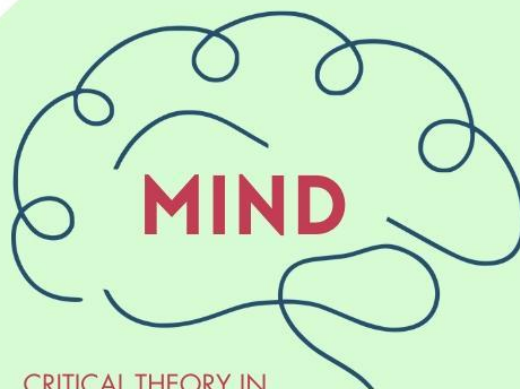


# IO2. Executive report on adult education programs and documents

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CRITICAL THEORY IN  
ADULT EDUCATION PRACTICE:  
EMPOWERMENT FOR CRITICAL ACTIONS

# IO2. Executive report on adult education programs and documents.

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## Introduction

An analysis of adult education documents and existing programs and practices with the focus on critical thinking (further- CT) in each country provides a concentrated picture of the situation and give an indication of what to focus on when developing practical tools.

Executive report on adult education programs and documents consists of 4 chapters: I. International documents, II. National legislation, III. Training programs and projects.

Analysis of international documents provides a general overview of the current political thinking on European and global political level on the issue of critical thinking and importance of its development in the society and on the role of adult education in this respect.

Analysis of the National legislation provides a picture of how politicians at National level reflect the issue of critical thinking and how they transform the ideas into actions.

Analysis of programs and projects provides concrete information and ideas for designing a universal model for CT development among adults in non-formal education.

### I. International documents

#### 1.1. Critical thinking and disinformation

EU documents concerned with CT recognize it as the main instrument for dealing with disinformation which is considered a major threat for the society.

The 2022 Code of Practice on Disinformation<sup>1</sup> points out that "the exposure of citizens to large scale disinformation, including misleading or outright false information, is a major challenge for Europe," and that "our open democratic societies depend on public debates that allow well-informed citizens to express their will through free and fair political processes".

From the other hand, fundamental rights must be fully respected in all the actions taken to fight disinformation and countries should be mindful of the fundamental right to freedom of expression, freedom of information, and privacy, and of the delicate balance that must be struck between protecting fundamental rights and taking effective action to limit the spread and impact of otherwise lawful content.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2022 Code of Practice on Disinformation. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/2022-strengthened-code-practice-disinformation>.

## 1.2. Critical thinking and active citizenship

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS of 30 May 2016 on developing media literacy and CT through education and training<sup>2</sup> considers CT as key competence in developing media literacy and for active participation in civic life.

*Media literacy - that is, all the technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow us to access and have a critical understanding of and interact with both traditional and new forms of media - is of increasing importance. It is closely related to active engagement in democratic life, to citizenship and the ability to exercise judgment critically and independently as well as to reflect on one's own actions, and can thereby enhance young people's resilience in the face of extremist messages and disinformation.*

*Media literacy - linked to literacy and communication skills in general - also involves other key competences, notably social and civic competences which have a clear link to critical thinking, ensuring that people can value diversity and respect the views and values of others, but also cultural awareness and expression which are underpinned by the ability to relate one's own way of expressing points of view to those of others, including those with different cultural backgrounds.*

Regarding the adult education, the document invites the Member States to:

- *Seek to increase digital competence levels among learners of all ages, in a lifelong learning perspective, as an important precondition for strengthening their ability to participate actively in the democratic life of our modern societies as well as for enhancing their employability.*
- *Encourage socially safe learning environments, both online and offline, in which controversial issues can be openly discussed and freedom of speech preserved, and empower teaching staff to initiate and moderate such discussions."*

Global report on adult learning and education (GRALE) (GRALE 5, 2022). UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning<sup>3</sup> concentrates on citizenship education.

GRALE 5 considers that citizenship education may be seen as a natural extension of 'civic education'; namely, knowledge and critical understanding of civil rights and responsibilities,

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<sup>2</sup> COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS of 30 May 2016 on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/05/30/eycs-conclusions-developing-media-literacy/>

<sup>3</sup> Global report on adult learning and education (GRALE) (GRALE 5, 2022). UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning. <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/adult-education/global-report-grale>

the cultivation of civic, social virtues, economic virtues and political virtues, and the ability to engage in transformative dialogue, negotiations and interactions.

The Report recognizes importance of the role of adult education in citizenship education and invites for professionalization of adult educators and quality in education:

*The professionalization and training of educators is inextricably linked to the issue of quality in education. <...> The main role of the educator is to be a guide and facilitator, encouraging learners to engage in critical inquiry and supporting the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that promote positive personal and social change.’ Adult educators, therefore, have a critical role in creating environments for citizenship education that are safe, inclusive and effective, and their professionalization should be developed accordingly, particularly with regard to the engagement of marginalized and disadvantaged groups.*

### 1.3. Critical thinking and skills and competences

European skills agenda 2020<sup>4</sup> in the Action 6: Skills to support the twin transition stresses that “beyond technical skills, the labor market increasingly needs transversal skills like working together, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. <...>. While schools have a role to play, they are often developed outside formal learning, at work and throughout life.”

EU Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018)<sup>5</sup> draws attention to the fact that the key competences are developed throughout life, through formal, non-formal and informal learning in different environments, including family, school, workplace, neighborhood and other communities.

An important point is that skills such as CT, problem solving, team work, communication, creativity, negotiation, analytical and intercultural skills are embedded throughout the key competences.

These are the eight key competences:

- Literacy competence
- Multilingual competence
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- Digital competence

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<sup>4</sup> European skills agenda 2020.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9723&furtherNews=yes#navItem-1>

<sup>5</sup> EU Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning .May 2018.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

#### 1.4. Critical thinking competency framework extracted from EU Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Each of eight competences contain sub-competences on CT. Putting them together we can compile the general CT competency framework:

- *Ability to assess and work with information. Individuals should take a critical approach to the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means and be aware of the legal and ethical principles involved in engaging with digital technologies.*
- *Reflective and critical, yet curious, open minded and forward-looking attitude to evolution of digital technologies.*
- *Critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history.*
- *Knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, work organizations, society, economy and culture.*
- *Integrated problem-solving skills as well as skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European and international level.*
- *Ability to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them creatively into values for others.*
- *Taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.*

## II. National legislation and policy documents

Working hypothesis regarding the appearance of CT in any education legislation was that it could be mentioned in the sections describing education goals and principles. The other source of information is strategic policy documents which possibly could describe the necessity of development of CT and civil society.

Unfortunately, State and local self-government institutions do not see the importance of CT of citizens as an important tool for development of civic society. CT is critical for analyzing processes in the society itself: "Citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social,

economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability.”<sup>6</sup>

## 2.1. National Legislation

1. National legislation of Latvia and Lithuania on education or on adult education does not mention CT nor as the goal of education nor as the principal of education.
2. In Croatia CT appears in Act on Croatian Qualifications Framework<sup>7</sup> describing learning outcome levels.
3. In Romania although CT is called an essential competence in different national strategies and it was introduced in the Pre University education law, in the national legislation of adult education it was not mentioned at all. Preuniversity education law mentions the CT as part of National curriculum<sup>8</sup>.

## 2.2. Policy documents

### *Croatia.*

Policy documents on adult education do not mention CT.

### *Latvia*

1. In policy planning documents, CT appears only in the latest period (2021-2027). Previously, it appeared only in the cultural policy and media policy guidelines.
2. Although in the Guidelines for the Development of Education 2021-2027 CT has been brought up as an essential skill for everyone, the context shows that it is related to the educational content created by School 2030 for students. In any case, the development of CT for adults does not appear in the tasks of the direction of actions. Regarding adult education, 2 general tasks are mentioned: Qualitative and accessible offer of adult education and Development of Sustainable adult education system.
3. In the documents of the previous period, the relevance of CT is emphasized in the context of society's value orientation and personal creativity. In the documents of the recent period dominate an understanding of CT as a tool for strengthening security against fake news and propaganda.
4. In the aspect of sectoral policy, CT is emphasized in cultural policy documents, guidelines for digital transformation and guidelines for children, youth and family development. Although the demand for adult education, which is able to meet the

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<sup>6</sup> EU Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning in May 2018.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>7</sup> Act on the Croatian Qualifications Framework. <https://www.zakon.hr/z/566/Zakon-o-Hrvatskom-kvalifikacijskom-okviru>

<sup>8</sup> Preuniversity education law

[https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/Legi\\_educatie\\_Romania\\_educata/legi\\_monitor/Legea\\_invatamantului\\_preuniversitar\\_nr\\_198.pdf](https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/Legi_educatie_Romania_educata/legi_monitor/Legea_invatamantului_preuniversitar_nr_198.pdf)



needs of the labor market, has recently increased, CT as a skill necessary for a skilled and competitive employee is not mentioned in employment and economic development documents.

5. In terms of professions, the need for CT is emphasized for media specialists, cultural researchers and digital agents.

### *Lithuania*

1. The major policy document approved in December 2023 is the Roadmap for the State Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2050'<sup>9</sup>. It says that "Comprehensive education, understood not only as academic knowledge, but also as the critical thinking, creativity, cooperation and other social-emotional skills needed for the future, is therefore becoming particularly important as well as resilience and the ability to take care of oneself and others in need". The document doesn't specify any age groups but from the context one can understand that it focuses on formal education: "An integrated and open education system serves the individual: it provides the free person with the necessary academic knowledge, cultural, civic and social skills emotional and political competences, financial, media, health and environmental literacy skills, develops an independent, responsible and cooperative individual personality."
2. Surprisingly, CT is not mentioned in the Agreement on Lithuanian Education Policy (2021–2030)<sup>10</sup>.
3. More clearly CT is discussed in the Lithuanian Cultural Policy Strategy, approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2019<sup>11</sup>. Its third goal is "To form the critical thinking and citizenship of a society that is creating its own identity", which should be implemented by two tasks:
  - a. 3.1. task: To strengthen civic activity and knowledge, and resistance of the population and institutions to informational threats.
  - b. 3.2. task: To strengthen society's critical thinking by professionally evaluating cultural phenomena.
4. The Program of the Eighteenth Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2020)<sup>12</sup> considers CT as an important tool for protecting against information threats and for strengthening national security.
5. Therefore, one can see that CT is seen by politicians mostly as an important instrument for strengthening the resistance of the population to external information threats.

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<sup>9</sup> Roadmap for the State Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2050'.

[https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p\\_r=35435&p\\_t=287183](https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_t=287183)

<sup>10</sup> Agreement on Lithuanian education policy (2021–2030). [OdR2qpvyHyo.pdf \(lrvt.lt\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> Lithuanian cultural policy strategy <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/4bafb6019d4d11e9aab6d8dd69c6da66?jfwid=57lm4zwfo>

<sup>12</sup> Programme of the eighteenth Government of the Republic of Lithuania. <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalact/lt/tad/973c87403bc311eb8c97e01ffe050e1c>



6. Authors of political and policy documents consider CT important for the young generation and forget the adult population which is the major part of citizens and of voters. For them the only important thing which politicians consider is external disinformation threat.

### Romania

1. The National strategy for the sustainable development of Romania 2030<sup>13</sup> considers CT as part of Sustainable Development Goals, guaranteeing a quality education and promoting learning opportunities throughout life for everyone: *Education should be treated as a process that prepares young generations for the challenges of the future and it takes place everywhere throughout life, encouraging innovation, meritocracy, constructive critical thinking, curiosity, conduct and emancipation.*
2. National strategy for adult training <sup>14</sup>(2023-2027) describes CT as specific direction of action for developing transversal skills: *In addition to technical skills, the labor market needs more and more transversal skills such as cooperation, critical thinking and creative problem solving, and their validation and recognition through the use of micro-certifications can facilitate adults' mobility and continuing learning.*
3. Draft National strategy for continuous adult education 2024-2030<sup>15</sup> (which currently is open for public discussions) considers CT as part of the system of values of adult education: *b. Personal freedom and autonomy: the strategy emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and personal autonomy, including identity and community membership, safety, moral and material and the relationship with authorities and service providers. These values support access to a decent job, security of long-term employability, critical thinking and active participation in the socio-economic dialogue facilitated by new technologies, reflecting the strategy's commitment to improving cognitive skills and digital.*
4. National implementation plan for initial education and continuous professional development<sup>16</sup> considers CT as one of the measures for increasing the attractiveness of vocational and technical education: *In the development of attractive initial vocational training programs for students, it is essential to support the development of transversal skills necessary for a successful career, for facilitating career transitions*

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<sup>13</sup> National strategy for the sustainable development of Romania 2030

<https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-Rom%C3%A2niei-2030.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> National strategy for adult training 2023-2027

[https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMSS/Transparenta\\_decizionala/20230907\\_hg-snfa-23\\_27-anexa1-strategie.pdf](https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMSS/Transparenta_decizionala/20230907_hg-snfa-23_27-anexa1-strategie.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Draft National strategy for continuous adult education 2024-2030

[https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Proiect\\_SNECA\\_24\\_30.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Proiect_SNECA_24_30.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> National implementation plan for initial education and continuous professional development

[https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/\\_fi%C8%99iere/Cooperare-Internationala/2023/Romania\\_PNI-VET\\_RO.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Cooperare-Internationala/2023/Romania_PNI-VET_RO.pdf)

and for personal development. Competences and entrepreneurship, digital skills, critical thinking and career management skills become essential in today's dynamic and competitive socioeconomic environment.

5. Strategy for the digitization of education in Romania - 2021-2027<sup>17</sup> considers CT as part of digital competence. *Digital competence involves using confidently, critically and responsible for digital technologies in contexts of learning, work and participation in social activities. That includes digital literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, creating digital content (including programming), safety (including well-being/comfort in the online environment and cyber security skills), respect for intellectual property, problem solving and critical thinking.*
6. The National strategy of financial education 2023-2030<sup>18</sup> pays special attention to project learning form which enables participation to be learned through engagement and not just by discussing participation; is facilitated, also the development of the necessary skills of the 21st century: creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills, adaptability and responsibility.

### III. Programs and projects

#### 3.1. EU projects on CT

1. **EU projects providers.** EU projects on CT are implemented by consortiums of various institutions and organizations: adult education centers, high schools, NGO's, private companies, and the public educational sector. The source of information is the platform <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>. There were found 14 projects (2017-2023) dedicated to the topic of CT. All projects are financed through the "Erasmus+" program. The main idea of the projects is the development of CT skills of young people, adults and seniors. It emphasizes CT as a tool for strengthening adult's awareness on social and political processes and making them aware of their rights as citizens. In most projects, CT is a learning object. Several projects use CT as a tool to improve skills in other areas, e.g. language learning, digital skills, for political decision-making processes.

2. **EU projects objectives.** Projects are characterized by a large variety of objectives. Conditionally, they can be divided into general and specific.

##### 2.1 General objectives

- to strengthen the ability to function in a world in the 21st century and fulfillment of the company's requirements on the individual competencies of individuals for which understanding of what is happening;
- to gain access to fundamental knowledge on the mechanisms and consequences of false information spread in Europe;

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<sup>17</sup> Strategy for the digitization of education in Romania - 2021-2027  
<https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/SMART.Edu%20-%20document%20consultare.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The National strategy of financial education 2023-2030  
[https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/SNEF\\_proiect\\_2023.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/SNEF_proiect_2023.pdf)

- raise the awareness and basic knowledge about "Fake News", Misinformation and Disinformation and about tools to detect them;
- to introduce game-based learning and quiz-based learning as methodologies for competence development and empowerment.

## 2.2 Specific objectives

### 2.2.1 For adult educators:

- to give adult facilitators a new tool to train and teach and empower the communities;
- to develop a training course and training materials for teachers and other educators with the aim of improving their ability to deliver high-quality media literacy programs to a diverse audience of parents and grandparents;
- to extend and develop adult educators' media literacy skills and competences in effective teaching of those skills (especially those who work with disadvantaged learners).

### 2.2.2 For adults:

- to prepare 55+ people for the aging process (functional literacy);
- to elaborate methodologies and materials for parents and grandparents to use with their children and grandchildren at home;
- to develop the adapted learning paths, where the learners will learn how to get involved, strengthen their awareness on social and political processes and make them aware of their rights as citizens;
- to enable adult students to recognize, identify, act, and manage against the risks of online information;
- to improve and expand quality learning opportunities for adults with less qualification that will benefit from transversal skills when accessing the labor market;
- to increase media literacy skills of adult learners (especially disadvantaged).

### 2.2.3 For creating of instruments:

- to develop an interactive online platform that supports the learning of Creativity and CT skills and that indicates a general itinerary for the improvement of transversal skills;
- to create a CT e-learning platform based on the survey results conducted in European countries and, as a result, an effective tool for developing CT skills.

3. **Methodological model/curriculum.** The methodological model was found in only one project<sup>19</sup>. Curriculum was found in four projects<sup>20</sup>. The other eight projects provide neither a

<sup>19</sup> APPRICOT, <https://apricot4parents.org/parents-and-grandparents-en/>

<sup>20</sup> Boomerang, <https://www.boomerang-project.org/mooc-boomerang?lang=en>

CONCRIT, [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/22fbfb83-e576-40bb-8864-78c0f200d621/CONCRIT\\_Handbook.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/22fbfb83-e576-40bb-8864-78c0f200d621/CONCRIT_Handbook.pdf)

methodological model nor a curriculum.

4. **Methods.** Various methods are used in the projects. The method sets are presented as one of the project results (mostly in form of handbook). The methods applied in projects: discussions, group work, reflections, icebreaker, quizzes, other digital activities. Textbooks describe both methods and specific tasks.

5. **Duration.** The duration of the training programs created in the projects varies: from 6 up to 20 hours.

6. **Training form.** Training forms in the projects are face to face learning, blended learning, digital tools, gamification platforms and quiz- based learning.

7. **Beneficiary (target group).** In many cases beneficiary is not specified: age, gender, occupation, employment status are not clear. From available information we can conclude that in most projects the first target group are teachers, trainers, social workers, consultants. The final target group is adults, young adults (in some cases having difficulties, disadvantaged), seniors and/or the community.

### 3.2. Training programs on CT

Examples of training programs provided by partners can be found in the document '*IO2- Annexes. Training programs related to critical thinking*'. Here we provide a general overview.

1. **Training program providers.** Programs on CT are provided by private consulting companies, public sector (mostly education) and NGOs. The source of information is advertising of programs on the Internet. They are differently structured, often very short and, with few exceptions, do not describe the methodology. There are three types of programs: first, where the CT is the training subject, second, where CT is part of a bigger topic and the third, where CT is the background of the topic methodology.
2. **Training program objectives.** Training programs provided by private companies are targeted for personal development, programs provided by public sector organizations – for personal development and organization, and by NGOs - for personal development, organization and the community. CT is taught in general or in relation to argumentation, fake news, media literacy, threats of war, health issues, artificial intelligence and internet safety, and nature conservation.
3. **Methods.** In most cases training methods are not specified or described in a very general way.
4. **Duration.** Duration of the programs varies from 4 hours to 40 hours. In the case of projects, it could be up to 200 hours, because CT is embedded in all project parts as the philosophical background.

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The CriticAl Thinking, [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/31f5b356-9d28-4b5e-8160-ad8f9d5b153b/CAT\\_guidelines\\_for\\_educators\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/31f5b356-9d28-4b5e-8160-ad8f9d5b153b/CAT_guidelines_for_educators_EN.pdf)

No Alternative Facts, [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/14bd76a7-a63c-423a-b353-5fe8aed17548/No\\_Alternative\\_Facts\\_Training\\_Programme\\_for\\_Adult\\_Educators.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/14bd76a7-a63c-423a-b353-5fe8aed17548/No_Alternative_Facts_Training_Programme_for_Adult_Educators.pdf)

5. **Training form.** Training form can be classroom, distance and blended learning. Experiential learning in real life situations mostly is implemented eye-to-eye with the target group. In some cases, e.g., organizing discussions, could also be organized on-line.
6. **Beneficiary (target group).** In many cases beneficiary is not specified: age, gender, occupation, employment status are not clear. From available information we can conclude that the major target groups are the teachers in the case of qualification courses for development of critical thinking of their students and senior citizens, who mostly participate in Media and Information Literacy Training in programs.

### 3.3. Topics of projects and training programs on CT

Here we provide the list of topics related to CT found in projects and training programs. Topics are arranged in the competency framework established in the chapter 1.4.:

*Ability to assess and work with information. Individuals should take a critical approach to the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means and be aware of the legal and ethical principles involved in engaging with digital technologies.*

- Getting to grips with the information war.
- False information: typology, understand the mechanisms, impacts and scope of false information spread. Why do we believe in false information? How our brain is misleading us.
- Fake news and disinformation. Conceptualizing disinformation. How to tackle disinformation: tools and methodologies. Tips for spotting fake news. Fake photos to identify.
- Computer course – Check the facts.
- Safety & privacy. Safe and responsible practice. How to surf the Internet safely.
- Experience less anxiety by being able to assess and predict events more objectively.
- How to select and critically evaluate information presented on the Internet.
- What are the basic rules for safer Internet use?

*Reflective and critical, yet curious, open minded and forward-looking attitude to evolution of digital technologies.*

- Social distance. Advantages and dangers of virtual social spaces (internet, social networks, games).
- The benefits of social media use for seniors.
- How to select and critically evaluate information presented on the Internet.
- Developing digital skills and using digital tools.
- Digital dangers. Digital identity. Cybersecurity, cyberbullying. Phishing.
- Media and information literacy. Common understanding of Media Literacy in the EU context.

*Critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history.*

- We did not find any topics on this issue in programs.

*Knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, work organizations, society, economy and culture.*

- CT is social thinking. CT as freedom and responsibility. Critical consciousness and critical reflexivity. Moral dilemmas in the contemporary world.
- The problem of perception and interpretation of social reality. Everyday life and mythology of the social world. Creativity as understanding and interpretation of the social world.
- Conspiracy theory. How to identify conspiracy theory. Not being immersed in lies or conspiracy theories.
- Online radicalisms and extremism.
- Intercultural understanding and relationships.
- The concept of Social Groups. Power, privilege and oppression.
- Impartiality and discrimination. Equity and equality of opportunities. Management of prejudices and stereotypes.
- Socio-economic background as an important factor influencing critical thinking.
- CT - the engine of political activism?

*Integrated problem-solving skills as well as skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European and international level.*

- The concept of CT. Development of CT: theory and practice, prerequisites and assumptions. The process of CT, strategies and techniques. What factors influence CT? Methods of CT Levels of CT skills. Assessment of thinking abilities. Who is a critical thinker?
- Barriers to CT and common thinking errors. What factors make it difficult to make effective decisions?
- CT for improving and strengthening the organization's activities.
- CT vs problem solving. Transformation of the decision-making process, through tools from coaching and neuroscience.
- Awareness and management of cognitive biases.
- Be able to make timely and more informed decisions and adjustments in different areas of life
- How to make more effective decisions. When should CT be applied?
- The decision-making process: two thinking systems that influence decisions. Fast and slow thinking (D. Kahneman). Decisions based on intuition and automatic thinking and their impact on results
- The importance of understanding the situation and context for decision-making
- The influence of attitudes and assumptions on the quality of decisions made. The "trap" of assumptions. How often do we treat assumptions as facts?
- How not to get fooled.



*Ability to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them creatively into values for others.*

- Identifying specific media literacies and digital storytelling needs in different settings. Digital storytelling in civic education.
- 6 Critical Thinking Questions for Any Situation.
- The essential elements of communication.
- Developing CT through collaboration (me and others; me and the group; we are the group).
- Entrepreneurship and CT skills in English Language Learning.
- Gamification platform and quiz- based learning.

*Taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.*

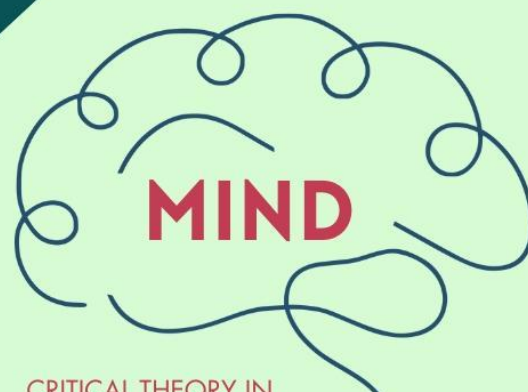
- CT for improving and strengthening the organization's activities.
- Practical activities in the application of CT education scheme, strategies and methods in the organization. Analysis and discussion of experience.
- Developing CT through collaboration (me and others; me and the group; we are the group).
- Advocacy. Organization and realization of an advocacy campaign.

## Conclusions

1. CT is a key competence in developing media literacy and for active participation in civic life.
2. State and local self-government institutions do not see the importance of CT of citizens as an essential tool for development of civic society.
3. Skills such as CT, problem solving, team work, communication, creativity, negotiation, analytical and intercultural skills are embedded throughout the key competences. They are often developed outside formal learning, at work and throughout life.
4. Analysis of projects and training programs showed that there is a big variety of different topics which could be arranged under the general CT competency framework:
  - Ability to assess and work with information.
  - Reflective and critical attitude to evolution of digital technologies.
  - Critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history.
  - Knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, work organizations, society, economy and culture.
  - Integrated problem-solving and decision making skills.
  - Ability to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them creatively into values for others.
  - Taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.



5. In partner countries, there are programs and projects aimed at developing CT skills, but they are episodic, inconsistent and short term.
6. Major target groups of programs and projects on CT are the teachers in the case of qualification courses for development of critical thinking of their students and senior citizens.



CRITICAL THEORY IN  
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EMPOWERMENT FOR CRITICAL ACTIONS



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