

**MEDIA  
EDUCATION IN  
THE DIGITAL  
ATELIER**

## AUTHOR

Maria Leonida  
KARPOS CENTRE  
FOR EDUCATION  
AND INTERCULTURAL  
COMMUNICATION

[maria@karposontheweb.org](mailto:maria@karposontheweb.org)

## ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces the relation of the **APP YOUR SCHOOL** project with Media Literacy from its origins to its final implementation through the Digital Ateliers (workshops). An overview of the Ateliers' Key Questions assists in studying the intentions of the partners in relation to their goals and their understanding of Media Literacy. The conclusions present ideas about where and how the Digital Ateliers could open a discourse with media Education concerns.

## KEYWORDS

**MEDIA EDUCATION**

**MEDIA LITERACY**

**WORKSHOP**

**DESIGN**

**OUTCOME**

**MEDIA**

Media Education as such was not the core element of this project but there was an abundance of media involved in its workshops and it was mentioned in several key points of the process. An effort to specify this relation, requires to have a look on how it was approached from the initial stages of the programme to the phase of design and application of the workshops in the different countries.

## THE EU CALL AND THE PARTNERS

In line with the predefined guidelines of the call (Erasmus+ 2016) the **APP YOUR SCHOOL** application selected two among the horizontal priorities:

- Open and innovative education, training and youth work, embedded in the digital era;
- Inclusive education, training and youth (addressing diversity in formal and non-formal) education and training, developing social, civic, intercultural competences and media literacy).

For this EU call, media literacy seems to be part of a wider set of educational priorities, connected to inclusive education and intercultural competencies while the first priority which addresses innovative education embedded in the digital era, surprisingly does not connect to Media Education or Literacy.

At the same time the premise of the leader in their original project proposal synopsis states that "the interaction between technologies and our life poses to media education and media literacy (as a goal) to penetrate deeper into the creative contexts capable of social and educational challenges." Technology here is seen as a part of our everyday practices capable of enhancing creative contexts that foster educational challenges. This connects the technological setting of our era to values of Media Education and Literacy while creative situations are meant to be necessary for educational, and thus social challenge. It would be worth underlying here that the project leader consciously dealt with the common ambiguity among Media Education and Media Literacy by including both terms.

The project itself brought together 8 specialized but varied organisations from countries around the EU, three of which were Media experts (Italy, Greece, Poland). Three were attached to formal education authorities (Finland, Turkey, Portugal), one addressed training and networking into non formal education (Czech Rep), one specialized in training in the field of integration and socialization (Lithuania) and finally an associated partner is a University Department, expert in digital technologies (Finland). During the kick off meeting (October 2016, Prague) the presentations of the partners displayed, a wide spectrum of applied, collaborative teaching and learning practices which involved a variety of media but in the writer's view, were not necessarily coherent in scope and aims. The reason would be the different standpoint to two main factors: their aims for the use of media and their theoretical background, and thus identity.

## MEDIA EDUCATION AND DEFINITIONS WITHIN THE PROJECT

Media Education is generally defined as learning about media and developing both critical understanding and active participation (D. Buckingham, 2003, p.4). We also find the widely accepted and similar positions of Buckingham (2005), Bekkhus & Zacchetti (2009) who define Media literacy “as the ability to access media, to understand and to critically evaluate media contents and different aspects of media and to create communications in a variety of contexts.”

Hobbs (2010) adds the notions of “reflect” and “act” towards a social sphere of responsibility which are also of interest to this project.

The project leader expressed the intention to introduce these ideas through the presentation of the project’s external evaluator, researcher P. Fastrez, during the first Trainers’ Training (Bologna, January 2017). This introduction focused on media competences and what a model user of media literacy is, presented definitions of Media Literacy as proposed by researchers (e.g. Hobbs, Bazalgette, Ofcom) during the last 30 years. The presentation titled “Media literacy competences in the Digital Ateliers”, included the following chapters:

1. What is a competence?
2. Defining media
3. Media literacy as competences: a few frameworks
4. Examples of research involving ML competences
5. What ML competences in the Digital Ateliers?

The question addressed was how we can enhance competencies in an educational environment through the use of media by taking into account all aspects (informational, formal, communicative and social). The presentation gradually connected the 6 signpost areas suggested by BFI (Bazalgette 1989) to new factors related to the development of technology (Jenkins et al. 2006): internet exploration, connectivity of young people, non linear network of media producers to consumers and media creators to audiences.

This input was informative and spherical however, in terms of creating a common reference for the partners, the length, the effort to include both history, research and current views made the presentation less effective than it could be for guiding a Media Literacy concept for the partnership. The idea of competencies remained an important element throughout the project but not necessarily connected to Media Education.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL ATELIERS

The leader (Centro Zaffiria) proposed a document with guidelines for designing a DA. The methodology was based on “the teacher guiding an exploration”, in three steps, with interdisciplinary connections and an out of the box attitude towards technology. (*Key Points to keep in Mind to design a Digital Atelier* - pg. 143). For this reason, a “Key question” was demanded for each DA which would offer a condense idea for the whole workshop as such: “summarize here your Digital Atelier using only one question” and later on “How you will present the research you would start in the Digital Atelier? Move each phase starting with a question “. (*Digital Atelier, Sheet for first Proposal* - pag. 144).

As the author has no personal experience of all the 43 workshops (7 countries x 5 plus 1 x 8 DAs), we propose firstly to find out if and how Media Education was incorporated in the DA’s from their most concise expression, i.e. the Key Question. This is indicative both of the experimentation that followed and of the intentions of each partner or specific trainer/designer. In parallel, the writer will extract information from the Full proposal templates and the visual references that accompany each DA.

## A CATEGORISATION

Our reading in search of media use, firstly came across the observation that there was a strong interest in specific themes which were mentioned as the main goal of many DAs. For reasons of this study, the Key questions were divided in two sections to discover groupings in terms of themes, media and technology. (Appendix DA TITLES, KEY QUESTIONS AND CODIFICATION, pag.99).

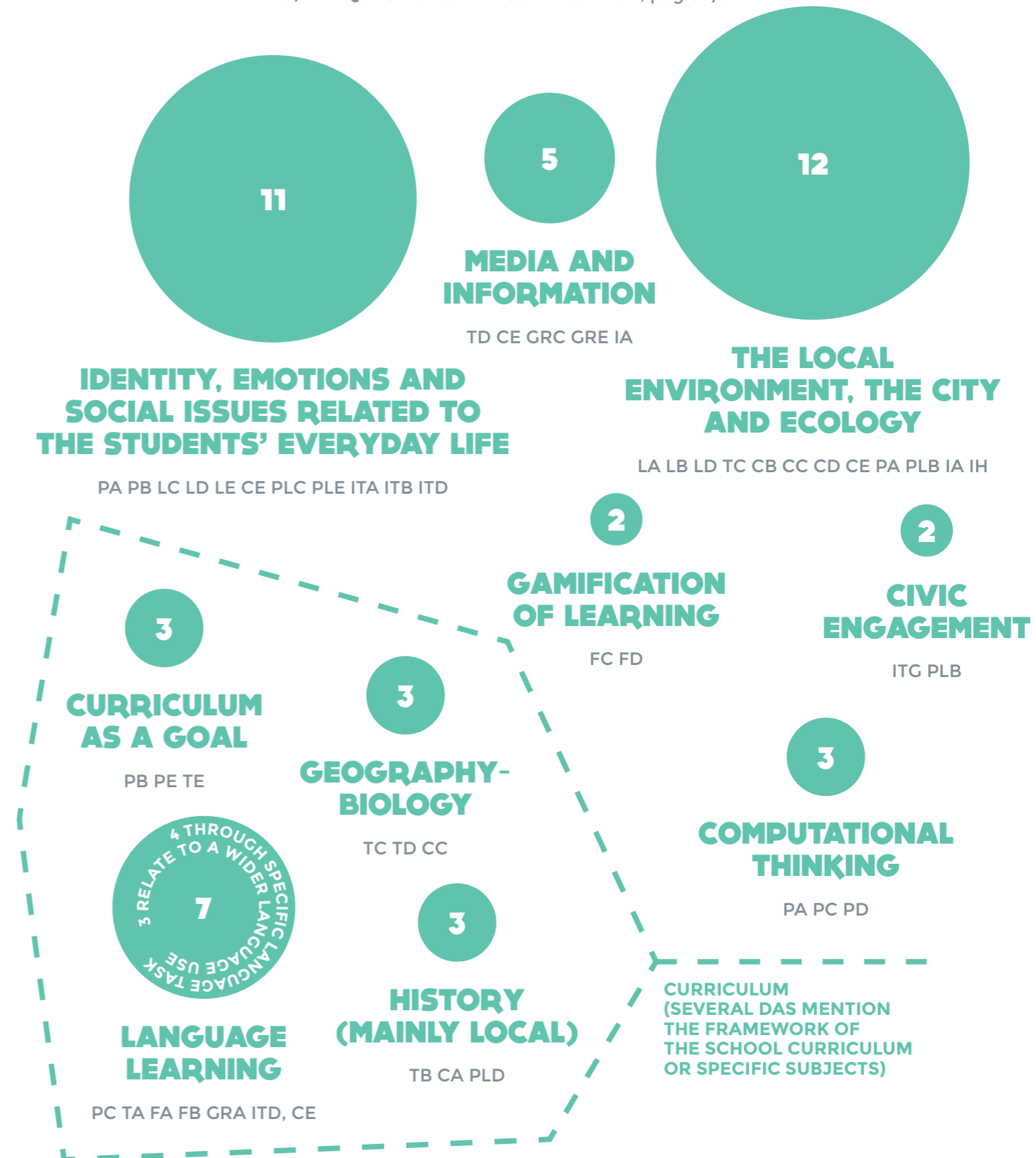


TABLE 1: Goals of Digital Ateliers according to their Key Questions

Media as such and communication are found to be just a small part. The themes, though, show that technology and media are used to approach several subjects in a variety of cultural contexts. The partners worked both in different kind of residential locations, from big cities to villages, and in mixed conditions as far as formal and non formal education are concerned. In addition, partners were free to choose the kind of technologies and media that suited their own local facilities. So the mixture and lack of systematic approach that we see in the table “DA Titles, key questions and codification”, reveals how familiar and multifaceted learning through media can be today in European countries.

In terms of the use of media as a tool for specific goals, we observe that media and technology appear within a broad spectrum. The discussion about when any kind of technology intends to carry meanings and processes that engage in mediation and communication is ongoing and we could not deal with it here.

We will study the specific references of media and technology mentioned in the Key Questions:

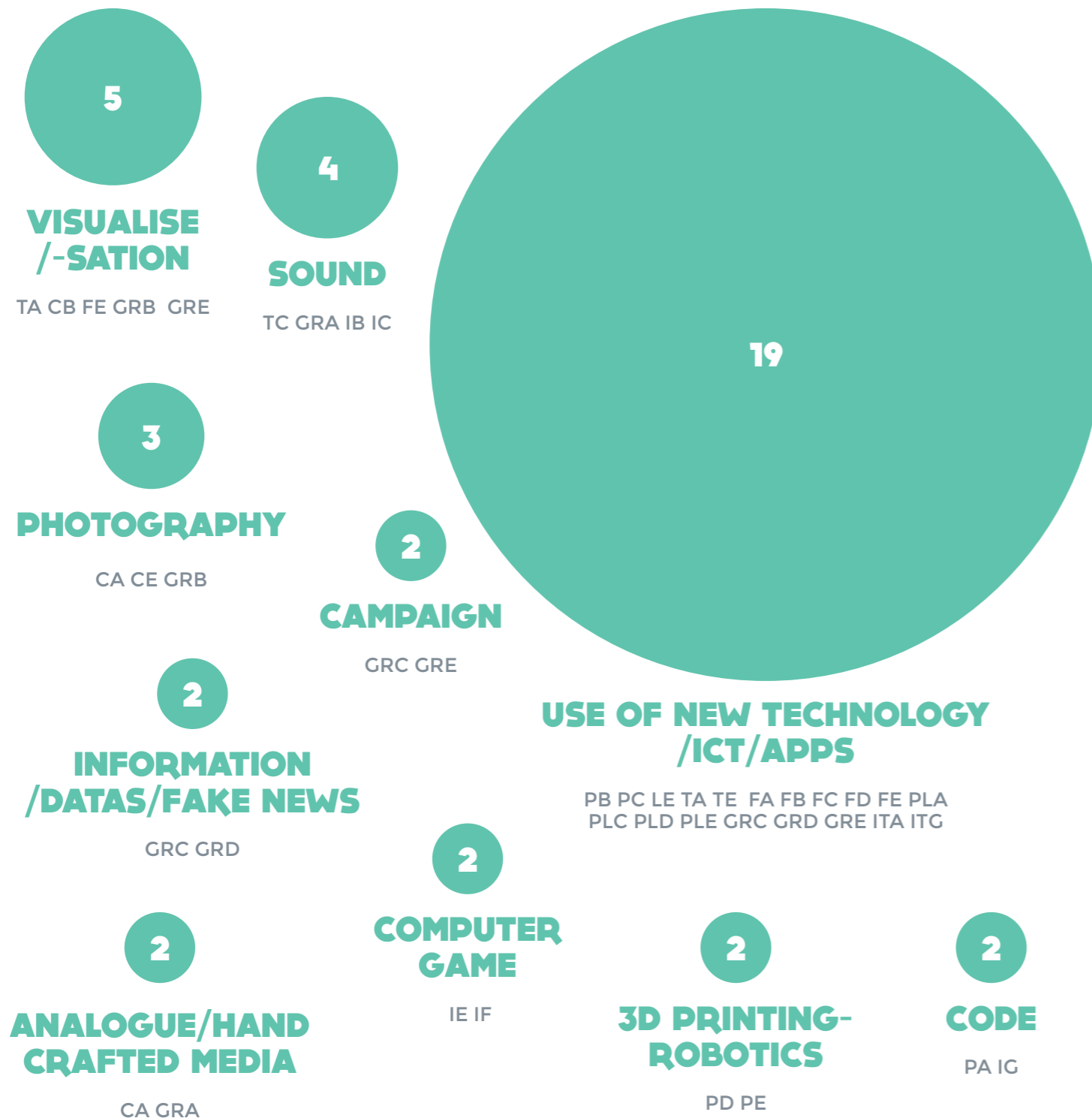


DIAGRAM 2: Use of media in the Digital Ateliers according to their Key Questions

In a few cases do DAs deal with media purely as a communication method such as creating a campaign, hiding and revealing information or using sound as a distinct element of audiovisual language for expressing feelings and messages. Some also try to see storytelling in a critical way: 2 Czech (Cb, Ce), 3 Greek, 1 Portuguese (Pc), 2 Polish (Pb, Pd), 2 Italian (Ia, Id). Five DAs also call for the “visualization” of a theme already from their Key question, showing thus an intense interest for one of the basic features of media which is the visual language and open a discussion on the possible multiplicity of such visions. Finally, -although not evident in the Key questions- only one DA (Pc) uses pre existing audiovisual material (projection of short films) and one (Ca) existing photographic material to initiate a discussion around storytelling. However, the short films in Pc (Virtual Reality - New ways to work storytelling) are screened via VR devices and focus on aspects of how VR stories especially allow variables in looking at a story.

It is not always clear why one device or format was chosen instead of another. But there is a strong presence of “new technology” and Apps which show that the inclusion of these new experiences and processes is still an open issue in countries both north and south of Europe. E.g. both Finland and Turkey worked almost exclusively with tablets on existing commercial/ educational Apps, however in a different context and level.

- In general, media were used to:
- record reality and then allow for some kind of editing or further use
  - view and/or create information via a device
  - use and experiment with devices
  - transmit a new message in some form of medium
  - simulation

A country based synopsis of the use of media in DAs.

The tables offer also a reading in terms of Partners’ tendencies.

**THE PORTUGUESE PARTNER** had a background in using coding and high quality hardware (small robots, VR, electronics...) aiming mainly at computational thinking but also collaboration and writing.

**THE LITHUANIAN PARTNER** used a variety of online open source platforms (Canva, Pixlr, Aurasma, / use of ICT tools, Instagram, FB) for addressing a wide spectrum of social issues.

**THE CZECH REPUBLIC PARTNER** developed an artistic, often stylised approach combining analogue and digital practices where self and space representation, Point of View and diversity were explored.

**THE FINNISH PARTNER** focused on using Apps and web based platforms for language learning and development. They experimented with gamification of learning too.

**THE POLISH PARTNER** combined varied materials and media storytelling techniques with a focus on local society and space.

**THE GREEK PARTNER** used classic forms (sounds and photos) as well as new technologies (Apps, software and social media) with a general tendency in messages, storytelling and PoV.

**THE TURKISH PARTNER** focused on applying massive use of tablets with existing Apps for small cognitive tasks in the classrooms.

**THE ITALIAN PARTNER**, being the project leader and familiar with the proposed methodology, moved easily between analogue and digital activities trying a variety of new interactive technologies for cultural purposes.

The results show that partners had a variety of understandings about:

- media and their combination (still photography, video, new media (apps and software) and programming/ robotics, VR)
- combination of media with other arts e.g. drawing/ painting (Italy, Czech, Greece), crafted constructions (mainly paper-carton), and theatrical elements (Poland, Czech Rep, Greece)
- technological devices as a main tool for experimentation (through trial of existing apps (Turkey and Finland), or new devices as a central experience (robots and VR: Portugal)
- pedagogy (involving non formal afternoon or weekend meetings, formal education and either a closer or less dependent attitude towards national curriculums).

Partners reflected on local necessities and ideas around not only Media Education but also a number of relative notions: the whole spectrum of how media are a tool for developing social and literacy competences, and how certain media are considered more desirable/ necessary than others, what are the connections between analogue, media and digital practices, and what are the possibilities of digital practices within formal or non formal education.

## CONCLUSIONS

Most DAs are designed around the idea of using technology and learning through media and not about media and the different agencies involved. Discourse and discussion about the communication process and its forms was rather exceptionally included in the objectives of the DAs (e.g. *One idea many variations*, Gr b), *Self portrait and Identity*, Ce), *Designing Soundscapes*, I b). In addition, deconstructing the medium and questioning its purpose, would be an interesting approach of Media education in the course of the DAs which the leader had originally suggested. This e.g. would mean a more systematic critical attitude about the form and functionality of the Apps used, if and how the uses their producers suggest are unique, expandable or possible to see in alternative ways. There was one case where technology itself inspired a new versatile use (*In the Ocean*, Cc).

Several DAs involved 1. observation or research 2. a hand made process and 3. more than two or three platforms or media. Especially we find this in: *Designing Soundscapes* (It), *Search myself on the web* (It), *Self portrait and Identity* (Ce), *City Fonts* (Pla), *Urban Box* (Ple), *QRcode* (Grd). The big variety of analogue and digital techniques which were often combined in a complementary way, open a path to discovering the qualities of each specific medium in comparison to another and the contemporary multipurpose devices. This passing from one technique to another enhances a transmedia approach which may add to a critical point of view. The author believes that understanding why these processes were chosen, their possibilities and limitations was missing in many cases. The experience however in developing content was rich and inclusive in both forms and outputs. In addition, the play of possibilities of the new media (through navigating and editing, using apps on any device, mixing and mash up styles etc.) assist an unconscious understanding of this networked, quick and non linear aspect of media education. A further study could see into the complementary mode of these educational scenarios to advance students' understanding of the messages involved and the different way they are dealt with in each medium (e.g. students making a fake news item in Facebook, in a poster and in a short video or how point of view and audience interpretation vary from still pictures to quick digital collages).

Generally speaking, access, understanding and creation are served by a large number of the DAs. Access especially is omnipresent in DAs with a great variety of devices or kinds of media and technology involved. The aspect of creation is also very strong as the DA approach is an intense creative and exploratory process, encouraging combinations of both analogue and digital media, hands on and crafted phases as well as a passing from one technique to another. Their interdisciplinary aspect is a strong characteristic and it was inventively combined with the creative processes: from paper to drawing, scanning, recording, listening, gluing, talking to people, looking through a multitude of screens for a variety of purposes, clicking on several platforms, choosing images and shapes, writing short texts, drawing the digital and digitizing hand crafted elements. Some understanding is encouraged. What is not always evident is the critical evaluation and reflexion.

The project mainly aimed at an informed and fresh use of media in order to accomplish an enriched experience through digital activities. These activities had the intention to combine skills developed both within and outside the classroom. Building consciousness about the various agencies and interactions involved among producer, technology, message, genre, consumer/ audience and representation did not appear as a priority, although certain workshops enhanced a critical understanding of media languages, media production and use of the web.

The versatility of these workshops have a potential for Media Education which could be explored at a second stage where structure and critical reading of the chosen methods will be both studied and tried out.

## APPENDIX DA TITLES, KEY QUESTIONS AND CODIFICATION

The table presents the DA's performed by each partner country. "Code" was created especially for this chapter to facilitate the reader who would like to search further certain DAs in connection to the tables included in the rest of the chapter. "Tool" deals with any specific media which were considered necessary for arriving at an outcome (goal). "Goal" was the desired aim of each DA as described in the proposal.

AENIE - Portugal			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Pa	<i>Dash &amp; Dot - My Learning Companions</i>	How to use technology	To develop computational thinking, problem solving , creativity, become happier, coding with one language, collaboration skills
Pb	<i>Tablets in the classroom</i>	by using technology in the classroom in open curriculum (Use of a variety of applications)	Students well-being
Pc	<i>Virtual Reality - New ways to work storytelling and collaborative work</i>	How to use technology (VR)	To develop computational thinking and writing skills
Pd	<i>3D Printing and 3D creating</i>	Search 3D printing and creating	To develop computational thinking skills
Pe	<i>Mobile Resources on Education: Let`s learn with each other</i>	Robotics as Stem's approach	Connecting all of the curriculum

EDUPRO- Lithuania			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
La	<i>Transforming My City / Designers of the City</i>		How can we contribute to making our local city more attractive to us and others?
Lb	<i>Eco-Friendly City</i>		how can we make our city friendly to environment ?
Lc	<i>Emotions decoded</i>		Are we the ones to control emotions or emotions control us?
Ld	<i>Mission (Im)possible?</i>		What can be done to solve the problems related to tolerance among socially excluded groups ?
Le	<i>Day in the museum</i>	ICT	Connect or separate us to our parents, grandparents?

ESENLER - Turkey			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Ta	<i>Play with Words</i>	Using digital drawings?	How can we form simple sentences and words
Tb	<i>Biographies of famous People</i>		How can we teach the famous peoples' life to the students in a permanently.
Tc	<i>Animals' Sounds</i>		How can we teach animals and their sounds?
Td	<i>Let's discover our Body</i>		How can we discover the human body in a more detailed way?
Te	<i>Web 2.0 Tools in Education</i>		How can we use web 2 tools in education?

EUDA - Czech Republic			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Ca	<i>Photographic Stylization - Old Photos in our Age</i>	Through the media of photography and hand made creation of props and costumes?	Can we reconnect history and the present
Cb	<i>Different Vision of Urban Space</i>		How varied the visual perception of open urban space can be?
Cc	<i>In the Ocean</i>		How big is the impact of contemporary human civilization and its' behaviour on the change of ocean environment ?
Cd	<i>Mapping of the Radotin in Landscape</i>		Do you know the landscape around your hometown?
Ce	<i>Self-Portrait and Identity</i>	By a combination of photo and text and by using different art styles demonstrate the diversity of society?	How can we portray our unique soul, mind and identity

KUOPIO - Finland			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Fa	<i>Using Kahoot as a Tool for English Language Learning</i>	How to use Kahoot.com	- in learning and revising English vocabulary and structures.
Fb	<i>Padlet at Multidisciplinary Learning of Finnish Language and Literature</i>	How to use Padlet.com	- as a platform in examining the special features of the Finnish language.
Fc	<i>Seppo.io</i>	How can use Seppo.io	- to enhance learning process need with developing serious and learning games?
Fd	<i>Socrative Digital Gallery</i>	How to use Socrative.com	- to enhance learning process need with developing serious and learning games?
Fe	<i>Storybird.com at Multidisciplinary Learning of English Language</i>	How to use Storybird.com as a tool	- in creating a visualized book review

NEW MODERN POLAND FOUNDATION - Poland			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Pa	<i>City Fonts</i>	Using new technologies?	How to talk about your city and discover it
Pb	<i>Citizen</i>		What does it mean to be a citizen?
Pc	<i>Emotions</i>	With help of new technologies, apps and GIFs?	How to talk about emotions
Pd	<i>Urban Legends</i>	Using new technologies?	How to show city historic legends/ cultural text in a creative way
Pe	<i>Urban Box</i>	Using new technologies?	How to discover the history of family internal migrations in my town

KARPOS - Greece			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Gra	<i>Soundscapes</i>	Through sounds exclusively?	Can we tell a story?
Grb	<i>One Idea, many Variations</i>		How can an object or concept be visualized in different ways?
Grc	<i>Truth or Dare</i>	Through media?	How easy is it to become fake news victims, build and share your own news campaign
Grd	<i>Qr Codes</i>		How can I hide information and create a campaign?
Gre	<i>Infographics</i>		Can Information and knowledge be presented in a visual way to become more understandable and memorable by a wider audience?

ZAFFIRIA - Italy			
CODE	TITLE	TOOL/MEDIUM	GOAL
Ia	<i>AR for Storytelling</i>		How to "Increase the reality" of own school and local community?
Ib	<i>How does your territory sound? Designing Soundscapes</i>		How does your territory sound? What emotions and feelings do you remember from a sound? How to become a designer of a soundscape?
Ic	<i>Colour Matching: Landscape's Colours and Sounds</i>		What colour has a sound? How does a colour sound?
Id	<i>Search Myself on the Web</i>	Through technology?	How to find new images and words to tell about yourself
Ie	<i>Minecraft: interdisciplinary Blocks</i>	Through the videogame?	Is it possible to activate interdisciplinary connection paths
If	<i>Inclusion through Digital Technologies</i>		How many different skills do you need to create a video game?
Iga	<i>QR Stories</i>	Can be hidden in a code?	How much Wonder How to create a new public service made by teenagers?

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## CODING AND ROBOTING

A Best Practice from Turkey  
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