

NEWSLETTER



A Strong Start: Kick-Off Meeting in Lisbon Sets the Stage for Digital Inclusion

April 11–12, 2025

Lisbon, Portugal — April 11–12 marked the official launch of the SENACT_SENiors in ACTION project with a successful two-day kick-off meeting hosted by the Municipality of Lisbon. Partners from the coordinating organization, the Municipality of Domokos (Greece), and technical experts from Labstem (Greece) gathered to solidify the foundation of this crucial initiative.

The core of the meeting was dedicated to aligning on the project's core objectives and priorities. Participants engaged in intensive discussions to refine the strategic direction, ensuring the 18-month initiative would effectively tackle the digital exclusion faced by older adults. A key focus was also the development of a robust dissemination plan to ensure the project's outputs and best practices reach a wide audience, maximizing its impact on digital inclusion across Europe.



Project Overview: Building Confidence, Not Just Skills

The SENACT project was initiated to counteract the growing digital exclusion of older adults, a barrier that often prevents them from accessing essential online services and engaging fully in civic life. Funded 100% under the Erasmus+ KA210 Adult Education program, this 18-month initiative aims for genuine digital inclusion.

SENIORS
IN ACTION



- **Our central objective is twofold:**

To teach technical skills and to fundamentally bolster confidence and reduce the profound psychological barriers to technology adoption. We believe that building self-efficacy is a more powerful predictor of digital adoption than mere access to a device.

The project is strategically coordinated by the Municipality of Domokos (Greece), with the Municipality of Lisbon (Portugal) contributing its extensive experience in active aging programs. Labstem (Greece) provides specialist expertise in educational technology to ensure our learning materials are both effective and innovative.

- **Key objectives of the project include:**

1. Assessing current digital literacy levels and identifying motivations.
2. Designing tailored, user-friendly educational content.
3. Building the capacity of local facilitators.



FG in Lisbon

Foundational Research: The Needs Analysis Confirms the Challenge

The first major activity of the SENACT project was a foundational Needs Analysis, which included a mixed-methods approach utilizing structured questionnaires (70 total across both cities) and focus groups (in Domokos and Lisbon) to gain rich, descriptive insights into participants' digital lives.

- **Key Findings Highlight the Path Forward:**

1. **Age is the Defining Factor:** Age is the single most significant determinant of device ownership and use, dramatically evidenced in Domokos. This age-related exclusion is a pressing concern for both municipalities, highlighting the necessity for targeted outreach to older cohorts.



2. A Crisis of Confidence: A critical finding is the strong, direct correlation between digital confidence and device ownership. A lack of self-efficacy is a primary barrier, with 87% of individuals in the Domokos sample who felt "not at all confident" also reporting they owned no device. This confirms that fear and anxiety are greater barriers than mere cost or availability.

3. Social Connection is the Driver: The overwhelming primary motive for technology use is communication with family and friends (51.4% of users). This functional and relational motivation drives the high learning interest in video calling (58.6%) and messaging/email (44.3%). Successful interventions must be framed around social connection.

4. The Need for Individualized Support: The research strongly indicates a preference for human-mediated and individualized support, with one-on-one tutoring being the preferred support method for 50% of respondents. Critically, 31.4% of the combined sample report having no support at the moment, underscoring a profound gap in formal assistance.

5. Structural Barriers Remain: Beyond psychological hurdles, significant structural issues were identified. Over half of the combined sample do not have regular access to the internet at home (51.4%). Furthermore, physical and cognitive conditions (e.g., Parkinson's, Dementia) identified in Lisbon necessitate a focus on accessible hardware and simplified interfaces for bespoke training.



What's Next? Development and Action

The insights from the Needs Analysis are now directly informing the project's next crucial phase: **the development of bespoke educational materials**. These materials will be specifically designed to address the identified barriers, focusing on building confidence and teaching highly relevant, functional skills (like video calling) using an accessible, individualized approach.

Following development, the project will implement local training sessions, known as **"Seniors in Action"**, aimed at directly engaging participants in both Domokos and Lisbon.

Stay tuned for more updates as we move from research to action, turning digital anxiety into digital confidence!

More about the Report findings, visit our website and at the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IY0mqOe9vB6zXshFGanT3kWpeANeHAoR/view>



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