



DIGITAL TOOLS FOR EMPOWERMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

2026

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INTRODUCTION

Digital technology should enhance autonomy, not replace human support.

Digital transformation is redefining how social services are delivered across Europe. Beyond technical solutions, digital tools can become powerful levers for empowerment, participation, and social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable populations.

This brochure was developed as part of the European project NEF – Digital Technology and Empowerment in Social Work Training, funded by the Erasmus+ program. It presents innovative digital tools and practices from four European countries and highlights their role in empowering individuals and communities through social work.



A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE NEF PROJECT

NEF supports social workers in the digital transition by taking into account the diversity of situations experienced by the people they support.

Today, access to rights and autonomy increasingly depends on digital technology, but not everyone has the same means to benefit from it. It is essential to empower vulnerable people in the digital age by directly involving them in the decisions, choices, and systems that affect them.

This is the whole objective of the NEF Project – Digital and Empowerment in Social Work Training: a cooperation partnership between four European countries (France, Romania, Belgium and Portugal) aimed at identifying, promoting and co-developing innovative tools and practices to make digital technology a real lever for self-determination for people in vulnerable situations, for social, economic or personal reasons.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The NEF Project (2024-2027) aims to identify and promote concrete practices that strengthen the empowerment of people in vulnerable situations.

01 Mapping inspiring practices

Based on the expertise of the people concerned and that of social workers, various workshops were carried out in order to identify, evaluate and select practices promoting the empowerment of vulnerable populations.

02 Create training modules

Developing the digital skills of social workers allows them to provide more human and relevant support in an increasingly digital environment.

03 Experimenting with a digital tool

Our open and inclusive approach to vulnerable audiences ensures that our digital tools remain useful and suitable for many contexts, whether people are facing disability, poverty, digital exclusion or other forms of vulnerability.

04 Sharing knowledge and results

It is essential to strengthen the empowerment of vulnerable people in the digital age, by directly involving those concerned in the decisions, choices and mechanisms that affect them.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Romania

10 good practices have been identified. The peer-review workshop took place on 26 September 2025 in a hybrid half-day format, with 16 experts attending in person and 31 experts participating online. During the workshop, 8 good practices were presented by representatives of the implementing organizations. These 8 practices were then submitted to all participants for online voting (Google Forms), and 5 good practices were selected, including one digital tool.

France

29 good practices have been identified. The peer-review workshop took place on 3 November 2025 in a fully physical half-day format, with 24 experts and 93 students attending. During the workshop, the identified good practices were submitted for voting, and 5 best practices were selected, including one digital tool.

Belgium

8 good practices have been identified, including one digital tool. The peer-review workshop took place online on 14 November 2025 with 10 experts attending. During the workshop, the identified good practices were submitted for voting, and 5 best practices were selected, including one digital tool.

Portugal

5 good practices were identified, including one digital tool. In Portugal, 2 online peer-review workshops were held: one on 9 December 2025 and another on 20 February 2026, bringing together a total of 6 experts. During these sessions, participants evaluated the 5 identified good practices and classified them according to specific indicators.



EUROPEAN WORKSHOPS

12 december 2025

Results from the evaluations during the workshop:

The selected practices:

Romania:

Together for dignity, NoRO Center, Day Center for Counseling and Support

France:

Les recruteurs du hameau, Santé BD, Mental Health Peer Mediator

Portugal:

É um Restaurante, Eu Sou Digital, MentoRoma

Belgium:

Ensemble pour le numérique, La Box Numérique, Livret Smile



Public's favourites:

Les recruteurs du hameau
Mes enfants



Digital solutions ranking:

Mes enfants (FR)

Map4accessibility (PT)

SIMAS Portal (RO) & 123 DIGIT (BE)

SELECTED PRACTICES



Country	Practices	Description
Romania	Together for dignity	Develop adults' digital skills, daily life autonomy, and social participation to ensure access to rights, independence, and inclusion.
Romania	NoRO Center	Create an integrated national and European hub for rare diseases that ensures coordinated care and reduces diagnostic delays and isolation.
Romania	Day Center for Counseling and Support	Strengthen vulnerable rural families and improve children's well-being through integrated support and access to specialized services.

Country	Practices	Description
France	Les recruteurs du hameau	Involve supported individuals in recruiting professionals to ensure profiles better match users' expectations and relational needs.
France	Santé BD	Make health information accessible and support patients with comprehension difficulties throughout medical care.
France	Mental Health Peer Mediator	Integrate lived experience into mental health care to strengthen recovery, reduce stigma, and support return to work.

Country	Practices	Description
Portugal	É um Restaurante	Support professional integration of people facing homelessness or severe exclusion through restaurant work while challenging stereotypes via a social inclusion showcase model.
Portugal	Eu Sou Digital	Train up to one million low-skilled adults in basic digital literacy to enable access to rights, public services, and online banking.
Portugal	MentoRoma	Reduce school dropout among Roma children and youth by strengthening school–family–social service links and supporting educational progression.

Country	Practices	Description
Belgium	Ensemble, pour le numérique	Equip social and field professionals with reusable resources to help reduce the digital divide through everyday digital skills support.
Belgium	La Box Numérique	Provide social workers with a pedagogical toolbox to support basic digital tasks such as administrative procedures, communication, and information search.
Belgium	Livret Smile	Provide adults with intellectual disabilities with easy-to-understand life-skills materials and support self-expression and person-centered planning.

Together for Dignity

Who Are the Beneficiaries?

Adults with disabilities living in residential centres, many coming from:

- Highly disadvantaged social backgrounds
- Long-term institutionalisation
- Limited access to education and technology

Common needs:

- Low autonomy
- Social isolation
- Limited digital skills
- Reduced participation in community life



Results

Participants show clear progress:

- Improved self-confidence
- Concrete digital and practical skills
- Increased communication abilities
- Greater independence in daily life
- Stronger community involvement

The model is recognised locally as a good practice and can be replicated.

Key Takeaway

Combining digital skills, independent living training and community involvement creates a simple, transferable model for residential services across Europe.



Contact
ASSOC Association

Petrean Anamaria – Principal Social Worker
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<https://www.assoc.ro/>



NoRO Center



Services of the NoRo Center

- Day Center for Children with Disabilities
- Day Center for Adults with Disabilities
- Specialized Outpatient Medical Office
- Treatment and Rehabilitation Facility
- Platform www.centrulnoro.ro – Online Therapies
- Training Courses in Rare Disease Case Management
- NoRo Help Line



- The first integrated center of its kind in Romania, combining medical, social, and advocacy services in line with the European model of reference centers.
- Strong involvement of patients and families in governance and training activities

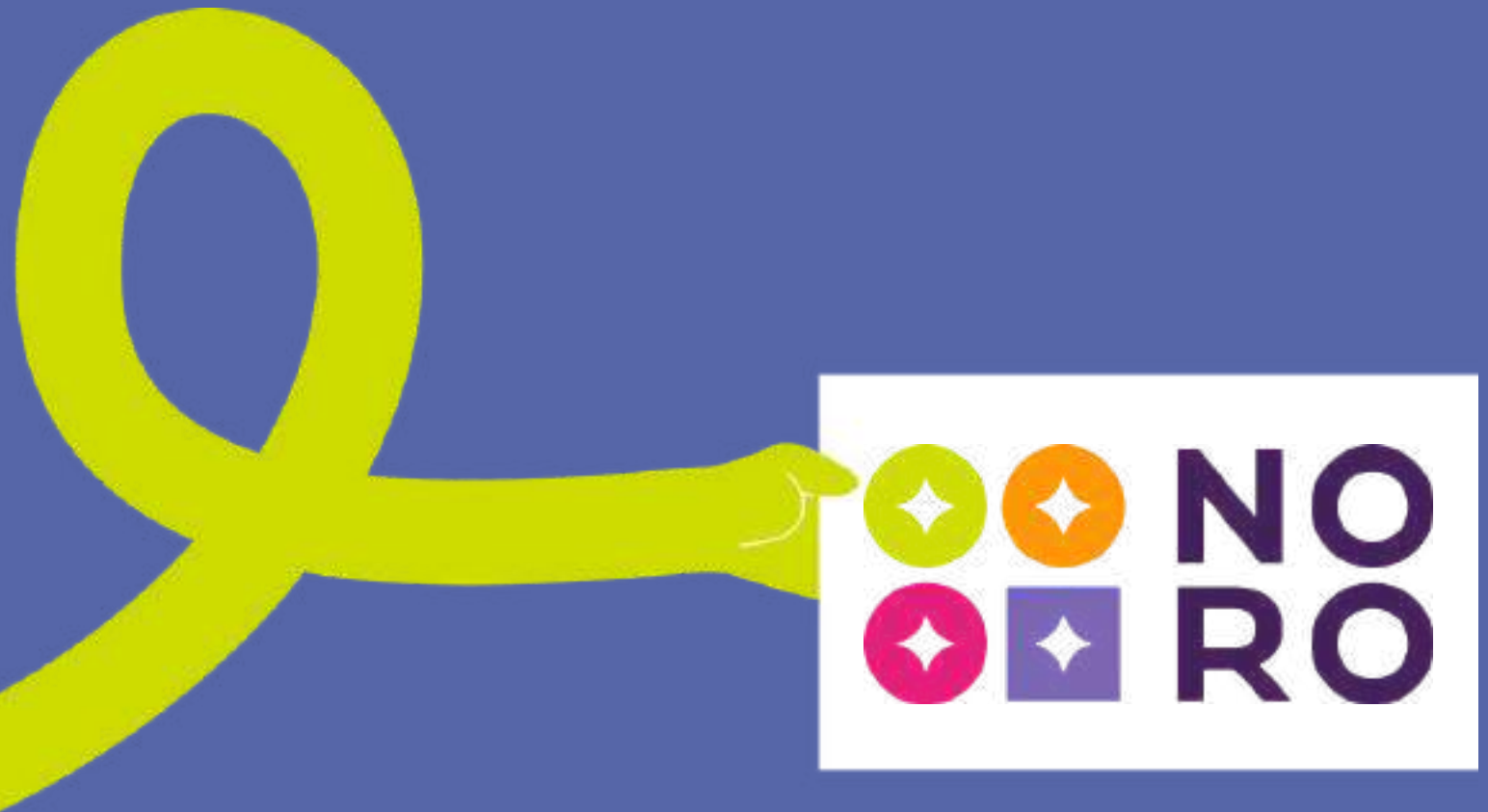


Strengths



Significant impact on shaping national rare disease policies and building a trained professional network.





Contact

office@centrulnoro.ro

+40 735 858 667

<https://www.centrulnoro.ro/index.php>

Day Center for Counseling and Support

COUNSELING & ACTIVITIES

- PREVENTING SCHOOL DROPOUT AND EXCLUSION
- DISABILITY SUPPORT AND SERVICE ACCESS
- RAISING PARENTAL AWARENESS
- SOCIO-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES: "CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP" (SESSIONS WITH ALL 11 CHILDREN)



A light but structured rural prevention mechanism that strengthens families through integrated psychological, educational, and social support, grounded in community-based governance aligned with European local development approaches.



Geographic proximity and trust-based relationships generate strong impact in preventing family separation and improving children's well-being.



Contact



0784 845 841



office@galvalesomesului.ro



<https://galvalesomesului.ro/>



Les recruteurs du hameau

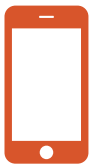
Shift user participation into a strategic HR role by creating an internal recruitment “brand” and agency, inspired by Swedish practices and designed to be transferable to other facilities.



Strong recognition of supported individuals, improved alignment between recruitment choices and real needs, and high media and institutional visibility.



Contact



03 20 88 88 00



lesrecruteursduhameau@gapas.org



Un accompagnement au quotidien

Inscrivez-vous à notre newsletter et restez informé de notre actualité, de la vie de nos établissements et services, de nos projets, etc.

 gapas.org

Santé BD



A co-constructed FALC image and health sheet bank that has become a national standard, enabling other associations to create their own comics and widely expand accessible health information.



Open access and wide dissemination with strong professional uptake, improving communication and adherence to care.



Faciliter l'accès à la santé pour tous





Contact



contact@santebd.org

An illustration showing a healthcare worker in a white coat interacting with several diverse patients. On the left, a woman in a teal dress is kneeling to talk to a young boy in an orange shirt. In the center, a woman in a blue dress is sitting in a wheelchair, talking to a healthcare worker. To the right, a young man in a red shirt and a woman in a green shirt are looking at a book together. Further right, a woman with a cane is talking to a healthcare worker. Above the illustration, the Santé BD logo is on the left, and the text 'Faciliter l'accès à la santé pour tous' is on the right, followed by icons for accessibility: a wheelchair, a person with a hearing aid, a person with a white cane, a person with a prosthetic arm, a person with a prosthetic leg, and a person with a hearing aid.

Accueil


Des bandes-dessinées pédagogiques expliquant la santé avec des dessins et des mots simples, pour mieux comprendre la santé, avoir moins peur pendant les consultations et mieux communiquer durant les consultations médicales.

BD SantéBD

Mental Health Peer Mediator



Professionalize peer support in hospitals by recognizing experiential knowledge as legitimate expertise alongside clinical care, in line with international peer support movements.



Research shows stronger therapeutic alliances, increased hope, and reduced stigma.



Médiateur de Santé-Pair

MSP



Contact



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ccoms@epsm-lm.fr



CCOMS
(Lille, France)

Centre collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé pour la recherche et la formation en santé mentale

LES PROJETS RECHERCHE ET LA FORMATION EN SANTÉ MENTALE

eceve Inserm

Le CCOMS

Le Centre collaborateur OMS pour la recherche et la formation en santé mentale (CCOMS)

 epsm-lille-metropole.fr

É um Restaurante



A strong integration of a social-enterprise restaurant model with intensive social support, fostering direct, positive interactions that reduce stigma and are recognized as effective internationally.



Provides real employment opportunities, increases public visibility, changes perceptions of homelessness, and aligns with European social business models.

Contact



+351 916 051 969



<https://crescer.org/project/eumrestaurante/>

Eu Sou Digital

A nationwide digital inclusion program mobilizing youth volunteers and local spaces, aligned with the European Digital Decade objectives.



Extensive geographic reach combined with practical everyday content and strong impact driven by volunteer engagement.



Eu Sou Digital

O programa "Eu Sou Digital" tem como objetivo promover a inclusão digital de adultos info-excluídos, assente numa rede nacional de jovens voluntários e centros de formação.

 Ponto Digital

MentoRoma

A long-term mentoring model rooted in trust, families, and Europe



A long-term (10-year) approach combining close individual mentoring with systemic work alongside families and institutions to support lasting personal pathways.



A strong, in-depth understanding of the Roma context, combined with active and sustained family involvement, and closely aligned with European recommendations and frameworks on Roma inclusion.

Ensemble, pour le numérique

A model grounded in real-life observations and local needs, developed through close fieldwork, that combines citizen training, staff upskilling, and accessible communication channels to ensure practical, inclusive, and sustainable impact.



Strong involvement of field workers, backed by clear institutional support to ensure effective and sustainable implementation.



<https://www.mi-is.be/fr/e-inclusion-belgium-cpas-2022-2>

La Box Numérique



A practical, easy-to-use toolkit that consolidates field practices and is designed for social workers rather than specialized ICT trainers.



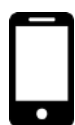
Free, structured, and easily reusable resources closely aligned with real-life digital needs (online procedures, smartphone use, online security, and digital costs), supported by dedicated funding from the ING Fund and the King Baudouin Foundation.





interface3
namur

Contact



081 / 63 34 90



Box Numérique

Boite à outils pour accompagner le publics avec le numérique, à destination des travailleurs sociaux et de l'insertion

 Interface3.Namur/

Les Livrets Smile

inclusion



Je donne mon avis
pour une vie meilleure!

Livret Smile




A participatory design approach involving people with intellectual disabilities, families, and professionals, using high-quality printed materials as empowerment tools alongside digital solutions.

Widely adopted by services, directly supporting the expression of preferences, and cost-effective to implement.

Mes besoins

-  Livret 1 : Mes repas
-  Livret 2 : Mon sommeil, mon repos
-  Livret 3 : Mon hygiène, mes vêtements
-  Livret 4 : Ma santé
-  Livret 5 : Mon logement
-  Livret 6 : Mes apprentissages
-  Livret 7 : Ma sécurité
-  Livret 8 : Ma communication
-  Livret 9 : Mon bien-être, stop aux mauvais traitements
-  Livret 10 : Ma vie relationnelle, affective et sexuelle




Mon entourage

-  Livret 11 : Ma famille, mes amis et les personnes autour de moi
-  Livret 12 : Mes enfants
-  Livret 13 : Mon éducateur référent

Mes activités

-  Livret 14 : Mon projet de vie
-  Livret 15 : Mes loisirs, mes congés et mes vacances
-  Livret 16 : Mon travail et mon volontariat
-  Livret 17 : Mes activités de tous les jours

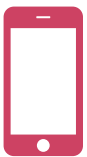
Ma vie dans la société

-  Livret 18 : Mes déplacements
-  Livret 19 : Ma participation aux décisions
-  Livret 20 : Mes droits, mon argent et mes papiers





Contact



0 2 2 4 7 2 8 1 9



secretariat@inclusion-asbl.be



Les Livrets Smile - Les outils faciles à comprendre

Sur cette page on peut télécharger "Les Livrets Smile".
C'est un outil pour aider les personnes avec un handicap ...

 Inclusion ASBL



EMPOWERMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

In social work, empowerment refers to strengthening people's capacity to make informed choices, develop their autonomy, and participate actively in society.

In a digital context, empowerment means:

- **Access to information and digital services.**

Access is the first step towards empowerment. It's not just about having equipment or an internet connection, but about being able to understand and use digital resources related to health, rights, education, and daily life. Guaranteeing this access means reducing exclusion linked to the digital divide and enabling everyone to take charge of their own journey.

- **The development of digital skills.**

Skills development includes mastering tools, but also critically understanding their uses. Training vulnerable populations in digital literacy means giving them the means to navigate safely, exercise their judgment, and make informed choices. This educational dimension helps increase self-confidence and the ability to act in a constantly evolving technological environment.

Digital tools should be used as means to promote dignity, autonomy and inclusion, and not as an end in themselves.

- **Participation and self-expression through technology.**

Digital technologies empower everyone to speak out, participate in social life, and share their experiences. Collaborative tools, participatory media, and citizen platforms foster individual and collective expression, while giving new visibility to often marginalized individuals. This type of participation cultivates a sense of belonging and social recognition.

- **Reducing social, geographical and institutional barriers.**

Digital technology can connect isolated individuals and open up previously inaccessible spaces for inclusion. Through online platforms and remote communication tools, beneficiaries can access services, training, and communities without geographical constraints. In this sense, technology becomes an instrument of social justice, capable of mitigating the barriers between territories, statuses, and institutions.



THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TOOLS

Digital technology supports social work; it:

- **Facilitates access to services and resources.**

Digital technologies simplify users' access to essential information and support services. Whether through online portals, interactive forms, or tracking applications, these tools reduce delays, eliminate the need for travel, and improve the clarity of administrative procedures. For professionals, this translates into increased responsiveness and transparency, provided that the interfaces remain accessible and understandable to everyone.

- **Improves communication between professionals and beneficiaries.**

Digital tools – secure messaging, collaborative platforms, video conferencing – foster continuous and personalized communication between social workers and the people they support. They facilitate monitoring of individual progress, interdisciplinary coordination, and the sharing of useful information. When used responsibly, these tools strengthen the relationship of trust by allowing for greater availability while respecting confidentiality.



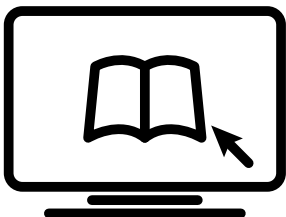
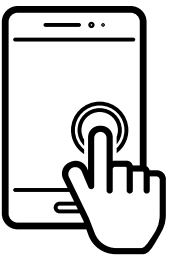
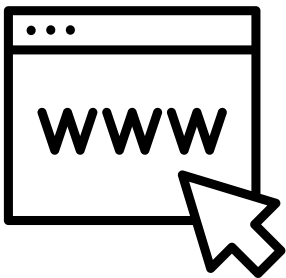
The responsible use of technology requires special attention to ethics, data protection and digital inclusion.

- **Create safe spaces for learning and expression.** Digital technology offers the possibility of designing learning environments tailored to the specific needs of different audiences. Educational platforms, moderated forums, and creative expression tools foster a sense of security and recognition, encouraging participation and experimentation. These spaces support personal development and strengthen the ability to learn independently.

- **Supporting participation and social inclusion.** By opening new channels for participation, digital technologies allow everyone to get involved in collective, cultural, or civic projects, whether local or European. Inclusion is not limited to technical access: it requires designing open, accessible, and diversity-respecting digital environments. Digital social work then becomes a driver of integration, where everyone can contribute and feel valued within the community.

THE IDENTIFIED TOOLS

The NEF project highlights several categories of digital tools used in social work:



- **Online platforms and portals**

Digital platforms and portals serve as central gateways to information, guidance, and social services. They facilitate the search for assistance, appointment scheduling, access to rights, and communication with institutions. Designed with universal accessibility in mind, these spaces empower users to become more independent and better understand existing systems, provided they are intuitive, multilingual, and adapted to different levels of digital literacy.

- **Applications mobiles**

Mobile applications offer personalized and interactive support in users' daily lives. They allow users to track their integration, learning, or health journey, while facilitating direct communication with professionals. They also serve as educational and awareness-raising tools, particularly for developing social and behavioral skills. Their accessibility on smartphones makes them a powerful tool for maintaining connections and strengthening continuity of support.

- **Digital learning tools**

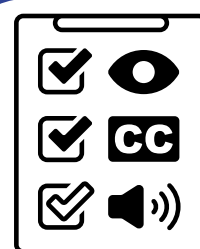
Digital learning tools – e-learning platforms, interactive modules, tutorials, simulators – support the development of personal, professional, and social skills. For vulnerable populations, they allow for self-paced learning through visual or gamified formats that promote comprehension. From an empowerment perspective, these tools contribute to restoring a sense of competence and opening up new avenues for integration and civic participation.

- **Accessibility solutions**

Digital accessibility solutions play a key role in the inclusion of people with disabilities or specific needs. They include screen reader software, alternative keyboards, simplified displays, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems. These technologies help restore equal access to information and communication, while contributing to an inclusive approach to social and educational services. They embody the principle of “universal design” promoted at the European level.

- **Digital tools for communication and mediation**

Digital communication and mediation tools promote active participation, dialogue, and social cohesion. Participatory forums, co-creation platforms, online meetings, and solidarity networks help create spaces for collective expression. By giving beneficiaries the opportunity to share their experiences and testimonies, these tools strengthen participatory democracy and support social workers in their role as mediators and facilitators of social connection.



Through European workshops, four innovative digital practices and tools were selected. These practices address real social needs, use digital tools ethically and inclusively, and promote empowerment, participation, and human dignity. They illustrate the diversity and creativity of digital social work initiatives in Europe.

Pays	Solution	Description
Romania	The SIMAS Portal	Information, exchanges and e-learning
France	My children	Information sharing, coordination,
Portugal	Map 4 accessibility	Facilitating travel
Belgium	123 DIGIT	Developing digital skills



THE SIMAS PORTAL

The National College of Social Workers (CNASR) is the Romanian authority that regulates the social work profession. The CNASR represents all social workers in the country and currently has 14,600 members.

To make the profession more accessible, better connected and stronger, the CNASR, with the support of UNICEF Romania, has developed two digital tools designed to modernize the profession, improve professional standards and meet the real needs of social workers.

This approach has been in place since February 2022, with the launch of the CNASR online portal and learning platform.

The portal allows:

- rapid management of professional documents
- access to the status of professional loans
- Registration for training sessions
- direct communication with the CNASR
- the submission of applications for obtaining a higher professional level qualification, a license for private practice, or the establishment of independent forms of practice
- access to a library of documents useful for professional activities

The CNASR online portal was created to meet the need for a more efficient, accessible, and connected system for social workers in Romania. Previously, administrative management, tracking professional credits, and communication with the CNASR were largely manual, time-consuming, and fragmented.

Originality

These tools serve to modernize the profession, strengthen professional standards, and meet the real needs of social workers. By facilitating access to digital technology and continuous learning, they also raise awareness within communities about the importance of a better-prepared and connected profession.

In a nutshell:

A national portal dedicated to a social profession, bringing together in a single system administrative management, e-learning and data tracking.

It helps to better understand social work professions (profiles, training needs), a practice that is still rare in this sector.

To learn more:

Official website of the CNASR: <https://www.cnasr.ro> – information on the National College of Social Workers of Romania, its members and its professional resources.

SIMAS
eLEARNING

Platforma de
eLearning
C.N.A.S.R.

Înregistrează-te

WEBINAR 1

WEBINAR 2

WEBINAR 3

WEBINAR 4

WEBINAR 5

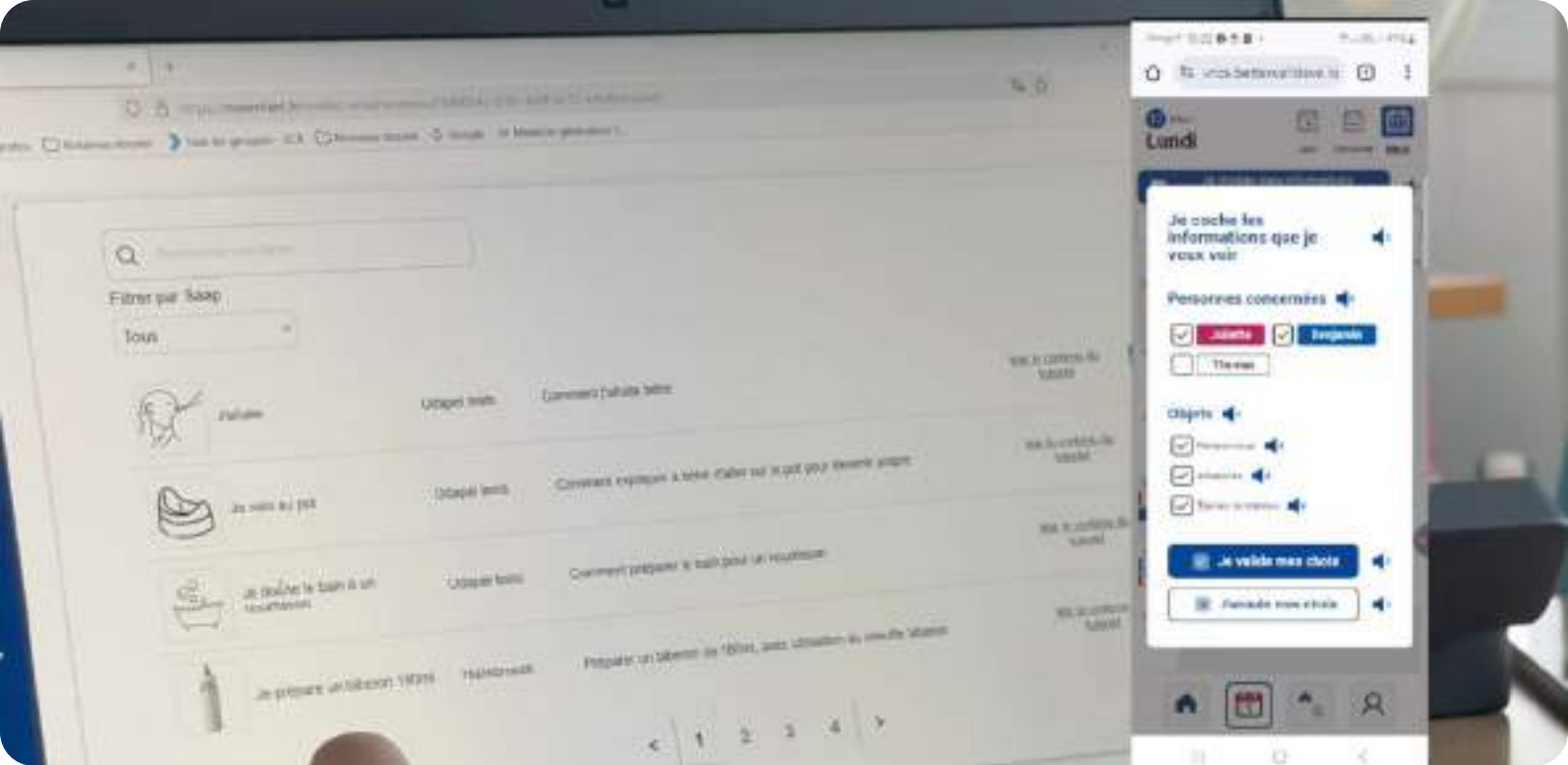
WEBINAR 6

WEBINAR 7

Cum să fim alături de noi în fața
crizei umanitare pe care o
gestionăm

Webinarii
Repere normative, abordări și
provocări în protecția copilului

Webinarii
Cum gestionăm stresul
profesional în asistența socială



MES ENFANTS

Mes enfants is an innovative mobile application whose objective is to promote autonomy and strengthen the confidence of parents with intellectual disabilities.

The platform offers users a personalized dashboard for each child with:

- **A fully customizable agenda (frequency, duration, time, amplitude between each occurrence, days, deadlines, etc.) and simplified to track appointments (medical, leisure centers, etc.), absences, tasks completed, with all useful information (departure time, documents to take, notifications, tutorials);**
- **Reminders for important tasks to be completed during the day, with the option for users to write messages, take photos, or record voice messages to make task completion visible;**
- **Visual tutorials with the different steps to follow to complete each daily task, in order to support users in their completion;**
- **A possible way to manage exceptional absences by notifying, viewing, modifying or deleting them.**

Originality

Users have access to a range of essential tools and resources through a fully customizable interface.

Designed with the families themselves, Mesenfants replaces traditional tools deemed too complex or unsuitable, and facilitates the link between parents and the professionals who support them.

In a nutshell:

The “My Children” app allows you to easily share information about the child’s daily life, care, activities and progress.

It improves trust and transparency between families and institutions.



To learn more:

Visit the website of the northern Udapei: [une photo](#)





MAP 4 ACCESSIBILITY

This is a European accessibility mapping application to provide information on the accessibility of public spaces in four European cities, based on the existing Portuguese application developed by Associação Salvador – App +Acesso Para Todos.

In addition to providing information on the accessibility of public spaces, it seeks to promote inclusive education.

The project involved higher education students and other stakeholders, through a community-based learning method.

Thus, the students carried out their learning and completed their academic work by actively engaging with the community, working on a topic already identified by the community.

The Map4Accessibility project addresses:

- to the lack of awareness of accessibility among higher education students;
- to low citizen participation;
- the need to promote more accessible cities, both digitally and physically, in Europe;
- there is a need to raise awareness among professionals in higher education institutions (including members of the partnership)
- to the digital, physical and social challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Originality

This is a website and an accessibility mapping application, co-designed and co-developed as part of learning activities. These mapping tools, incorporating universal design principles, aim to provide city-wide accessibility information in four European cities.

In a nutshell:

Map4Accessibility is developing an application to assess the accessibility of public spaces. The project is based on service-based learning.

By engaging participants in concrete and thoughtful activities, the project encourages active learning focused on the real needs of communities.



Map4Accessibility

To learn more:

<https://associacaosalvador.com/projeto/map4accessibility/>

<https://map4accessibility.eu/>

<https://europroject.bg/project/map4accessibility/>



Créé par
WE TECH CARE

123 DIGIT

123 Digit is an initiative that helps adults who have difficulty accessing or using digital tools. The project offers free, practical, and locally-based workshops to strengthen digital literacy. Beneficiaries include adults in situations of social or economic vulnerability, job seekers, and people with limited digital skills.

This aims to teach them essential digital skills, such as using a smartphone, tablet or computer, browsing the internet and managing online administrative procedures.

The platform provides access to hundreds of local training courses offered by partners throughout Wallonia. The site makes it easy to find workshops near you, while partner organizations can publish their activities and receive support for their promotion and coordination.

Through this network, 123 Digit raises awareness of the importance of digital skills and ensures that no one is left behind in the digital transition.

Originality

A shared regional platform that structures a digital inclusion ecosystem centered on caregivers rather than just learners. Modular educational resources (videos, quizzes, workshop scenarios) tailored to specific needs. The initiative offers a scalable and inclusive model for strengthening digital skills.

In a nutshell:

Digital helpers receive training via the platform and use its tools to assist users in accessing essential online services.

Local organizations create accounts, access educational materials, organize workshops and publish their training offers.

3

DiGiT

To learn more:

[The Digital Support Platform | 123Digit](#)

IMPACTS AND ADDED VALUE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL WORK

The use of digital tools in social work contributes to:

- **increase the autonomy of beneficiaries**

Digital technology can become a driver of empowerment when integrated into an educational and inclusive approach. By directly accessing information, procedures, and communication tools, users gain independence and confidence. This autonomy is expressed both in managing daily life (rights, health, employment) and in the ability to navigate life and make informed decisions. Digital technology thus acts as a facilitator of empowerment, provided that appropriate support is available.

- **improve access to social services**

Digital tools help reduce the physical, administrative, and time-related barriers that limit access to services. Whether through paperless processes, information portals, or remote assistance, they foster closer ties between institutions and users. This contributes to making social services more equitable and accessible, particularly for residents of rural, isolated, or mobility-impaired areas.



- **develop digital skills**

Digital social work is part of a continuous learning process. Training programs, workshops, and interactive environments enable both vulnerable populations and professionals to strengthen their ability to use, understand, and contextualize digital tools. This skills development is essential for promoting active inclusion, employability, and civic participation. It also contributes to sustainably reducing the generational and social digital divide.

- **strengthen the relationships between professionals and users of services**

Digital technologies offer new forms of interaction based on continuous communication and shared responsibility. Collaborative tools, shared calendars, exchange platforms, and online interviews facilitate more flexible and personalized support. When used judiciously, these tools create an atmosphere of mutual trust, value users' voices, and encourage a partnership between professionals and service users.

For social workers, digital solutions offer new methods of intervention, learning and innovation.



Digital empowerment requires training, ethical use of technologies, inclusion and co-creation with beneficiaries.

THE CHALLENGES FOR TOMORROW

Despite their potential, digital tools also present challenges:

- **inequalities in access to technology**

Access to digital technology remains a matter of social justice. Disparities in equipment, connectivity, and user environment widen the gap between those who can fully benefit from digital tools and those who are excluded. These inequalities particularly affect the elderly, vulnerable populations, rural areas, and certain under-resourced social services. For truly inclusive use, it is essential to implement equitable equipment policies, provide public digital spaces, and offer local support.

- **different levels of digital literacy**

The diversity of digital skills is another obstacle to autonomy. Some users easily master the tools, while others struggle to understand interfaces or distinguish reliable information. In the context of social work, this requires an individualized pedagogical approach, based on step-by-step learning, celebrating successes, and peer learning. Training in digital literacy strengthens the critical thinking and civic engagement of the people being supported.

- **linguistic and cultural barriers**

Digital technology, often designed according to dominant cultural norms, can exacerbate the exclusion of certain populations. Language, social representations, and communication models strongly influence the understanding and adoption of these tools. Adapting linguistic content, offering intercultural mediation, and valuing the diversity of social practices are essential conditions for guaranteeing equal access to information and digital participation.

- **ethical issues and risks related to data protection**

The use of digital technology in social work requires constant vigilance regarding ethics, confidentiality, and security. Personal data collected must be protected, and service users must be informed of their rights. The risks of surveillance, stigmatization, or loss of control over one's information are real. Professionals therefore have a crucial role to play in raising awareness, ensuring transparency, and respecting informed consent, so that technology remains at the service of dignity and not control.

WHAT'S NEXT

NEF Project – From Practice to Training The results presented in this brochure will be integrated into:

- Digital training modules to support the development of digital skills in social work
- An experiment to encourage the testing and adaptation of digital tools in real-world contexts.

The NEF project strengthens European cooperation and promotes innovation in social services.

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