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setting the future scene of e-inclusion

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*The playing field of Belgian e-inclusion actors:  
Who, what, why, how?*

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## **Imec-SMIT VUB**

SMIT stands for Studies in Media, Innovation and Technology. The research group is established at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in 1990, and is currently involved in the following research domains: living labs, market and policy, and privacy, ethics and literacy. SMIT is a major research center in Europe for policy and socio-economic research relating to ICT and media. Over the years, SMIT has established significant research expertise in the field of e-inclusion and digital literacy. Several studies have been realized both at the level of social aspects of e-inclusion and digital literacy as at the level of policy analysis and recommendations. SMIT research is playing an important role in policy formulation and implementation at local, regional and national level in Flanders and in Belgium.

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## Introduction

The deliverable 4.2 “Identification of Belgian e-inclusion actors and their competences” provides an overview of the digital inclusion civil society in Belgium. Belgium is a federal state with different governmental layers and communities. Without going into detail, we distinguish the federal, Walloon, Flemish and Brussels levels.

In this research paper, the term civil society is used as a translation of the Flemish concept *middenveld*. According to Berkhout & Hanegraaff (2017), the concept *middenveld* refers to associations and non profit organisations that have no direct political or commercial objectives. The authors translate this term into *civil society*. Salamon et al. (2017) state that non profit organisations have a significant place in civil society, but the concept is much broader. Various definitions have evolved over time, although in their work, Salamon et al (2017) arrive at a structural-operational definition: civil society covers organisations that are structured, private, non profit, self-governing and non-compulsory. With the concept of digital inclusion civil society, this paper focuses on a part of the civil society sector, in particular on organisations and initiatives that are concerned with the issue of digital inclusion.

To identify this Belgian digital inclusion civil society, based on empirical quantitative research and participatory workshops, the paper addresses four key questions:

- 1) what are the characteristics of today’s digital inclusion civil society in Belgium;
- 2) how are these organisations working on digital inclusion;
- 3) what are their current challenges;
- 4) what do they see as possible future steps in relation to digital inclusion?

In order to answer these questions, the first part of the paper elaborates on the characteristics of the current digital inclusion civil society in Belgium. Based on the results of the actor mapping, online survey and workshops, we analyse which organisations are engaged in digital inclusion, how they work on the issue, and which citizens they try to involve. In the second part, we discuss the current challenges of digital inclusion initiatives and civil society organisations, and the possible future steps they themselves identify.

## Methodology

The objective of this paper is to identify Belgian digital inclusion civil society actors and their characteristics, challenges and possible future actions in relation to digital inclusion. The approach used in our research was a three stage process. First, we carried out a stakeholder mapping on the basis of an exploratory desk research of online sources and existing inventory lists. Second, we distributed an online survey to the inventoried digital inclusion actors, in which we assessed (a) the characteristics of the organisations, and (b) how digital inclusion is implemented in their activities. Third, we organised two participatory workshops with representative civil society actors to identify their challenges and possible future actions in relation to digital inclusion. On top of this, we participated in two externally organised meetings on digital inclusion.

### *Actor mapping*

To identify Belgian digital inclusion civil society actors and initiatives, we extensively searched for actors online and for online sources. We also used the following existing inventory lists:

- The inventory list of digital inclusion initiatives of Mediawijs, the Knowledge Centre for Digital and Media Literacy, published online (n.d.).<sup>1</sup>
- The inventory list of 'espaces publics numériques' of Technofutur TIC, published online (n.d.).<sup>2</sup>
- Rapport *Digitale kloof tweede graad in Vlaanderen*, commissioned by the 'Instituut Samenleving en Technology (IST)', published in 2010.
- *Inventaire 2019: Fracture numérique et e-santé*, commissioned by the 'Ligue des Usagers des Services de Santé (LUSS)', published online in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

In total 1.193 digital inclusion actors were listed: 39 federal, 635 Flemish, 248 Walloon, 271 Brussels. It is noteworthy to mention that we are able to display a higher number of Flemish actors than Brussels and Walloon ones. This could be explained by the fact

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mediawijs.be/organisaties/zoeken?ocr=1>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.epndewallonie.be/trouver-un-e-pn/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.luss.be/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/inventaire-2019-fracture-numerique-et-e-sante-version-informatique-05-04-19.pdf>

that on the one hand the existing inventories we used, were mainly aimed at Flanders, and on the other hand in Flanders more data relevant to this research context, is made available online. The stakeholder mapping has allowed further analysis of the digital inclusion initiatives, as the online survey could be distributed to the identified actors. However, not all have completed the survey, which means that there is a possibility that some organisations listed do not (longer) address the issue of digital inclusion. We also have to keep in mind that the stakeholder mapping will become outdated over time, as certain projects may come to an end or new projects may be set up. Nonetheless, the list provides a basic overview of actors working on the issue of digital inclusion.

### *Online survey*

In order to define the characteristics and actions of the digital inclusion civil society, we distributed a quantitative survey. The survey design can be found in Appendix 1: Qualitative survey online (English translation). The survey was sent by e-mail to the 1.193 inventoried actors on 17 September 2018 and closed on 15 July 2019. A reminder e-mail was sent on 20 December 2018. In addition, the link to the survey was placed on an online platform ([www.inclusiondigitaleinclusie.be](http://www.inclusiondigitaleinclusie.be)) and announced by Mediawijs, the Knowledge Centre for Digital and Media and Literacy. It was also promoted during our participatory workshops. In total 79 participants returned the questionnaire, including 33 French speaking and 46 Dutch speaking actors. Two respondents did not agree with the conditions of the GDPR, so their data could not be included in the analysis. Of the 45 Dutch speaking respondents, only 36 indicated that they are currently working on digital inclusion. Of the 32 French speaking actors, 30 subjects indicated that they have an existing e-inclusion initiative. This gives us a total of 66 actors involved in digital inclusion who completed the survey.

The overall response to the survey is rather poor as only 6.62% participated. As we have tried to engage the actors in a sufficient way and through different channels, we believe that the low response rate can be justified by the fact that organisations rarely identify themselves as digital inclusion facilitators. Most actors do not consider the topic to be their main priority. This might have been the reason why the vast majority of identified actors did not see the need or added value to participate in the research. As an outcome, the results of the survey are not representative and cannot be generalised to Belgian civil society as a whole. However, the results of some questions show

significant similarities, and many of these results were confirmed during the participatory workshops as well. All in all, the combination of the findings from the survey and the participatory workshops does shed some light on the research topic.

### *Participatory workshops*

Since we cannot sufficiently identify the current challenges and possible future actions of digital inclusion actors by means of the quantitative survey, we organised two participatory workshops to engage with the sector. We used the same method for both workshops, but for practical reasons we organised a separate workshop for Dutch speaking and French speaking actors. Flemish organisations were invited to attend the Dutch speaking workshop on 12 February 2019 in Brussels. Walloon organisations were invited to attend the French speaking one on 14 February 2019 in Brussels. Actors from Brussels were invited to both. In total 12 Flemish organisations attended the first workshop, 14 Walloon and Brussels organisations took part in the second one. The list of organisations present can be found in Appendix 2: Participants participatory workshops IDEALiC.

In the first part of the workshop, we asked the participants to pinpoint their objectives and target group(s) of their organisation, and their relationship with the theme of digital inclusion. This gave us more insight into the characteristics of civil society actors. In the second part, organisations had to briefly note down some of the challenges they face. The participants were then divided into two groups and had to cluster the challenges into main themes. Next, both groups had to mark five challenges, of one's own group and of the other group, they recognised as priorities. Participants had to give a score of one to five, one being most important, five being the least important priority. In the second part, the two groups of participants received templates with seven elements of a digital inclusion policy, based on *Allemaal digitaal? 7 bouwblokken voor een duurzaam e-inclusiebeleid* (Mariën, I. & Van Damme, S., 2016). They were given the assignment to modify, add or reject building blocks, definitions and/or actions. This exercise gave us the opportunity to select elements that are crucial to establish a digital inclusion strategy according to civil society organisations.

Subsequently, we had the opportunity to participate in two externally organised meetings with Flemish actors that are of importance in the field of digital inclusion: a Round Table on e-inclusion organised by the strategic advisory council SERV on

22 January 2019 and an expert group organised by the Flemish Association for Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) and Mediawijs on 24 April 2019. The goal of the Round Table was for SERV to identify the current challenges in the context of e-inclusion in order to formulate policy recommendations for the Flemish government. In the context of IDEALiC, we had the opportunity to present the research results of the policy analysis to collect feedback from local authorities and organisations. The aim of the expert group of VVSG and Mediawijs was to come up with policy recommendations for the federal, Flemish and local levels with regard to digital inclusion.

## Characteristics of Belgian digital inclusion civil society

### Who supports who?

The stakeholder mapping of the first part of the research presents the different Belgian civil society organisations relevant to digital inclusion. The mapping reveals a field that consists of various initiatives and perspectives on the issue of digital inclusion. These initiatives are mainly set up by public or semi public organisations (e.g. OCMW, CPAS, CAW, FOREM, adult education institutions) and non profit institutions. It's striking that private companies are usually not involved. These (semi) public and non profit organisations perceive digital inclusion as part of their social remit (e.g. well-being, employment, literacy).

In general, digital inclusion is addressed by these stakeholders in two ways. First, the organisation sets up a digital inclusion initiative, often in cooperation with a local authority. These initiatives often address the following issues: access, programming and coding, operational skills, media literacy, etc. In this context, public libraries in Flanders usually have a public computer room, where citizens can get access to digital media. An extensive network of *espaces public numériques* (EPN) or public computer rooms with supervision can be found in the Walloon and Brussels regions. Unlike in Flanders, these *espaces publics numériques* are coordinated top down and subject to strict conditions in order to obtain the EPN label.

Second, a large number of public or semi public organisations that provide social support to citizens are implicitly concerned with the issue of digital exclusion. For the most part, the topic is not part of their core business and they don't identify themselves as digital inclusion facilitators. During the participatory workshops, many organisations indicated that they feel obliged to pay attention to the issue since there is a close link between citizens' digital and social needs. These organisations rarely implement a digital inclusion strategy or plan of action. Instead, they are more likely to anticipate difficulties that arise when interacting with citizens. There is little professionalism or long term vision with regard to digital inclusion.

Despite the fact that organisations have a different approach when it comes to digital inclusion, the results show that all kinds of organisations involved with tackling social challenges, try to find solutions for citizens' digital needs. Digital inclusion is, however, hardly ever a key priority. This is strongly reflected in the organisations' funding. The results of the survey show that most organisations get public funding. Still, during the workshops it emerged that the majority does not receive additional financial resources to work on digital inclusion since it is not part of their core business. It is often compulsory to look for other means—such as a project call—to fund digital inclusion projects. There is little cooperation with private partners, which makes them highly dependent on public funding.

The organisations concerned are mostly engaged with underprivileged target groups. As a result, most digital inclusion initiatives are directed towards these groups of people. First, the results of the survey reveal that most organisations target different age groups at the same time. All age categories are covered, but the elderly are most often mentioned. Second, in regard to social groups, the majority of actors tries to tackle different categories simultaneously. The most frequently mentioned groups are people living in poverty, low-literate individuals, ethnic-cultural minorities and jobseekers. Only a minority focuses on refugees, homeless people and people with a mental and/or physical disability. Although the online survey shows a low response rate, the similarities in the answers are quite high. These findings were also confirmed during the participatory workshops we organised.

Based on the results, we can assume that in Belgian civil society, when it comes to digital inclusion, mainly underprivileged target groups are addressed. This is carried out, on the one hand, by organisations that already offer social support, on the other hand, by digital inclusion initiatives set up by (semi) public or non profit organisations, often in collaboration with local authorities. The digital component is generally strongly linked to the social objective of helping citizens to participate in society. This means that we cannot speak of a clear-cut digital inclusion civil society. Instead, the issue is strongly embedded in the social support of citizens by all kinds of (semi) public and non profit organisations. Regardless how digital inclusion is dealt with, it is striking that the theme is mainly tackled at the local level, although digitalisation strategies are primarily implemented at the federal and regional levels.

## **Digital inclusion in practice**

The next section of the research analysis is concerned with what organisations do in relation to digital inclusion. In the online survey, respondents had to indicate to what extent they are working on the following topics: access to digital media, digital skills, data literacy, media literacy, digital public and private services, motivation, and social support networks. Regarding digital skills, the survey presented a distinction between operational, formal, informational, strategic, communication, soft, creating and programming skills, based on academic literature. Responses to the questions were provided on a 10-point scale ranging from zero as not covering a topic at all, to ten meaning the theme is a priority. There were some clear similarities to be found in the responses.

### ***Focus on access to digital media and support***

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The results show that organisations consider providing access to digital media and strengthening citizens' digital skills a priority. First, respondents indicating to give access to digital media were asked to specify to which digital media. The results show that many organisations give access to more than one device at a time. Most actors have desktop computers, peripherals, tablets and laptops at their disposal or apply the *bring your own device* approach. Smartphones are much less available. The results show that most organisations have a wifi connection available for citizens to use, often combined with a fixed internet connection.

Second, when it comes to digital skills, most organisations consider strengthening operational, formal, informational and strategic competences a priority when it comes to digital inclusion. Communication skills are also perceived as important, be it to a limited extent. The results for social and creative skills show a slightly different dynamic. Most organisations do not pay attention to these categories. Strengthening coding and programming skills, on the other hand, is an essential objective for some actors.

### ***Digital private and public services***

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During the participatory workshops, it became apparent that supporting citizens with public and private services has become an essential part of digital inclusion. The results of the online survey reveal the same trend. Most actors help citizens with the use of public services and even consider this to be a priority. Private services are less discussed. In the survey, the organisations were asked which services are covered by their digital inclusion activities. They were given a list of options where they could indicate several answers. We find that most organisations support citizens or get questions about e-government services, e-mail, Tax-on-Web, online travel plans and internet banking. Services that are rarely addressed are Student@work, registering a school choice online, e-commerce, eHealth services or communication with gas and electricity suppliers.

### ***Motivating and empowering citizens***

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Another topic that we addressed in the survey was the motivation of citizens to use digital media. The majority of organisations pays a great deal of attention to the encouragement of citizens. Respondents were also asked which attitudes their visitors have towards digital media. We came up with a list of positive and negative attitudes, from which several options could be selected and/or added. Many organisations indicated that their visitors mainly have negative feelings about the use of digital media. People find it too complicated to use and/or fear that their privacy will be violated. Moreover, according to many respondents, visitors feel obliged to use digital media. Only a few state that citizens also believe that digital media create more opportunities in our society and/or save time.

During the participatory workshops it became clear that many organisations experience the lack of motivation of citizens and their own employees and volunteers to be a major challenge. According to the respondents, many citizens and staff are unable to use digital media in an autonomous way. Citizens rely too much on the support of organisations to deal with digital issues, as a result of which their digital autonomy is not reinforced and they have to keep asking for help.

### ***Data and media literacy and social support networks***

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In contrast to the previous topics, data and media literacy are considered to be less important. The results show that mainly Flemish actors are taking media literacy into consideration. In the case of Walloon and Brussels organisations, the theme is given less attention. As far as data literacy is concerned, we note that a great deal of respondents points out to not pay any attention to it. When it comes to the strengthening of social support networks as well, many organisations are not convinced that this needs to be dealt with. Actors who take measures in this regard, mainly organise informal meetings or group assignments to bring participants into contact with each other.

## **Conclusion**

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Due to the limited size of the sample, the results cannot be generalised to Belgian civil society as a whole. However, the results show that the organisations involved in the quantitative research are generally in agreement on the themes addressed in the field of digital inclusion. The majority believes that providing access to 1/ digital media and 2/ support concerning operational, formal, informational and strategic skills and digital public services are essential topics. By contrast, themes such as data literacy, soft and creative digital skills and social support networks are rarely included.

## Challenges and needs regarding digital inclusion

### Current challenges and gaps

#### ***Participatory workshops – IDEALiC project***

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During the participatory workshops of the IDEALiC research project, we identified the challenges of civil society organisations in relation to digital inclusion. Among the Flemish organisations, five main themes were considered a priority: creating accessible support fitting to the needs of the user, exchanging knowledge and expertise, reaching out to citizens, dealing with citizens' negative attitudes towards digital media, and managing a lack of financial and structural support. Organisations pointed out that they know little about each other's activities in relation to digital inclusion, or about citizens' needs and difficulties with regard to digitalisation. Some Flemish actors mentioned that underprivileged groups in our society often have different priorities, and that language barriers can prevent organisations from helping them. Another important challenge for Flemish organisations is the lack of sense of urgency among policymakers. This results in insufficient (financial) support of civil society organisations. The participants pointed out that governments need to develop a structural digital inclusion strategy.

The Walloon and Brussels participants addressed more or less the same challenges. They brought up the lack of coordination and cooperation between civil society organisations, the need for accessible support and the urge for the identification of citizens' digital and social needs. This way, organisations can customise their own initiatives or refer to existing projects. Furthermore, all participants expressed their concerns with regard to the lack of structural financial support. Additional funding is necessary in order to professionalise digital inclusion initiatives and to give access to sufficient digital media devices and support. On this level, too, the lack of strategy and sense of urgency on the part of policymakers was referred to.

#### ***Round Table on e-inclusion – SERV (22 January 2019)***

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We participated in the Round Table on e-inclusion, organised by SERV, where we gathered feedback on the IDEALiC research results and identified the current challenges and needs of Flemish public and private organisations, local authorities and government agencies. The results differed from one organisation to another, although certain findings were generally accepted.

First, most participants brought up the importance of creating accessible public and private services. Efficient offline channels must still be used. Gaining knowledge about the citizens' needs and proactively thinking about digital inclusion when designing websites and tools, are important elements in this context. Second, the participants stated that more attention needs to be paid to the digital skills and motivation of their own employees. The digitalisation of our society is putting pressure on the existing worker profiles, increasing fear and uncertainty. Third, there is a need for a strict definition of digital inclusion among organisations and policymakers, and for a transversal policy in Belgium. It was pointed out that authorities and organisations at the local level currently accomplish more to tackle digital exclusion than federal and regional authorities. Civil society organisations should also consider how digital inclusion can be structurally embedded in their functioning, according to certain participants. Fourth, governments should pay more attention to the promotion of digital inclusion initiatives so citizens know where to go.

We can conclude from the Round Table that Flemish authorities and organisations believe that the issue of digital inclusion should gain more prominence in policy. A broad definition should be defined at the level of policy and a horizontal strategy should be implemented in all policy domains. Attention should be paid to the skills of employees, offline interaction channels, e-inclusive and accessible services and cooperation with public and private organisations.

## ***Expert group e-inclusion – VVSG and Mediawijs (24 April 2019)***

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The expert group on e-inclusion regularly brings together civil society organisations and local authorities interested in the topic of digital inclusion. During the meeting in April 2019, we were given the opportunity to present the results of the IDEALiC policy research and to generate feedback on our results. During the meeting we discussed the following themes: distribution of competences, knowledge sharing, digital services, support of civil society actors and offline communication channels.

To begin with, the Flemish actors pointed out the need for a transversal Flemish digital inclusion policy so there can be more coordination towards the civil society. The Flemish actors also consider it important to work on knowledge sharing and partnerships between the organisations themselves. Organisations need financial resources to do this, for example, so that an employee can work fulltime on the theme of digital inclusion. Another theme we discussed was the digitization of services. The participants considered this an urgent challenge, and suggested that digital inclusion should be considered proactively when designing tools. The websites and tools also need to be validated regularly in relation to digital inclusion. Policymakers must provide specific guidelines for service providers in order to create inclusive tools and platforms. In addition to the digital services, efficient offline interaction possibilities must be offered. Finally, the civil society actors put forward that they need more support and recognition in their role as digital inclusion facilitators, whereby the issue must be included in the mission of the organisation and adequate (financial) resources must be made available.

## Necessary steps forward

During the two participatory workshops of the IDEALiC research project, we asked the organisations what is required in order to meet the challenges mentioned above. Participants were given the opportunity to respond to seven predefined themes with actions, which they could accept, modify or reject. The results show that organisations at all levels generally agree with these themes as elements to create a digital inclusion strategy.

A first element is the identification of stakeholders at different levels in order to distribute knowledge and create structural partnerships. According to the Flemish respondents, governments should encourage cooperation, and there should be more collaboration between actors and policymakers. French speaking respondents pointed out the importance of sufficient (financial) resources to be able to create sustainable partnerships. At the moment, there is still a lot of fragmentation to be found in civil society. A network for Walloon organisations is already present, namely CABAN, but this network is not wellknown according to the participants.

A second element is the strengthening of digital skills of employees. As reported by the participants, sufficient training moments must be carried out, but this requires a sense of urgency within the organisations themselves and a positive attitude of employees towards digital media. French speaking respondents argued that this is difficult to organise when working with volunteers or temporary workers. In addition, in the opinion of these respondents, there is little information available to improve knowledge about digital media. A third element is paying attention to the basic competencies of users. Literacy plays an important role, although according to the Flemish actors, it is difficult to identify illiterate individuals and it is generally not easy to deal with foreign languages.

A fourth element is the basic reflex that needs to be achieved in order to think about digital inclusion in the creation and implementation of digital services. Respondents considered it relevant to take into account different user profiles and to provide accessible offline alternatives, so that every citizen has an opportunity to participate. Digital inclusion needs to be included proactively, so that difficulties can be overcome

in advance. According to the Flemish respondents, governments in particular should set an example by making public services e-inclusive from the start. A fifth element is the establishment of a broad definition of digital inclusion. Participants agreed that digital inclusion initiatives should respond to new trends, not just operational skills and access to infrastructure. A sixth component is the conduct of research, for example on the sustainability of initiatives, on accessibility and on possible thresholds. A seventh and last element is the provision of inclusive and high quality access to digital media, with individual support and sufficient access to internet. According to the Flemish participants, home access is more important than providing access in public places.

We can conclude that civil society organisations largely identify the same challenges in relation to digital inclusion. Actors face difficulties in providing accessible and customised support, sharing expertise and creating partnerships and dealing with digital inclusion in a sustainable way. This partly stems from the fact that the organisations have little (financial) resources available to work on digital inclusion and that there is little sense of urgency among policymakers and within the organisations themselves. At present, there is a lack of proactive thinking about digital inclusion, which means that the responsibility to participate digitally does not lie with public and private service providers, but with citizens and civil society actors supporting them.

## Conclusion

The intention of the study was to identify the state of today's digital inclusion civil society in Belgium. For this reason, we analysed the characteristics of digital inclusion organisations and initiatives, the challenges they face and the possible future steps they could take. The most important finding is that the Belgian digital inclusion civil society is a fragmented field. A large number of organisations with a social objective of supporting citizens, deal with citizens' digital needs to help them participate in society. These organisations respond to digital issues without digital inclusion being their core business. In addition, all kinds of digital inclusion initiatives are set up intentionally by (semi) public and non profit organisations, often in collaboration with local authorities. These initiatives mainly focus on the strengthening of digital skills, citizens' concerns with regard to public and private services and the provision of access to devices and the internet. Some initiatives clearly focus on specific skills, such as programming and coding. Paying attention to data literacy, social and creative skills and reinforcing social support networks is however rarely addressed. This could be explained by the lack of a broad definition of digital inclusion both at the level of the organisations themselves as on the level of public policy. According to the organisations, the topics mentioned above should be dealt with in the future, along with the creation of customised support. At this moment, however, there is insufficient knowledge about the needs of citizens and human resources to face these challenges.

In general, it seems that a large number of civil society organisations have—mainly out of necessity—taken on the role of digital inclusion facilitator. However, often they don't identify themselves or get recognised as such. These organisations are mainly dependent on public funding, but do not receive additional financial means to work on digital inclusion. As a result, they cannot commit to digital inclusion in a structural and professional way. The participatory workshops have shown that the lack of financial means is the main concern of civil society organisations. Due to the scarce funding, organisations generally rely on volunteers. However, it appears to be difficult to ask volunteers for sufficient flexibility and motivation. According to the organisations, policymakers should have a sense of urgency concerning digital inclusion and should recognise the work done by digital inclusion facilitators. They should therefore start funding digital inclusion initiatives in a more structural way.

The results do show that many organisations are looking for structural partnerships with others. Knowledge sharing and cooperation appears to be an important topic that needs to be addressed more in the future. However, at present, there is still a lack of cooperation, which means that every organisation deals with its own activities and difficulties. Furthermore, civil society organisations believe that they are not sufficiently consulted by policymakers when taking decisions about digitalisation.

The progressing digitalisation strategies of governments poses clear challenges for a number of citizens in our society. Our research clearly shows that civil society organisations play an important role in supporting weaker groups in society to cope with these challenges. It would be good for governments to recognise the role these organisations play and to 1) involve them more in digitalisation strategies, 2) fund the initiatives in this sector more structurally so that the level of structural initiatives and general professionalism is strengthened.

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### Appendix 1: Qualitative survey online (English translation)

Q1: Choose the language of the survey:

- Dutch
- French

Q2: By checking 'I agree', you give permission to release your personal data and research data for scientific research and publication by the IDEALiC research team: Ilse Mariën, Chantal Wauters & Axelle Asmar and their colleagues. The IDEALiC research team is responsible for the collection and storage of your personal data and the research data that you provide. You can contact Chantal Wauters about this via [chantal.wauters@vub.be](mailto:chantal.wauters@vub.be).

Your data will be shared with a limited number of academic researchers from SMIT (Studies on Media, Innovation and Technology) in an aggregated and anonymous form. By agreeing to this form, you give the researchers permission to use your data for scientific research, scientific publications and conferences. Your data is kept confidential and processed anonymously. The data will be stored for as long as it is relevant to the investigation. After one year, the research team will remove all references to personal data, so that they keep a file of survey answers without names, for future scientific research.

You have the right to access, correct and delete your personal data. You may also impose restrictions on the processing, or object to the future processing of your personal data. To claim these rights, you can send an e-mail to [rob.heyman@vub.ac.be](mailto:rob.heyman@vub.ac.be), in which you identify yourself and indicate which right you wish to claim. You have the right to submit a complaint to the Belgian Data Protection Authority: <https://www.privacycommission.be>.

I give my consent to the above conditions:

- I agree
- I do not agree

Q3: General information: Indicate what applies:

- We do not have an e-inclusion initiative
- We used to have an e-inclusion initiative
- We have an existing e-inclusion initiative

Q4: General information about the e-inclusion initiative:

Q4a: Name of the organization

Q4b: Name of the person responsible for e-inclusion in the organization

Q4c: E-mail address of the person responsible for e-inclusion? (*not required*)

Q4d: Website of the e-inclusion initiative or organization? (*not required*)

Q5: Indicate what applies:

- Our e-inclusion initiatives are spread across Belgium
- Our e-inclusion initiatives are spread across Flanders
- Our e-inclusion initiatives are spread across Wallonia
- Our e-inclusion initiatives are spread throughout the Brussels-Capital Region
- Our e-inclusion initiatives are limited to a province or region (excluding Brussels-Capital Region)
- Our e-inclusion initiatives are limited to a city or municipality

Q6a: (*If indicated "our e-inclusion initiatives are limited to a province or region"*): In which provinces is your organization active with regard to e-inclusion?

- West Flanders
- East Flanders
- Antwerp
- Flemish Brabant
- Limburg
- Walloon Brabant
- Hainaut
- Liège
- Luxembourg
- Names

Q6b: (*If indicated "our e-inclusion initiatives are limited to a city or municipality"*): In which city or municipality is your organization active with regard to e-inclusion? (*Open field*)

Q7: Indicate what applies to your organization:

- Our organization is working on e-inclusion by means of projects with a fixed start and end date
- Our organization works structurally and continuously on e-inclusion
- Other

Q8: How long has your organization been working on e-inclusion?

- Less than 2 years

- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Q9: Which target groups does the e-inclusion initiative have in mind? Multiple answers possible:

- Small children (0-6 years old)
- Children (7-12 years old)
- Young people (13-18 years old)
- Young adults (19-25 years old)
- Adults (26-65 years old)
- Seniors (+65 years old)
- People with a physical disability
- People with a mental disability
- People living in poverty
- Ethnic-cultural minorities
- Job seekers / unemployed
- Low literate individuals
- Refugees
- Homeless people
- Other

Q10: What does your organization offer with regard to e-inclusion?

*Score (0 = not covered, 10 = main focus of the e-inclusion initiative)*

Q10a: Access to digital media

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10b: (if score Q10a = 1-10) Which infrastructure do you have available for your visitors?

Multiple answers possible:

- Desktop computer
- Laptop
- Smartphone
- Tablet
- Equipment: printers, scanners, etc.
- Fixed internet
- Wifi connection with password, available on request
- Wifi connection, open to everyone

- We work with a bring your own device approach
- Other

Q10c: Develop operational skills

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10d: Develop formal skills

*Ex. Use hyperlinks*

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10e: Work on informational skills

*Ex. Use Google search engine*

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10f: Strengthen strategic skills

*Use digital media for own advantage or to improve social position.*

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10g: Develop communication skills

*Ex. Send messages using WhatsApp*

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10h: Strengthen soft skills

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10i: Work on creative skills

Ex. Use Adobe Photoshop

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10j: Develop coding / programming skills

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10k: Data literacy

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10l: Media literacy

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10m: (If 1 score Q10c to Q10l = 1-10): What approach does your organization use when learning digital skills?

- One-to-one support, individually
- Guidance in small groups (<or = 6 people)
- Guidance in medium-sized groups (<or = 20 people)
- Guidance in large groups (> 20 people)
- A combination of the above
- Other

Q10n: (If 1 score Q10c to Q10l = 1-10): Indicate what applies to your organization:

- At the end of the training, participants receive an officially recognized certificate
- At the end of the training, participants receive a proof of participation
- At the end of the training, participants do not receive a certificate
- Other

Q10o: Using digital public services

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10p: Using digital private services

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10q: (if 1 score Q10o to Q10p = 1-10): For which type of digital services do visitors request support? Multiple answers possible:

- Tax-on-Web
- Mobile application NMBS or De Lijn
- Plan a trip
- Order Uber
- E-loket city
- Internet banking
- Student @ work
- My Pension
- Website VDAB
- Health insurance service
- Online appointment with doctor or dentist
- Online appointment with a teacher
- Order goods online
- Send mail
- Consult leisure activities
- Consult telecom services
- Consult gas and electricity services
- My Library
- Apply for school and study allowances
- Registration school choice
- Other

Q10r: Motivating people to use digital media

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10s: (if score Q10r = 1-10): Which attitudes towards digital media are most common among your visitors? Multiple answers possible:

- Visitors are afraid of using digital media
- Visitors find that digitalization makes everything easier
- Visitors believe that digitalization has a time-saving effect
- Visitors believe that digitalization is cost-effective
- Visitors think that digital media create more possibilities
- Visitors are uncertain in the use of digital media
- Visitors think that services should be digitized even more
- Visitors fear that their privacy will be violated by digital media
- Visitors find digital media too complicated to use
- Visitors feel compelled to use digital media
- Visitors indicate that digital media make everything more accessible
- Visitors feel more involved in society through digital media
- Visitors find digital media unsafe
- Other

Q10t: Strengthen social support networks for digital media use

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Q10u: (if score Q10t = 1-10): How does your organization tries to strengthen support networks? Multiple answers possible:

- Participants are encouraged to motivate each other or others to use digital media
- Informal meeting moments are created so that participants can support each other
- Peer-to-peer learning strategies are applied
- Group discussions are organized with regard to digital media
- Assignments on digital media are handled in smaller groups
- Other

Q10v: Does your e-inclusion initiative does something else? (*Open field*) (*not required*)

Q11: How is the e-inclusion initiative/work of your organization funded?

- Self-reliant
- 100% funded by the government
- Partially funded by the government
- Partially or fully funded by the private sector

- Other

Q11a: (If response Q11 = "100% funded by government" or "partially funded by government"):  
By which government level(s) is the e-inclusion initiative of your organization funded? Multiple answers possible:

- Local government (city or municipality)
- Regional government (Flemish Region, Brussels Capital Region, Walloon Region, French speaking Community)
- Federal government
- Other

Q12: How many other e-inclusion initiatives does your organization work with?

- None
- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-10
- More than 10

Q13: Who is involved in the evaluation of your e-inclusion initiative?  
(0 = not applicable at all; 5 = completely applicable)

Q13a: Participants?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13b: Employees

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13c: Partners?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13d: Governments and authorities?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13e: Other e-inclusion initiatives?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13f: External organisations (excluding partners)?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q13g: Other? (*Open field*)

Q14: Indicate what applies to your organization: The impact of the e-inclusion initiative is ...

Q14a: looked at economically

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q14b: viewed in terms of social impact

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q14c: measured by using quantitative data:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q14d: measured by using qualitative data:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Q14e: evaluated over a period of:

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-9 years
- More than 10 years

Q15: Which indicators are used in the evaluation of the e-inclusion initiative? Multiple answers possible:

- Number of users that access digital media
- Number of users learning to work with digital media
- Increasing motivation with regard to digital media among users and / or staff
- Increasing use of digital public and / or private services
- Increase of e-commerce activities
- Increased self-reliance of users
- Number of users present at training courses
- Number of activities that are organized
- Wage increases and / or transfer to higher positions of users
- Number of unemployed who find a job within x number of time
- Number of vacancies that are filled (with regard to digital functions or jobs that require digital skills)
- Increase chance of success in education with children and / or young people
- Increase efficiency of public or private serviceproviders
- Cost savings for public or private serviceproviders
- Cost savings for users
- Influence on social relationships between users
- Influence on relationship between users and private and / or public serviceproviders (incl. The government)
- Time saving for users
- Time saving for serviceproviders (incl. Government)
- Increased access to information
- Other

Q16: What are the three most important challenges that your e-inclusion initiative currently faces? (*Open field*)

Q17: If you want to be kept informed of the results of the research, please leave your e-mail address below:

Q18: A workshop will be organized shortly with regard to the results of this research and the preparation of policy recommendations, in which your input is important (information will soon be available on [www.inclusiondigitaleinclusie.be](http://www.inclusiondigitaleinclusie.be)). Are you interested to participate in this?

- Yes
- No

## **Appendix 2: Participants participatory workshops IDEALiC**

### *Dutch speaking workshop*

Seniornet Vlaanderen  
VDAB  
LINC vzw  
Link in de Kabel  
Stad Antwerpen  
Digidak / Unigo  
VeBeS vzw  
Vormingplus Antwerpen  
Federatie Basiseducatie  
VVSG  
Gemeente en OCMW Zwijndrecht  
Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen vzw

### *French speaking workshop*

Agence du numérique  
FOREM  
UCLL  
CIRB – CIBG  
Espace Cultures et Développement asbl  
MAKS Digitaal vzw  
Fobragra  
Caban  
Lire et Ecrire Bruxelles  
SPRB – Easybrussels  
Fondation Roi Baudouin  
Solival  
CPAS Berchem-sainte-agathe  
Cyber 53 asbl