementing the plan and facilitating communication, debriefing completed activities, and sustaining the action plan. Below is a detailed explanation of each step and the overall process.

Step 1: Fostering personal contact – Mentor and Mentee
This first step is essential for building a trusting relationship between the mentor and mentee. The mentor should take the time to get to know the mentee, their strengths, challenges, interests, and goals. A positive and supportive relationship between the mentor and mentee will help to ensure that the mentoring program is successful.

Step 2: Empowerment in education and orientation
In this step, the mentor provides an orientation session to the mentee to help them understand the basics of social entrepreneurship and digital tools. This session should include an introduction to the concept of social entrepreneurship, including the key principles and practices, as well as an overview of the various digital tools that can be used to support the enterprise. The mentor can also provide resources such as online training materials, videos, and case studies to help the mentee learn at their own pace.

Step 3: Setting goals and objectives
This step involves the mentor and mentee collaborating to identify specific goals and objectives for the mentee's digital social enterprise. The mentor can help the mentee to define the enterprise's purpose, mission, and vision, as well as identify the specific outcomes they want to achieve. It is important that the goals and objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

Step 4: Designing an action plan
The mentor and mentee work together to design an action plan that outlines the specific steps needed to achieve the mentee's goals and objectives. The plan should be realistic, achievable, and tailored to the mentee's unique needs and abilities. The mentor can help the mentee to identify the resources, tools, and support they need to execute the plan. The action plan should also include timelines, checkpoints, and milestones to ensure that the mentee stays on track. The mentee can be instructed and guided in this process by following these questions:
- Why do I want this particular goal to be achieved?
- What is the end goal of this endeavour?
- What resources do I have for the success of this objective?
- What happens after the goal is achieved?[1]

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[1] Usanmaz, O. (2022, February 18). Key Steps To Follow Before And During Mentorship Programs: A Mentoring Program Outline. Qooper. Retrieved 2022, from https://www.qooper.io/blog/key-steps-to-follow-before-and-during-mentorship-programs-a-mentoring-program-outline

Step 5: Implementation phase and active communication

In this step, the mentor provides ongoing support and guidance as the mentee works to execute the action plan. The mentor can help the mentee to overcome challenges and obstacles, provide feedback on their progress, and offer suggestions for improvement. Clear communication channels should be established to ensure that the mentor and mentee are working effectively together. The mentor can use a variety of tools and methods to communicate, such as email, phone, video conferencing, and face-to-face meetings.

Step 6: Debriefing the completed activities

After the implementation phase, the mentor and mentee use one or few sessions to debrief on the completed activities. This step involves reflecting on the successes and challenges of the action plan, identifying areas for improvement, and adjusting the plan as needed to ensure continued success. The mentor can provide feedback on the mentee's achievements, celebrate their successes, and help them to learn from any mistakes or failures. This step is critical for helping the mentee to continue to grow and develop as a digital social entrepreneur.

Step 7: Sustaining the action plan

In this final step, the mentor and mentee focus on sustaining the mentee's digital social enterprise and its processes/functionality. The mentor can provide ongoing support and guidance as the mentee works to grow and develop the enterprise. This step involves helping the mentee to develop a sustainable business model, identify new opportunities for growth, and connect with other entrepreneurs and stakeholders in their industry. The mentor can also help the mentee to develop a plan for measuring and evaluating the impact of their enterprise on the community.

This 7-step mentoring program provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to supporting seniors and adults with disabilities in their digital social entrepreneurship journey. The program is designed to empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to build successful enterprises that create positive social impact and generate income using digital tools.

PART 2: Tools for using in NFE when directly educating and mentoring seniors and adults with disabilities for digital social entrepreneurship (DSE) start-ups

5. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money for an individual or organization by collecting donations through family, friends, friends of friends, strangers, businesses, and more. By using social media, people can reach more potential donors than traditional forms of fundraising[2]. Crowdfunding websites provide the opportunity to its users to get support for the business idea, get publicity, find investors, partners, and potential customers. Also, users can understand the needs of the target group that can help with the way they approach them, and they can get the finances that they need at a much lower risk.

Crowdfunding is a vast industry, and its capacity is constantly expanding. There are many start-up crowdfunding sites that can be used to obtain the needed money for start-ups, some of the most popular ones are Kickstarter, Indiegogo, GoFundMe, Fundly, JustGiving, and Facebook.

5.1 Kickstarter

KICKSTARTER
Kickstarter

Official website to access the tool: https://www.kickstarter.com/

Kickstarter is one of the most popular crowdfunding websites. It has around 15 million supporters and a low payment fee/percentage from the money that is raised from the crowdfunding campaigns. It is considered as one of the best for tech start-ups, art and design start-ups. It is essential to know that at Kickstarter there is a 14-day waiting period to take the money and also the deposit action takes approximately 5 to 7 working days. Even though the responding at Kickstarter is something very countable, they have limited hours for support via email. Also, it is important to emphasise that there is a process of Kickstarter approval when initiating/launching a fundraiser.

5.2 Indiegogo

INDIEGOGO.
Indiegogo

Official website to access the tool: https://www.indiegogo.com/

Indiegogo is one of the largest crowdfunding platforms available across the globe and it offers a wide range of investment opportunities with only 5% platform fee. It is highly recommended for Start-ups overall and Early-stage start-ups. Indiegogo is more specialised in technology and launching

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[2] Crowdfunding. https://www.crowdfunding.com/

hardware products. They offer regular support via email, including marketing and support in developing campaign strategy.

5.3 GoFundMe

GoFundMe

Official website to access the tool: https://www.gofundme.com/

GoFundMe is a good crowdfunding platform especially for social entrepreneurs and non-profit organisations with only a 2.9% payment/transaction fee. It is considered the best for eco-friendly start-ups as well. According to Crowdfunding (n.d.), some key characteristics of this platform are:

- Can quickly set up withdraws and deposits take an average of 2-5 business days;
- Coaching and account support throughout the fundraising and donation process;
- Easy to use fundraising tools make setup fast (e.g., mobile app and superior add beneficiary feature);
- The GoFundMe Giving Guarantee – in the very rare case that something isn't right with a fundraiser, donors may be eligible for a 100% refund of their donation[3].

5.4 Fundly

Fundly

Official website to access the tool: https://fundly.com/

Fundly was created to assist non-profit organisations, charities, and clubs in raising funds for a variety of purposes. Employees can use the tool to build donation pages, upload images and videos, and track contributions. The fund raised through this platform can be withdrawn in a very short period of 2-5 business days. The support via email is more limited comparing to other platforms.

5.5 JustGiving

JustGiving

Official website to access the tool: https://www.justgiving.com/

JustGiving is a great platform for personal use, it helps raise money for personal causes, a person in need, clubs, schools, and communities. It has more than 22M supporters. JustGiving started in 2010 and its focus back then was more in supporting charity events/causes in receiving financial support through online tools from all over the world. Throughout the years, JustGiving grew into a bigger platform and expanded its operations with more crowdfunding campaigns development. However,

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[3] Crowdfunding. (n.d.). https://www.crowdfunding.com/

they always stick to their initial idea of serving the community so they do not permit any kind of political campaigns to be run through them, any unverified medical treatment campaign, as well as any kind of campaign that might indirectly harm the community or promote social exclusion.

5.6 Facebook

facebook.

Facebook

Official website to access the tool: https://www.facebook.com/

Facebook can also be used to raise money for different causes and personal goals to help someone. Even though it is not a typical crowdfunding platform, as an online fundraising tool it is successfully operating and supporting many initiatives. The main con of Facebook is that even though it is very popular for fund raise it does not allow users from all over the world to create a fundraiser. If used for charity purposes, Facebook does not impose any transaction fee. Crowdfunding (n.d.), emphasises the following characteristics of Facebook as online fundraiser:

- Can withdraw immediately and deposits take 7+ days;
- Non-profits must undergo a 24-hour charity verification process, slowing down setup;
- No donor guarantee policy[4].

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[4] Crowdfunding. (n.d.). https://www.crowdfunding.com/

6. Sponsorship of posts, columns, or videos on YouTube channels

What is sponsorship?

Sponsorship represents the relationship in business level between two parties, where the supplier of resources, funds or services supports in any form certain organisation, individual, or events. Sponsorship is also considered as the most powerful tool in the marketing spectrum. There are four sorts of sponsorship, all of which can help the marketing plan:

- Financial Support

The role of a sponsor is to provide financial support to an organization or special event while also receiving notoriety. There are several approaches to this, including direct payment for venues, matching donations, covering wi-fi for an event, and even paying for catering. Essentially, the sponsor exchanges money for brand recognition and advertising.

- Sponsorship in-kind

Instead of cash assistance, the sponsor provides free services or products. This donation can range from using its own speakers for a music event to providing meals for a festival or printing posters and flyers.

- Media sponsorship

Media sponsorship is the promotion of another person's activity through the media. This promotion can take the shape of social media posts, blog entries, and information sharing via broadcasts. A local television network may cover the event, generating valuable media coverage.

- Marketing Partners

Promotional partners like media sponsors, typically include individuals such as social media influencers and bloggers that promote an activity or event across several communication platforms. As a result, these persons may be given a speaking slot at the forthcoming conference or benefit in another way.

Types of sponsorships on YouTube and the process

Getting sponsorship on YouTube is possible for all accounts that have an engaged audience. YouTube sponsorships, also known as sponsored content, are films that promote a company, product, or service in a seamless manner. Brands pay for YouTube sponsorships with either money or product.
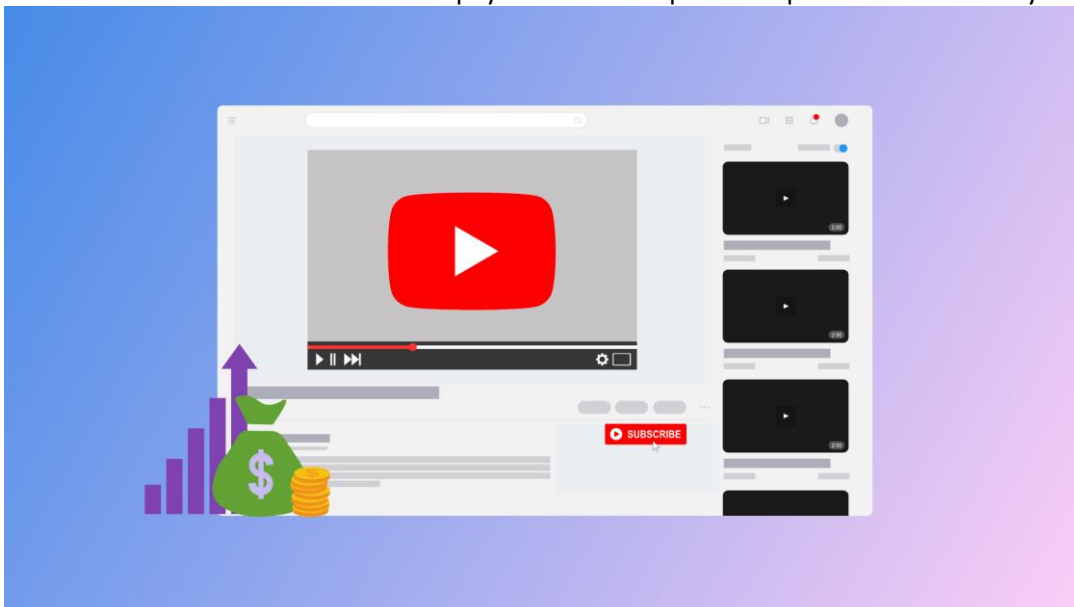
Picture: YouTube Sponsorship (2023), Source: Passaris, C. (2023, February 13). How to get sponsored on YouTube. Clipchamp Blog. https://clipchamp.com/en/blog/how-get-sponsored-on-youtube/#:~:text=Product%20sponsorships%2C%20affiliate%20sponsorships%2C%20and,video%20that%20a%20brand%20sponsors

YouTubers usually work with businesses that are relevant to their channel genre, topics, and personal interests, resulting in a sponsored video that is appealing to followers and target audiences. Getting sponsorship in YouTube is possible for all accounts that have an engaged audience. There are also ways to prepare your channel for sponsorship. It is important for every Youtuber to be familiarised with YouTube guidelines, to have a professional account, a clear audience and to have high quality videos in their channels.

What is the process to sponsor a post, column, or video on YouTube?
YouTube offers a very simple procedure to reach the paid sponsorship or any kind of product placement that demands disclosure to viewers in that content. The organisation or individual need to have a Google account (which is automatically connected to YouTube) in order to be able to sponsor content on YouTube. Then, he/she just needs to follow the process of 6 simple steps which are the following:
1. Signing in to the YouTube Studio (Link: https://studio.youtube.com/);
2. Clicking on the "Content" section – on the left of the window;
3. Selecting or uploading the video intended for sponsorship;
4. Clicking on the option "More";
5. Clicking the box which is next to the sentence "My video contains paid promotion like a product placement, sponsorship, or endorsement.";
6. Clicking "Save".

7. Brand awareness

Picture: Brand Awareness, Source: Sumrak, J. (2022, December 27). 8 Foolproof Strategies to Increase Brand Awareness in 2023. Foundr. https://foundr.com/articles/marketing/brand-awareness

What is brand awareness?
Brand awareness is one of the components of brand equity. Brand awareness measures how well the target audience can recognise and understand a brand. When marketing and promoting a business and products, especially in the beginning phases, building brand awareness is important. There are generally two types of Brand Awareness – aided and unaided brand awareness. According to Qualtrics (2022), unaided brand awareness is what one knows as Brand recall, while aided brand awareness is known as Brand Recognition.

- **Brand recall**

Brand recall is what creates a link between a product category and a brand. Most people can name three product-category labels. Some people can recall five, while others can only recall one. This response demonstrates consumer interest in the product category.

- **Brand recognition**

The first sort of brand awareness is brand recognition, which occurs when a consumer recognizes a brand. Having a signature colour or logo is more likely to be recognized by the costumers.

Creating and increasing brand awareness
Although nowadays the digital world offers a variety of tips and tricks to increasing brand awareness, the most effective way to create and increase brand awareness is by developing a solid marketing programme which is in accordance with the brand strategy. This plan should be carefully written, implemented, monitored and evaluated. The strategy itself should balance the short term acquisition and long term brand building. According to Qualtrics (2022), when focusing on building brand awareness, an integrated approach that is tailored to your audience will bring the best results. This is because in today's age customer needs are nuanced, there are multiple mediums and many more brands competing for attention. This way you'll be able to reach your audience in more places[5].

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[5] Brand Awareness: What Is It and How to Increase It in 2023. (2022, December 13). Qualtrics.
https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/brand/brand-awareness/

Moreover, Qualtrics (2022), presents some of the most common tactics that are used for the brand awareness building:

- Advertising through social media, TV, website and other tools;
- Creating effective communication and Public Relations (PR) with media and influencers relations;
- Sponsorships of different causes and events that enable the exposure of the brand;
- Partnership creations;
- Events participation and meeting new people;
- Brand activations/Launches;
- Thought leadership programme;
- Prioritising the work on Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)[6].

[6] Brand Awareness: What Is It and How to Increase It in 2023. (2022, December 13). Qualtrics. https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/brand/brand-awareness/

8. Storyboard

Image Source: https://www.wyzowl.com/what-is-a-storyboard/

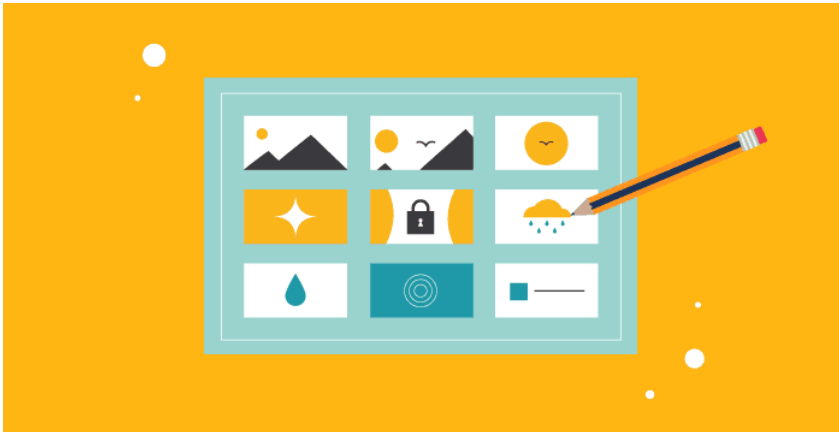**What is a storyboard?**

A storyboard is a visual planning tool that helps to organise a narrative or writing a goal. Creating a storyboard with specialised software is an effective way to present information in a visually appealing manner. Storyboards use a linear sequence of cells that are ideal for storytelling, explaining processes, and illustrating the passage of time. Essentially, storyboards consist of a series of drawings that illustrate key points and tell a story. Breaking down the story into smaller, manageable parts allows the author to concentrate on each cell without distraction. This approach ensures that the writing is consistent and conveyed in a clear and concise manner. Storyboarding is also a useful way to communicate ideas to an audience during the planning process.

Types of storyboards

Traditional storyboard

This type of storyboard is when the sketches are drawn on paper with a pencil. This method was utilised in the beginning of video production and the film industry when other tools were just unavailable.

Thumbnail

Each frame must be meticulously drawn in this style. This style of storyboard is so detailed and well-thought-out that the production process becomes simple.

Digital

Digital storyboards are made using specialised software. This is the modern way, which allows the process to start with a simple storyboard to illustrate the first idea, and then add more and more complexity by adding a voiceover and other aspects.

What is included in a storyboard?

The best storyboard usually include the following elements:

- **Aspect Ratio** which represents the relationship between the width and the height of the images.
- **The frame** that defines what is going on at a single point in your story.
- **The shot** as sequence of frames.
- **Rough sketches**, drawings for each frame.
- **The script** as one of the main starting points in a storyboard creation.
- **Voiceover** which represents the explainer on the storyboard.

Storyboarding tools

The tools required to make a storyboard will differ depending on the sort of storyboard that will be developed. Pieces of paper are required for sketched storyboards, and there are online storyboard templates that simply set out boxes for the creator to scribble in. For animated storyboard there are specific software that can be used to create a more elaborate storyboard such as Adobe Illustrator to develop visuals and Google Slides to build a presentation. There are many tools and softwares for creating storyboards and depending on the device, as well as on the budget, one can choose to create storyboards from the tools in the list below:

- Storyboarder: https://wonderunit.com/storyboarder/
- Plot: https://theplot.io/
- StudioBinder: https://www.studiobinder.com/
- Milanote: https://milanote.com/
- Miro: https://miro.com/
- Boords: https://app.boords.com/signup
- FrameForge: https://www.frameforge.com/
- Storyboard Quick: https://www.powerproduction.com/storyboardquick/index.html
- Camera-Storyboard: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/camera-storyboard/id1176392577?mt=12
- Storyboard Fountain: http://storyboardfountain.com/
- Panel Forge: https://www.panel-forge.com/
- Storyboard That: https://www.storyboardthat.com/
- Toon Boom Storyboard Pro: https://www.toonboom.com/products/storyboardpro
- Canva: https://www.canva.com/create/storyboards/
- Make Storyboard: https://makestoryboard.com/
- MovieStorm: http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/

9. Video pitch

Image Source: https://articles.bplans.com/where-to-get-feedback-on-your-business-pitch/

The pitch videos are used to promote ideas and products in significantly less time. When talking about a pitch video concept, it is essentially referring to a marketing video. Pitching videos are very popular nowadays, aspiring business owners have utilised a variety of methods to promote their products and ideas. Some of these strategies include generating a video presentation, using a website or app, or creating a product demo.

Pitch videos are useful for fundraising efforts and especially for new enterprises. They're also useful when pitching a new idea to a supervisor or when pitching a specific product or service proposal to investors. Pitch videos can be used to pitch a new company idea or for almost any other purpose in which there is a need to capture the audience's attention and support in order for them to like the idea.

There are some tips to be followed when one makes a pitch video:
- Keep it brief and simple. Keep your pitch around 5 minutes long to avoid losing people's interest and to allow them to easily fit your pitch within their web browsing time.
- Include the main information such as why your idea/product is the best.
- Use tangible evidence like as photographs, video clips of your work, testimonials from others, and so on. Make a visual representation of what you stand for.
- Use subtitles to avoid any kind of confusion.
- Have a great opening to make sure to have the attention from the beginning.

10.   Blogging

Image Source: https://city-dog.cz/business/swsol/getting-started-with-blogging-org/

Blogging began as a way for individuals to post diary-style entries. However, it soon started to be integrated into many businesses' websites. Blogging distinguishes itself with regular updates, informal language, and possibilities for readers to engage and create a conversation. Nowadays it is very popular in the business world, as with most internet-based advancements, many entrepreneurs realised the marketing potential in having a blog. A blog cannot only be used to market a business, but it can also be utilised to start a home business.

How to start with blogging?
Choosing the platform that will serve best for blogging is one of the main steps to take before starting your blog. Self-hosting platform are the most recommended ones. WordPress is the most popular one, while for new bloggers Bluehost is highly recommended because it offers free domain name, and when bloggers decide to stop using their services, they refund the money within 30 days.

Official websites to access the tool:
> WordPress: https://wordpress.com/
> Bluehost: https://www.bluehost.com/

Pro and Cons of Bloging
Blogging is nowadays considered as a very flexible and portable way and a great option for people who want to be a lifestyle entrepreneur, but of course as any other platform it has its pros and cons.
Pros
- Good for SEO: The frequency with which blogs are updated is a distinguishing trait, and that new content helps boost a website's SEO performance.

- Maintains contact with customers: Blog posts are a great option to keep the consumers and clients up to date on what's going on, inform them about the new deals, and offer advice.
- Builds relationships with customers: Blogs allow people to submit comments and engage with the bloggers. This type of engagement and interaction increases the chances to create a better relationship that might lead to purchases.
- Additional source of income: Successful blogs can generate revenue on their own.

Cons

- Time-consuming: The success of blogging is dependent on people returning, and they only return when there is new content to read.
- Constantly requires new ideas: Posting numerous times each week will be ineffective if the ideas aren't new and intriguing.
- Payoff is delayed: One of the most frustrating aspects about blogging is that it is time-consuming with little payoff at first. Building a readership and momentum takes time.

11.   Creating Rich materials (e-books, spreadsheets, infographics, tests, tutorials, comparisons, etc.) in DSE

Image Source: https://www.brafton.com.au/blog/creation/rich-content/

What is Rich Content?
Rich content are considered all media types such as video, sound, and graphics that inspire consumers to engage and interact with the underlying product/service. That's the reason behind seeing white text ads, as well as displays with vivid visuals, in order to enhance audience engagement[7].

Various types of rich media content exist, including website videos, social media images, infographics, podcasts, and GIFs. Live broadcasts from relevant webinars are another source of great content. Rich content may be a strong tool for improving digital communication and creating user experiences that seem as natural as interacting with friends or family. As consumer behaviours changed in an increasingly digital world, brands must be accessible across all possible communication channels. With a plethora of communication options available to them, such as messaging apps, live chat, social media networks, video chat, and phone, web users expect fast connection with their favourite brands and responses that feel authentic and personable at every stage of their purchasing process.

Rich materials in Digital Social Entrepreneurship
Rich materials play a crucial importance in digital social entrepreneurship as they can contribute to the success and growth of a digital business through utilising videos, images, podcasts, infographics, and interactive elements. In specific, the usage of these tools and methods can contribute to the following:

- User Engagement: Rich content can capture the audience attention faster as it includes different types of media, and not only plain text.
- Shareability: By using rich content, there is higher possibility to have a larger number of shared content on social media as the content itself offers increase of brand visibility and attracting new customers.
- SEO benefits: Incorporating rich content can improve search engine rankings and provide a better user experience, leading to SEO benefits.
- Establishing authority: Providing valuable and well-researched content can establish digital entrepreneurs as experts in their field, building credibility, loyalty, and trust with their new and old customers.
- Rich content can help educate customers about a product or service through the illustrated methods which lead to better-informed and more satisfied customers. The plain text content is not always attractive for educational purposes.

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[7] What Is Rich Content? - Gepard PIM. https://gepard.io/glossary/what-is-rich-content

- Storytelling: Storytelling is another important element for every entrepreneur to connect the customers with the idea behind the enterprise and causes it supports. With rich content, digital social entrepreneurs are allowed to tell their brand story in a more immersive and captivating way, creating emotional connections with the audience.
- Competitive advantage: This is one of the key aspects in every enterprise to survive and succeed in the market it operates. Incorporating a variety of rich content materials into their marketing strategy can give digital entrepreneurs a competitive advantage over competitors using only text-based content.

How to Produce High-Quality Content
Every company's mission is to provide unique, high-quality content. One can begin by researching the target audience and analyse which rich content samples they prefer to interact with, whether they are photographs, videos, or animated GIFs. Researching the demography can also assist organisation in determining the correct rich content tone that will encourage engagement.

When to use Rich Content?
Rich content can be used across all customer journey steps in the business. Virtual tours, high resolution images, on-site spreadsheets can help to boost the visibility of products and assist customers to better comprehend it.

12.   Product Hunt

Official website to access the tool: https://www.producthunt.com/

What is Product Hunt?
The Product Hunt is a community-driven platform where product creators and marketers can showcase their products to a tech-savvy audience. The community engages with products through votes and reviews, giving praise and feedback equally – essential ingredients in the early stages of product development[8]. People may find some of the most recent hardware, applications, and software goods on Product Hunt. Many inventors and entrepreneurs use the site to effectively launch their new product, and other mainstream products are tracked out by other members of the community.

Who can use it?
Everyone can use the Product Hunt, but the platform does feature three primary user kinds: members, hunters, and makers. Everyone who joins Product Hunt becomes a member of the platform. Most members, on the other hand, simply use Product Hunt to discover the latest products on the platform. Hunters are users who upload products for others to easy find, while makers are the ones who make the product and subsequently launch it on the platform.

How to become a maker?
The process is very simple. First a personal account needs to be created, once created the user has to follow some steps. To launch a new product developed by the user on Product Hunt, click the orange Submit button in the top-right corner of the homepage, enter the product URL, and then click Get Started. On the following screen, the user must provide information such as the product's name, tagline, links, description, and select certain themes to categorize it.

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[8] How to Launch a Product on Product Hunt - A Step by Step Guide - Userpilot. https://userpilot.com/blog/how-to-launch-a-product-on-product-hunt/

## 13.	Quora

Quora

Official website to access the tool: https://www.quora.com/

Quora is a website for questions and answers that was launched in 2009 and it has more than 300 million users. Because of its high search prominence, it is considered as a useful site to increasing company awareness by answering questions. Quora is a platform where users can ask and answer questions on various topics. The community is passionate about sharing knowledge, and the platform has a reputation for providing high-quality answers. Users can follow topics or other users to stay updated on the latest discussions, and the platform includes a blogging feature and a voting system for answers. Quora provides a powerful tool for learning, sharing knowledge, and engaging in thoughtful discussions with people from around the world.

How to become a user?
It is simple to join Quora. All that is required for an individual/enterprise is to sign up for Quora and begin answering questions. The site is mostly self-moderated, with excellent answers being upvoted and spam replies being downvoted. Members of Quora can also report abusive or spam responses. Quora has moderators who examine reported answers. The following are the simple steps to go through and becoming a user:
1. Creating an account: Sign up with an email, Google, or Facebook account.
2. Setting up a profile: Adding a profile picture, bio, and interests.
3. Finding topics: Searching for topics that interest the entrepreneur or follow specific topics and questions to stay updated.
4. Asking questions: Creating a new question with a clear and concise title and providing context.
5. Answering questions: Browsing questions and providing helpful and detailed answers.
6. Upvoting or downvoting: A digital social entrepreneur can upvote or downvote answers to indicate their quality.
7. Following users: Following other users to see their questions and answers.
8. Writing posts: Using Quora's blogging feature to share knowledge and insights on specific topics.

Usefulness of Quora in Digital Social Entrepreneurship
Quora.com is important for digital social entrepreneurship as it provides the opportunity in increasing brand awareness, generate leads, to create contact/network with other entities in their industry, conduct market research, and improve SEO. By answering relevant questions related to their industry on Quora, digital social entrepreneurs can establish themselves as thought leaders and attract potential customers who are interested in their products or services. Additionally, Quora provides a platform for entrepreneurs to connect with like-minded individuals and gain insights into their target audience's pain points and challenges.

14.   BetaList

Official website to access the tool: https://betalist.com/faq#what_is_betalist

Beta List is a website that allows visitors to find and gain early access to the most recent internet start-ups. It allows entrepreneurs to market their start-up to a group of early adopters who are eager to provide feedback. This platform is considered as a good source of connecting with the customers. BetaList is a platform that provides resources and tools for start-ups to succeed, including a newsletter, job board, and directory of resources. The platform uses a selective curation process to ensure high-quality products are featured. This can help start-ups gain exposure, receive feedback, and connect with potential customers and investors.

How to advertise on BetaList as a start-up?
Start-ups need to be technology start-ups, because Beta List it is focused on technology. Each start-up is given two opportunities to be featured. Once pre-launch, and once during launch. There should be at least a few weeks between those posts. One really important note is that the product should be either recently launched or still be unreleased. Products that have received press coverage are not very likely to be accepted.

The process of getting started at Beta List is very simple and it consists of the following steps:
1. Creating an Account: In order to use Beta List every individual/entity needs to create an account. The account can be created by using a valid email address or social media account.
2. Submitting the Product: When the account is created, the entrepreneur can submit the product for consideration. A detailed description, photos/screenshots and videos should be included.
3. Waiting for Review process: The submitted product goes through a reviewing process by the Beta List team. In case it is selected, it will be featured on the website and newsletter.
4. Engaging with the Community: Once the product is featured on the website and it is accessible to everyone, the entrepreneur has the chance to engage with the community by responding to comments and feedback to gain valuable insights.
5. Using Other Beta List Resources: The entrepreneur should take advantage of Beta List's job board and directory of resources for entrepreneurs to grow their digital social enterprises.
6. Connecting with Investors and Customers: Knowing that Beta List has a large audience of investors and early adopters, the entrepreneur should actively use this platform to connect with potential customers and investors who can support their digital enterprises and help them grow.

15.   ECommerce/ online stores for DSE

Image Source: https://ewm.swiss/en/blog/future-e-commerce-what-trends-we-need-look-out

What is an eCommerce platform?
An eCommerce platform is the software that an online business uses to manage all their merchant purchasing needs as well as their own seller needs. Product pages, reviews, transactions, order fulfilment, customer assistance, and returns are examples of these requirements.

15.1 The 6 best eCommerce platforms

Shopify – for getting up and running quickly.
Shopify has been around for more than 16 years with almost four million stores built and it is considered as a great option for small businesses looking to get an online store up and running quickly. The process of signing up is very simple – the user can sign up for a 14-day credit card-free trial period and they will have a first build of the store. After that the onboarding wizard guides one through the process of adding items, changing the layout of the shop, connecting one's own domain, and setting up to accept payments. So, even if a person has never constructed a website before, they will not get lost in Shopify's user-friendly web app. Everything is well labelled, and setup instructions are extensive.

Shopify offers 11 free themes and over 100 expensive themes which cost from $180. One can also select over 1,300 templates on ThemeForest or hire a professional designer who is already familiar with the platform to create a tailored one for them. If the chosen theme is not integrated into Shopify, one can discover an extension, plug-in, or service in the app store that does it. This can be done by just navigating to apps.shopify.com, picking the app, and clicking Add App.

Square – for selling in-person and online.
Square is one of the best options for small businesses that want to sell in-person, such as at a farmer's market or craft fair, as well as online. The online and offline orders are all managed under a single dashboard, eliminating the need to bounce between apps, seek down client data using individual spreadsheets, or by manually entering the items after the fact.

Square features some of the greatest onboarding in the industry. After signing up there is an interview that must be filled up with details and requirements regarding the organisation/company and it will help to set everything that fits those requirements. Square makes it simple to sell items based on the desires of costumers. Depending on the needs, users can create a single shopping page, a shoppable Instagram page, or a comprehensive website and online store. The default theme will also be modified to reflect the business category chosen by the user.

Ecwid – by Lightspeed for starting with a free plan—then growing
Ecwid is considered as one of the best place to launch an online store with minimal initial outlay. Ecwid offers a free plan that allows selling first 10 products with no costs implied and after the business starts gaining profit upgrade tiers starting at $14/month. There are also no additional transaction fees on top of what the payment gateway charges, so it isn't skimming any profit with hidden fees.

When signing up, Ecwid offers the option to integrate an existing store in platforms like WordPress, Weebly, Drupal. The Dashboard displays a large, bold to-do list that leads through the process of setting up the site, adding the first products, localising the store, and deciding how to distribute good, and be paid for them.

BigCommerce – for large-volume sellers
BigCommerce is mostly used by multinational companies. The platform is aimed at businesses that are already selling a lot, either in units or dollars. It offers the option to develop and maintain the store from anywhere if the user has access to a web browser and the Internet. Another advantage of this platform is that it provides a variety of configurable templates to assist in designing the online store. Whichever items the users want to sell, BigCommerce will make it simple to showcase them and give a plethora of effective tools to assist in marketing them to an online audience.

WooCommerce – for adding a shopping cart to an existing WordPress site
WooCommerce is an open-source flexible software solution built for WordPress-based websites. It is used mostly to create online e-commerce shops. With this software solution, anyone can turn their regular website into a fully functioning online store, complete with all the necessary e-commerce features[9]. WooCommerce also allows users to manage their online stores easily from setting up product displays, and managing orders, to accepting multiple payment gateways.
This solution is free to use! Users can easily download the WooCommerce plugin from the official WordPress plugin directory. One of the reasons why many businesses choose WooCommerce is because it has also a beginner-friendly interface, so the users don't need to be an expert in IT or coding to begin.

Wix – for building a complete site
Wix is considered as the best option to build a full website where the online store is part of the website, and it is a great option for small and medium businesses. The site itself is very user-friendly. First, the user must pick what type of website he/she wants to create and the concepts on which the website is going to help users to visit the site. There are wide range of options that users can select based on the topic that is covered by the company. Wix gives its users a free platform to implement the ideas as they want. Also, it gives lots of readymade templates to use as per users' choice. What makes Wix an innovation solution is also the option of Artificial Design Intelligence that designs a website with some human logic.

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[9] Sellcloud Managed WordPress Server Ready in Minutes, Spin Unlimited. https://sellcloud.io/

16. Using social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok) for the benefits on social capital of the DSE of seniors and adults with disabilities

Internet communities such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, and many others have fundamentally transformed the way we interact and communicate with one another. These platforms have allowed like-minded individuals from all over the world to connect, communicate and share information in real-time. With the exponential growth in internet users, social networking sites have become a vital aspect of people's social lives. People use these platforms to communicate, build relationships, share ideas, and collaborate with others who share similar interests. These online communities offer a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for people to connect and engage with others who they may not have had the chance to meet otherwise.

These platforms have also played a significant role in spreading information and news. Social media has emerged as a primary source of news and information for many people. It allows individuals to stay informed about current events, share their perspectives, and engage in discussions with others. In many ways, social media has democratized access to information, allowing anyone with an internet connection to share their voice and perspective.

16.1 How can social networking sites be used for the benefits on social capital?

Social capital can be categorised as either bonding or bridging. Bonding social capital typically involves close relationships with family and friends, while bridging social capital refers to more casual connections between individuals. In the context of forming relationships, bonding social capital generally has a greater positive impact, as it fosters strong, long-lasting ties. In contrast, bridging social capital tends to create weaker, short-term connections.

A wide range of beneficial social outcomes are often associated with social capital. As individuals exchange information, they become more knowledgeable about topics such as financial markets, public health, religion, cutting-edge technology, illnesses, social issues, and more. Social capital also enhances the likelihood of collective action against social problems or in support of various causes. Although there is potential for misuse, social capital is generally perceived as having a positive influence on society.

Social networking platforms play a significant role in fostering social capital. By connecting like-minded individuals, these platforms facilitate discussions around shared interests and help establish and maintain relationships. In this way, social networking sites contribute to both bonding and bridging social capital by making it easier for people to access information about one another and build meaningful connections. Ultimately, the primary impact of social networking sites on social capital lies in simplifying the process of gaining knowledge and fostering appropriate relationships.

16.2 Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok usage for the benefits on social capital of the DSE of seniors and adults with disabilities

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok are commonly used by digital and social enterprises to promote their brand and engage with their audience. Each platform has its own strengths and can be used in different ways to achieve different goals. Below is presented how these platforms can be used for the benefits on social capital of the digital social enterprises of seniors and adults with disabilities.

Facebook:
- Creating and managing interest-based groups to connect seniors and adults with disabilities to peers and support networks.
- Sharing relevant articles, videos, and resources related to healthcare, accessibility, financial support, and more.
- Hosting live events, such as Q&A sessions, conferences, webinars, or workshops, to engage the audience and provide valuable information or skills.
- Using Facebook's advertising tools to reach a larger audience and raise awareness about the needs and rights of seniors and adults with disabilities and their participation in digital entrepreneurship.

Twitter:
- Sharing short, timely updates about news, events, and resources relevant to seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Using hashtags to join and create conversations around specific topics, such as accessibility, healthcare, or disability rights.
- Connecting with influencers, organisations, and policymakers to advocate for the needs and rights of seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Retweeting and engaging with relevant content from other users to foster a sense of community and belonging.

LinkedIn:
- Creating a professional network for seniors and adults with disabilities, allowing them to connect with potential employers, partners, or mentors.
- Sharing job listings, volunteer opportunities, and educational resources tailored to the needs of seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Publishing articles and leadership content that present the skills, talents, and contributions of seniors and adults with disabilities in the workforce.
- Engaging with companies, organisations, and professionals to promote inclusive hiring practices and policies.

TikTok:
- Creating and sharing short, engaging videos that educate, inform, or entertain seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Utilising TikTok's algorithm to reach a wider audience and raise awareness about the needs and rights of seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Collaborating with influencers, advocates, and content creators to amplify messages and foster a sense of community.
- Participating in trending challenges or hashtags to engage the audience and promote a positive, inclusive environment.

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