National Report

Cyprus

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1   Executive Summary

This report aims at providing insight on the digital strategies and means that organizations are using for youth engagement in volunteering activities. It also aims to create a greater understanding of the recent situation of digital youth work in Cyprus.

In order to collect all the necessary information, a questionnaire was distributed to youth workers of NGOs, youth centers and foundations, social workers and school guides, mentors, tutors and professionals from organizations working with youth. These questionnaires were distributed online to our network of collaborators, through our social media platforms, as well as to other identified relevant organizations and institutions. The data collected were then analyzed in order to create a state-of-the-art report, at a national (Cyprus) level, presenting the current situation of digital youth work in Cyprus.

2   Introduction

The ECO-MEDIA project aims to train social and youth workers, school guides, mentors, tutors and, in general, professionals working with youth, in using community media as a tool to enhance the quality of their work and communication, to empower young people, and finally to raise awareness on other volunteering approaches, i.e. e-volunteering and digital activism, with a focus on climate change.

To achieve the aforementioned goals, a number of tangible results are scheduled to be developed throughout the project's lifespan. The first one is the development of a descriptive map of community media approaches amongst partner countries, through study, evaluation and analysis of data on digital methodologies for youth engagement in volunteering activities.

To collect all the necessary data, a questionnaire was developed and distributed in all partner countries. This report focuses on the analysis of the responses received from the questionnaires that were disseminated to the target group of interest in Cyprus, and also presents relevant national findings of community media approaches for digital youth work.

3   Part A: Questionnaire

3.1 Methodological framework and objectives

With our main aim being to gain a greater understanding of the recent situation of digital youth work around Europe and develop a descriptive map of Community Media approaches for digital youth work, a questionnaire was created and distributed to youth workers, school guides, mentors, tutors, and, in general, professionals working with youth in all partner countries. The final result is the development of six separate national reports (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Italy, Spain) that will be consolidated in a final comparative analysis of the survey results and relevant national findings report. That way, we will obtain a more comprehensive understanding of youth work in the frame of community media and digital methodologies in all partner countries.

More specifically, in Cyprus, 30 responses have been collected, a fact that allows the export of valid conclusions. The questionnaire was structured in a way that gathered information regarding several aspects of digital youth work, such as the familiarization of youth workers with the implementation of digital tools/methods, the utilization of digital means for the motivation of youth towards volunteering activities, the relation of youth workers with their country's community media, but also the awareness of youth towards climate change.

3.2 Reaching out to the target group and collection of responses

To achieve our objectives and retrieve all the necessary information, a questionnaire in English was developed, uploaded on a freely accessible web platform (Google form) and then distributed to a list of stakeholders in the Youth Sector. The questionnaire was sent via email to youth workers, school guides, mentors, tutors, and, in general, professionals working with youth. To facilitate the whole process, phone and email communication was established with several stakeholders and people in key positions in the above mentioned organizations.

By engaging the largest possible number of people to complete the questionnaires, we intended to collect valuable data and information in relation to:
● Digital methodologies for youth engagement in volunteering activities
● Youth engagement in volunteerism through community media

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- Youth work and climate change; methodologies for raising awareness amongst young people
- Challenges and obstacles imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the organizations' adaptation to them

## 4. Part B: Country mapping and relevant national findings

4.1 Survey results

In the first part of the questionnaire we aimed to understand the current situation in the organizations (working with youth) regarding their level of familiarity with digital tools and means that they could utilize to engage young people in (e-)volunteering activities.

Specifically, the first question (figure 1) referred to the level of familiarity that each organization's youth workers have with digital tools. To evaluate the level, a scale from 1 to 5 (insufficient to excellent) have been given to responders and as we can observe in the following figure the most responses fell into 3 and 4 (43 and 46 % respectively). This indicates that even though youth workers in Cyprus seem to be familiar with digital tools there are still margins for improving their digital skills and knowledge so they can provide quality digital youth work.

1) In a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your organization's youth workers' level of familiarity with digital tools in order to provide quality digital youth work?
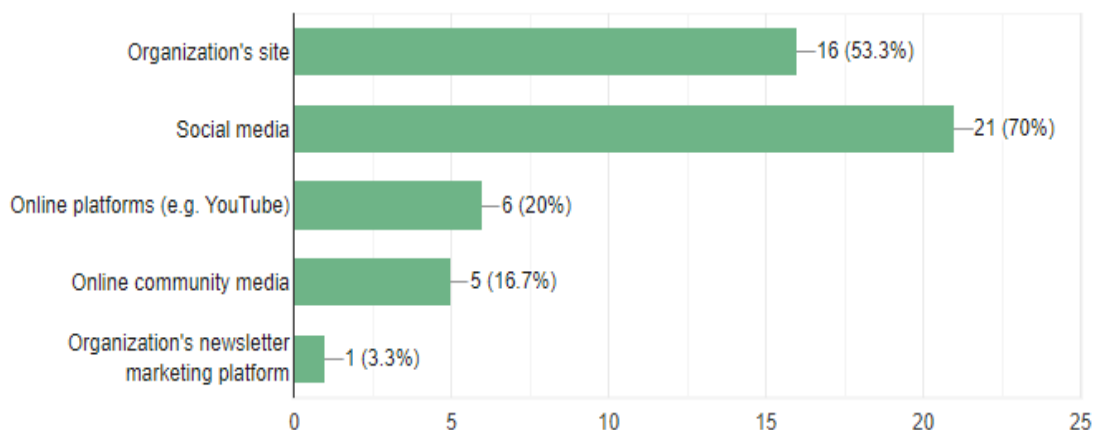
30 responses
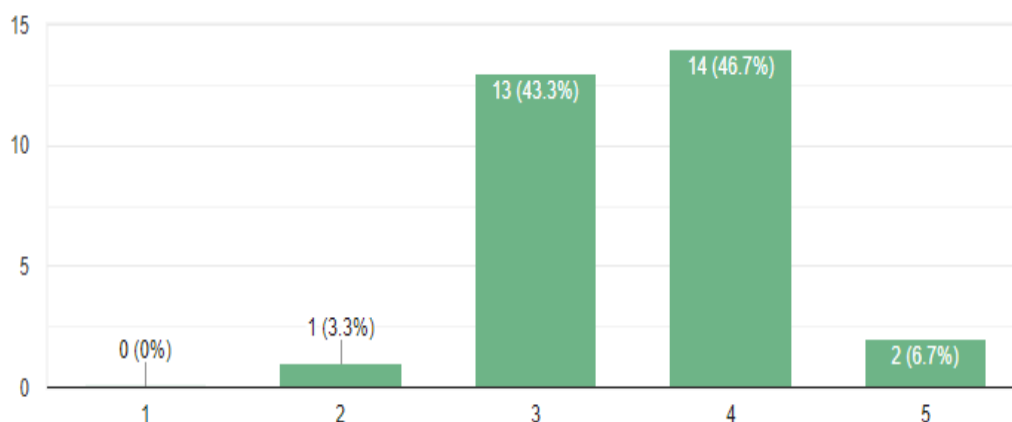
Figure 1: 1ˢᵗ question of the survey

2) Which digital media your organization uses in order to inform youth about volunteerism?
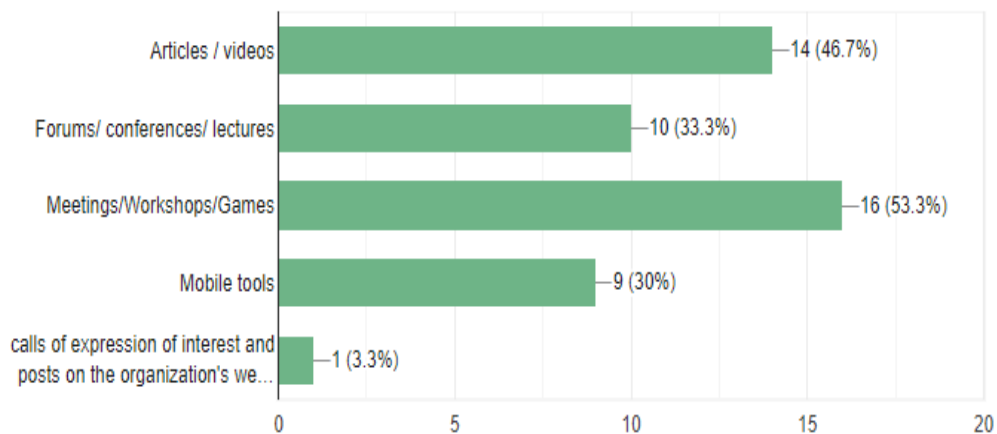
30 responses

Figure 2: 2ⁿᵈ question of the survey

The second question (figure 2) was integrated to receive information about which media organizations used to disseminate news and volunteering opportunities, especially during the pandemic where digital media were the most popular tool to inform young people for social issues such as volunteerism. The results showed that most of the organizations preferred social media for posting opportunities of volunteering activities or informing articles etc. More than half of the organizations (16 of 30) declared that they used their internet site for the aforementioned purpose and only 5 of the 30 organizations responded that they came in contact with their national community media for informing youth for volunteerism. This fact reveals that a high percentage of the organizations didn't prefer community media for spreading news and opportunities. As for the specific means that they implied to motivate youth to volunteer, almost 50% of the organizations replied for articles, videos, meetings, workshops and games and 30% of them articles, videos and mobile tools. Also, 83% of organizations working with youth, didn't use any software for volunteering management. In spite of that, organizations are satisfied with the response of young volunteers to the digital methods they applied (see question & response 5), indicating that even under difficult circumstances, there are possible pathways for volunteering (mainly e-volunteering) but there are also margins for improvement.

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3) Which of the following digital means your organization employs in order to motivate youth to participate in volunteering activities?
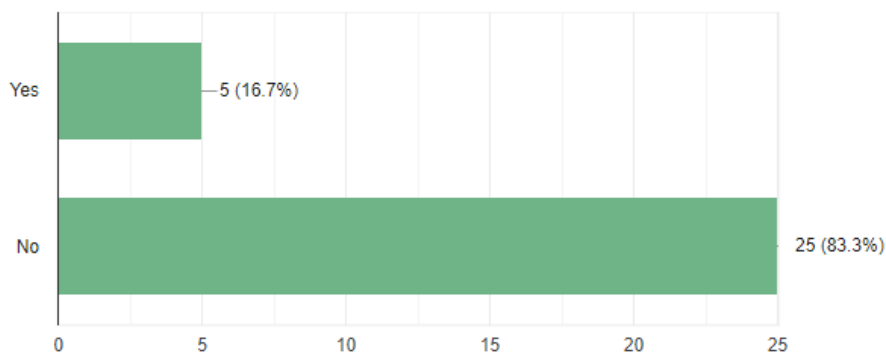
30 responses

Figure 3: 3rd question of the survey

4) Is your organization using any existing volunteering management software, such as Get Connected or VolunteerLocal? In case of different software, please choose "Other" and specify.
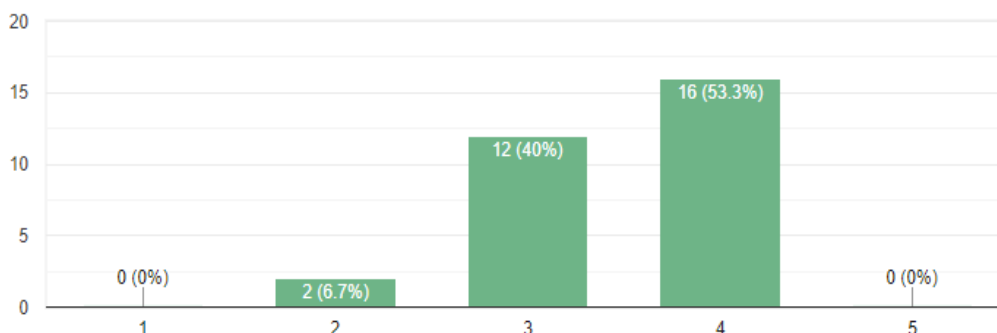
30 responses

Figure 4: 4th question of the survey

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5) In a scale from 1 to 5 how would you rate the response of young volunteers to the digital methods you applied?
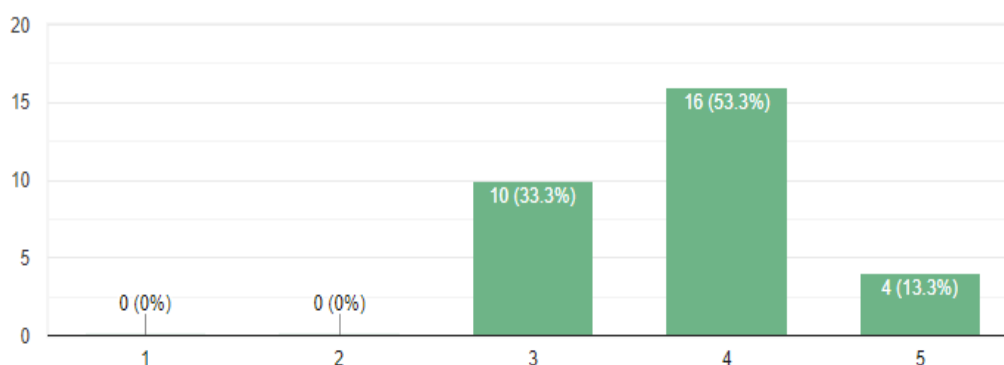
30 responses

Figure 5: 5th question of the survey

Continuing the questionnaire, youth workers were called to rate (in their opinion) the efficiency that digital tools and e-learning platforms (especially climate crisis related) could have for motivation of youth to volunteer. A high percentage of youth workers (53,3 %), believes that aforementioned methods could be up to "very efficient" for engaging youth to volunteering activities, highlighting the importance of creating digital tools to activate young people. However, 87% of the organizations that responded to the questionnaire don't promote free access platforms for the development of young people's digital skills. The creation of friendly-user platforms and digital tools and the promotion of them among youth organizations and community media could be beneficial for both.

6) In a scale from 1-5 please rate in how efficient you believe that free digital tools and e-learning platforms related to climate crisis could be, for motivation of youth to volunteerism.
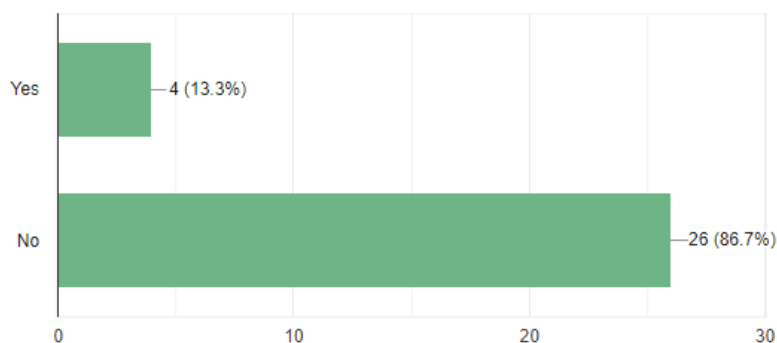
30 responses

Figure 6: 6th question of the survey

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7) Do you promote the usage and exploration of free access platforms (e.g. Allyouneediscode) among young people in order to develop their digital skills? If yes please specify which platforms.

30 responses

Figure 7: 7th question of the survey

The next question's purpose (figure 8) was to explore if organizations provided any opportunities for e-volunteering activities and what opportunities specifically. The results were optimistic, showing that 70% of the organizations, provided e-volunteering activities for social media promotion and management, 40% e-mail marketing and management, 23% video creation, website design, blogging and editing and only 6,7% of the organizations working with youth didn't provide opportunities for e-volunteering.

9) Does your organization provide any of the following digital activities for youth e-volunteering?

30 responses
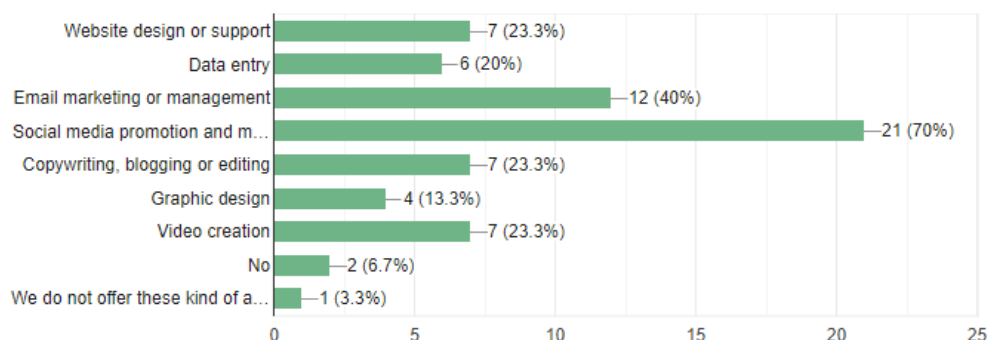
Figure 8: 9th question of the survey

The following part of the questionnaire (Q&A 10 and 11), aimed to investigate the relationships between organizations that work with youth and active community media in

each country. As presented in the figures below, in a scale from 1 to 5 (1 for insufficient 5 for excellent) 36, 33 and 26 % of organizations, responded 4,3 and 2 respectively regarding their relation with national community media, indicating a high level of familiarity with them which could be further enhanced through the Eco-Media project. In the question about the possible support that each organization has provided to the Cypriot community media, most of them (47%) answered for the provision of educational material, 30% for digital material and toolkits, 23% for data that they have collected through implemented projects, 20% for expertise and know-how but only 10% provided economical instruments to the active community media of Cyprus.

10) What is your relation with your country's active community media?
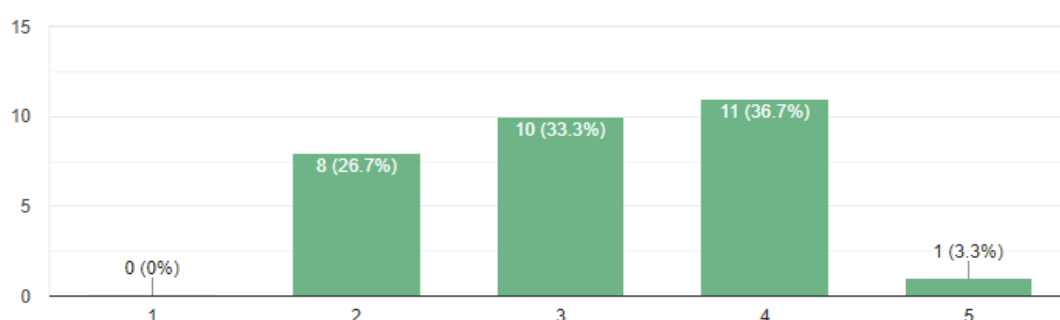30 responses

Figure 9: 10th question of the survey

11) Is your organization providing any of the following kind of support to local community media? If other please specify.
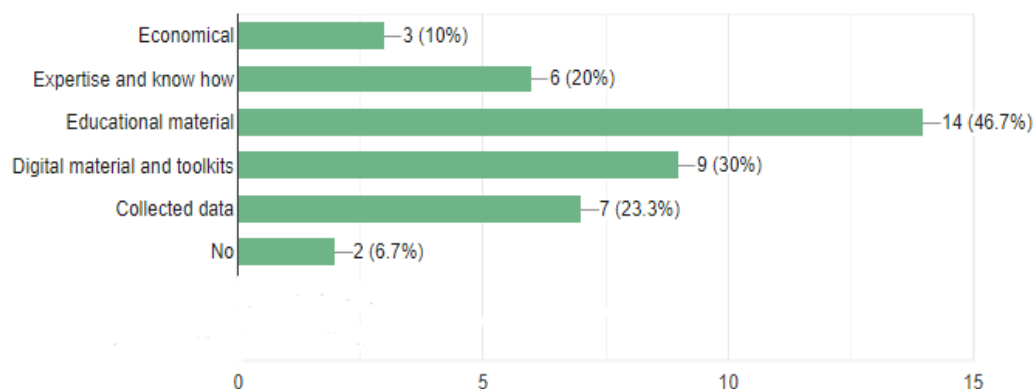30 responses

Figure 10: 11th question of the survey

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Afterwards, we intended to gain youth worker's opinions on methodologies that could be used in order to raise awareness amongst young people for the climate crisis. Most youth workers (63%) believe that by organizing volunteering green actions and giving presentations about environmental sustainability can be really helpful for the aforementioned purpose. Also, 36% of youth workers responded that creating media campaigns and art related to climate change is a possible way to engage youth in volunteerism. The creation of training material for youth workers (relevant to climate change) gained 30% of acceptation, mentioning the need for the development of tools for youth workers.

12) Which of the following methods you would choose in order to raise youth's awareness regarding climate change?
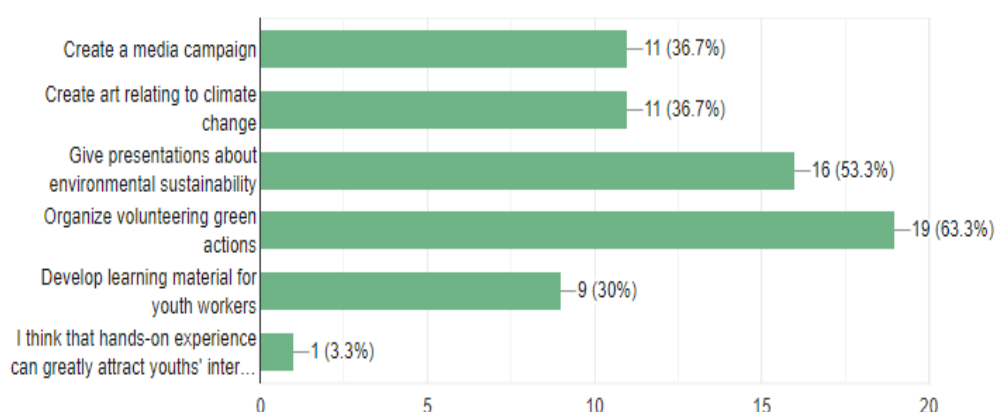
30 responses

Figure 11: 12th question of the survey

Finalizing the survey, we tried to realize the obstacles that organizations came across during the COVID-19 pandemic and prevented them from providing qualitative volunteering actions. Most of youth workers, voted as a biggest obstacle the lack of participants, indicating that most of the strategies they applied weren't that effective to engage young to volunteerism and if we combine it with the second biggest obstacle which was the lack of expertise in digitalization and the absence of digital tools it emphasizes the importance of digitalization and provision of free digital tools among organizations working with youth in Cyprus. Another big obstacle seems to be related with economic issues (40% of youth workers referred to that), including the fact that 29 of the 30 organizations that responded to the questionnaire haven't received any kind of support from the Ministry of Education of Cyprus, neither economical, nor technical (question 14).

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13) What were the obstacles and challenges that your organization came across during the pandemic regarding volunteering?
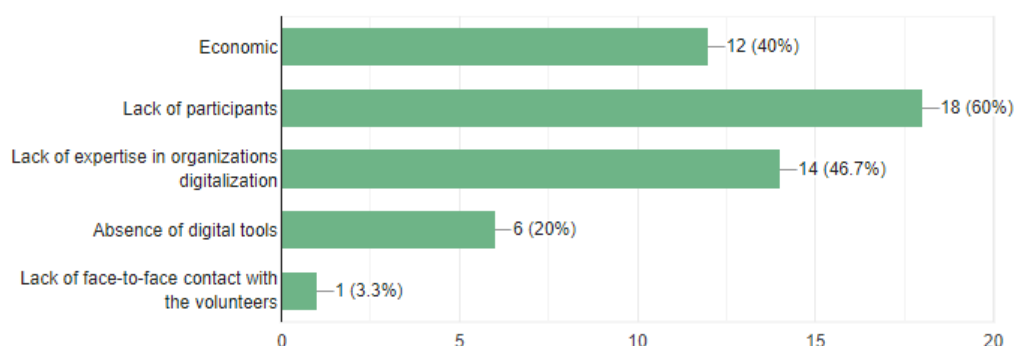
30 responses

Figure 12: 13th question of the survey

14) Has your organization received any kind of support in order to upscale its digitalization from your government or Ministry of Education? If yes please specify.
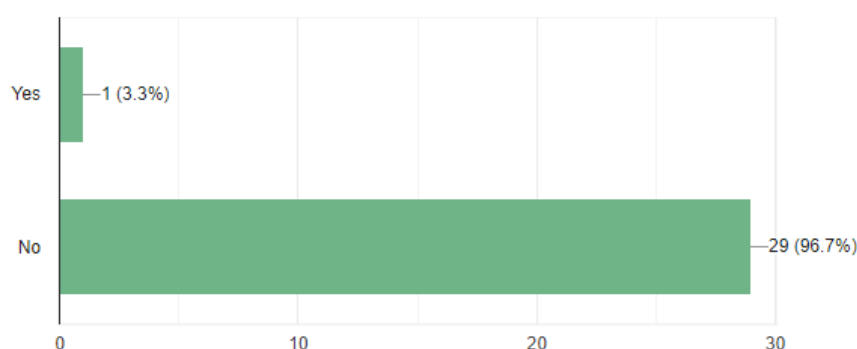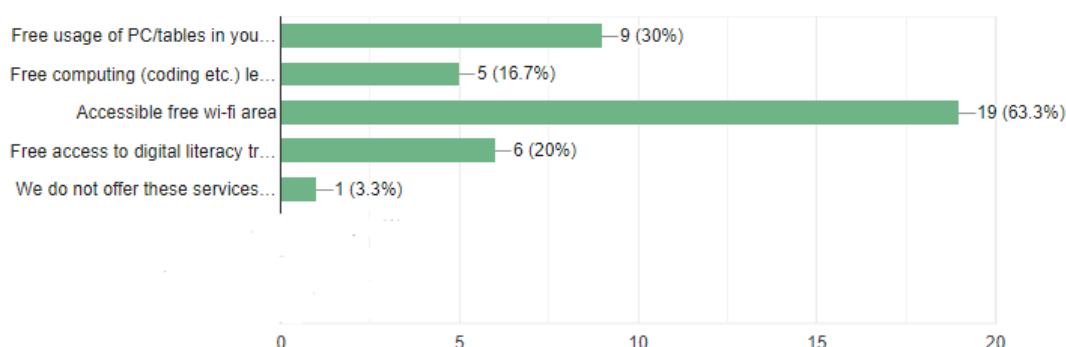
30 responses

Figure 13: 14th question of the survey

Last but not least, due to the fact that not everybody can benefit from digital opportunities, mainly because of social-economic obstacles, we intended to explore if organizations provided means and tools to those who couldn't own a personal computer or internet and computing lessons. By providing these opportunities, it is more possible to engage a bigger number of volunteers in organizations and eliminate digital divide and literacy. Fortunately, most of the Cypriot organizations in the youth sector, provide at least an accessible free wi-fi area and a 20-30 % also provides free usage of personal computers and tablets, computing lessons and training material for the elimination of digital literacy.

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15) Does your organization offer any of the following opportunities to reduce the digital divide among young people? If other please specify.

30 responses

Free usage of PC/tables in you... — 9 (30%)
Free computing (coding etc.) le... — 5 (16.7%)
Accessible free wi-fi area — 19 (63.3%)
Free access to digital literacy tr... — 6 (20%)
We do not offer these services... — 1 (3.3%)

Figure 14: 15th question of the survey

5 Conclusions

Through desk research and questionnaire distribution we managed to gain insights on the digital strategies and means that organizations in Cyprus are applying for the engagement of youth in volunteerism. Most youth workers declare that they are familiar with digital tools in order to provide qualitative lessons and digital activities to youth, but there is still room for improving their skills. Organizations in Cyprus, are using social media and websites to disseminate news and volunteering opportunities and even through the pandemic, they were providing chances for e-volunteering activities such as marketing and promotion via social media, e-mail management and data analysis and stated "rather satisfied" to "satisfied" regarding the acceptance their methods received from volunteers. In spite of this, the biggest obstacle organizations (18 of 30 responders) came across last years was the lack of participants, thus highlighting the need for more effective methods to motivate youth to volunteerism.

Only 5 in 30 organizations preferred community media to spread news and opportunities, even though 90% responded a level of familiarity with Cypriot active community media. Through the Eco-Media project, community media will be promoted as an innovative tool for the engagement of youth in volunteering activities, by the provision of expertise in digitalization, digital tools and e-learning material. Moreover, better networking between organizations in the sector of youth and community media of Cyprus should be achieved. For this reason, conferences will conclude youth workers and community media activists, lists of active community media (containing all necessary contact information) will be distributed to

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organizations and backwards and free accessible e-learning platforms as well as digital toolkits (created by Eco-Media partners) will be promoted amongst them.

Accordingly, to Eco-Media's scope, an e-learning platform with relevant training content and digital tools will be created in the scope of briefing youth workers and youth about the climate crisis and sustainable environmental actions to mitigate the effects of climate change. Over 50% of youth workers believe that organizing green actions and giving presentations about climate change could be effective for raising youths' awareness and engaging them in volunteering activities. Finally, the e-learning material and digital toolkit, it is believed by the majority of youth workers (85%) that if it consists of material related to climate change will have a great contribution in engaging youth to volunteering activities.

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