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NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT

NATIONAL REPORT, BULGARIA

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1. Background

This analysis is carried out by the team of NTCenter (BG) in the beginning of June 2018. The analysis is part of the activities of IO1 of RED project. It is aimed to determine **which are the specific target groups and potential stakeholders (primary and secondary) of the RED project in the Bulgarian setting**. Analysis reveals the needs on which there should be specific focus, and also shows what are the expectations of the different target groups and potential stakeholders concerning the RED platform.

This serves as a reference document and is based, on one hand, on **meetings with stakeholders and interviews with experts**, and on the other hand, on **survey of sample of potential users** of the RED platform.

Although there are significant differences between the target groups of the individual organisations/experts which were contacted by NTCenter, the analysis revealed some **overlapping needs** which can be effectively met by the RED platform and its intended resources.

These needs are arranged in **several main topics** which we suggest to be included on the platform, with **each topic containing several specific items of interest**. The topics are as follows:

- Personal finance
- Health care
- Social services (municipal and governmental)
- Education
- Work
- Household
- Online safety
- Legal assistance
- Digital literacy

2. Purpose of the needs analysis

The needs analysis is designed to:

- Assess the current levels of (1) target groups' perception of their own needs and (2) experts and stakeholders evaluation of needs of distinct target groups for the RED project in Bulgaria;
- Assess the existing opportunities, bearing some similarity to the RED toolbox, to cope with various social problems which the target groups encounter;
- Explore the relevant topics which are suitable to be included in the RED platform, by way of conducting meetings and interviews with experts and survey of the identified target groups;
- Define selection criteria and determine the main topics of interest, and their sub-themes and focus issues;
- Ensure that the topics are relevant to the educational and socio-cultural features of the target groups/audience identified by the team of the Bulgarian partner in the RED project;
- Provide a solid foundation for the development of the contents of the RED platform and for the delivery of the training/information materials to the target audiences.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data sources

The report is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary sources comprise an online target group questionnaire, interviews and face-to-face meetings with experts, information received from various stakeholders. Secondary sources which were used are different online publications and policy documents.

3.1.1. Expert meetings and interviews

These seek to:

- Define with precision the target groups of the respective organisations/experts;
- Uncover existing problems of the different target groups;
- Find out which are the information needs of the target groups;
- Find out what sources of information are available and which resources are used in the process of seeking and interpreting the information;
- Understand experts' perceptions of the needs of the target groups;
- Prioritise the perceived and reported needs;
- Inform the NTCenter's on the various experts' involvement and support activities with regard to coping with the lack of particular skills by the target groups;
- Serve as basis for designing the target group questionnaire, based entirely on recommendations and suggestions by experts and stakeholders;
- Find out the sources of information which the different target groups know, prefer and use;
- Assess the most appropriate tools/techniques to convey the required information to the particular target group. When developing the online RED platform It should be taken into account what combination of techniques is preferred by the target audience, i.e. audio (voice recording), video (images), subtitles (text), interactivity (link and some kind of activity required by the participant);

3.1.2. Target group questionnaire

The designed questionnaire which was presented online seeks to:

- Obtain more detailed information about the target groups needs;
- Find common topics of interest among different target groups;

- Uncover target groups' attitudes regarding the use and benefits of the RED platform;
- Establish a “desirability of needs” scale to assist the decision-making on which topics should be considered a priority when planning and designing the content for the RED platform.

3.1.3. Online research

Our online research efforts were focused on establishing what are the available means of informational and procedural assistance available to meet the target groups' needs. We screened central government, agencies and local government websites for digital resources aimed at helping people with poor literacy and numeracy skills, and discovered a very limited number of such resources. It is clear to us that RED would contribute in a significant manner to providing resources in support of target groups' needs. In addition, we are confident that the experts and institutions we met will be using the RED resources in their day-to-day operations and interactions with the target groups.

3.2. Data collection process

The first step in the process of analysis was to determine which organisations/experts to approach. We used personal contacts and online search in order to identify the most appropriate and relevant people to reach out to. Our aim was twofold: firstly, to receive initial information and to determine the potential target groups and their needs, and secondly to use the experts as a intermediaries which will connect us with the specified target groups.

Two representatives of the NTC team, Mrs Gergana Pencheva and Mrs Theodora Dimitrova, had formal and informal meetings with potential stakeholders on local level and national level - experts and representatives of government agencies, associations, social services, NGOs, outreach workers, physicians, psychotherapists, occupational therapists, volunteers.

The meetings and interviews took place from 27 March - 31 May 2018. The conducted formal face-to-face meetings are summarised in 9 Meeting Memo reports. The following table shows data for the diversity of the reached organisations/stakeholders and the number of experts interviewed:

Organisation name and type of the organisation	Details positions of people present at the meeting	Number of experts respondents
Center for Social Rehabilitation and Integration	1 expert from the center 1 social worker from the center 1 psychologist from the center	3
Day Center for People with Disabilities	1 social worker 2 experts	3
Low threshold center for young people at risk - Association "Health without Borders"	1 expert 1 social worker 1 dermatovenerologist	3
Initiative for Health Foundation - NGO for young people and families at risk	1 social worker 1 outreach worker	2
Sofia Municipal Center for Temporary Accommodation „St. Sofia“	1 director	1
Sofia Municipality Center for Temporary Accommodation „St. Dimitar“	1 director	1
Social Assistance Directorate, municipality Vazrazhdane, Sofia	2 experts 1 social worker	3
Low-threshold center for people addicted to alcohol and drugs, “Posoka” (Direction) House	1 executive manager 1 psychologist	2
Health and Social Development Foundation	1 health and social community assistant 1 social worker 1 teaching assistant	3

The next step was research of the the needs of the specified target groups. Based on the interviews with the experts a Target Group Questionnaire was developed. It consists of 20 questions. Both paper and online versions are available.

Our aim was to encompass wide range of (young) adults with low literacy, numeracy and digital skills, which are at distance to the society and the labour market. The number of respondents is shown in the following table:

Demographics	No of respondents (n=61)
Gender	Number
Male	27
Female	34
Age	Number
from 18 to 25	9
from 26 to 35	17
from 36 to 46	24
46+	11
Education	Number
none	8
completed primary - 4th grade	14
completed lower-secondary 7th grade	22
completed upper-secondary 12th grade	13
Target group	Number
refugee or immigrant	2
member of minority (ethnicity, religious, etc)	11
people with disabilities	18
disadvantaged people (situations of extreme poverty or social exclusion, school drop-outs, former prisoners, second generation immigrants, unemployed for more than two years, illiterate persons, etc.)	16
people with addictions	6
homeless people	10
do not fall into any of the above categories	4

3.3. Limitations of data collected

There were some limitations to the data collection process which should be considered when analysing the results and drawing conclusion. These could be described as follows:

1. The number of stakeholder organisations and experts met represents a small sample of all affected and dealing with the problem of adults with low literacy, numeracy and digital skills.
2. Some respondents needed help in order to fill out the questionnaire and probably there is some influence/bias from the person which actually filled the form.
3. Similar bias may be expected in cases where an assistant had to translate the questionnaire (e.g. for non-Bulgarian speakers) to the respondent, since the translation may not have been correct, or may have been loaded with emotions and comments on the part of the assistant.
4. The respondents felt that they were assessed in some way which may result in deformation of the data received, a bias typical for most surveys of this type.
5. It was difficult to get the target group to cooperate, because the filling of the questionnaire was not directly related to any personal benefit, though the upcoming RED platform was thoroughly explained.
6. The survey provides perceived needs which are not verifiable using the tools of the RED project.
7. Respondents may have difficulties identifying themselves as part of a specific target group, hence the survey results concerning membership of a particular group should be read with caution.

4. Findings

4.1. Needs evaluation - the experts' opinion

A total of 21 experts were interviewed during the first stage of the RED project. Some of them were approached by **face-to-face contact**, and a very small number - **by phone** (for reasons of inability to travel).

The talks with the various experts which we held resulted in a construction of a **'master list' of topics and specific issues** which they deemed appropriate for the target groups with which they work. **The list consists of 91 items** (see separate document in Dropbox). We carried some analytical and editorial work on that list: removed duplicates, re-phrased some items, grouped others, in order to construct a short and relevant Target Group Survey to be delivered online (using Google Forms).

4.2. Needs evaluation - the target groups' opinion

The **target groups which we identified** and included in our survey are listed below. It is worth underlining that we see a combination of determinants, i.e. homeless in general is not sufficiently specific for us, based on discussions with experts and stakeholders. Hence we replicated, to a large degree, the **definitions of the target groups which the stakeholders use** and are familiar with:

- specially trained mediators from the Roma-community
- integration of re-socialisation of unemployed and low-skilled people, low-income people, poor people
- homeless people over 18 years old
- homeless people aged 16 - 25
- disadvantaged people
- young people at risk with disability
- people with risky sexual behavior - sex workers
- intravenous drug users, prisoners
- alcohol, drug and gambling addicts
- roma community

Starting with this list as an initial point, we **identified the relevant specific risk factors, and the issues and topics which RED should consider when developing digital content:**

- homeless, with distance to the labor market, with unspecified level of education, with lack of basic digital and numeracy skills
- unemployed, large families, illiterate persons who have low skills
- people with functionally illiterate, with physical and mental disabilities
- people with functionally illiterate, risk of dropping out of society
- people in risk of dropping out of society, unemployed, with low (or without) income

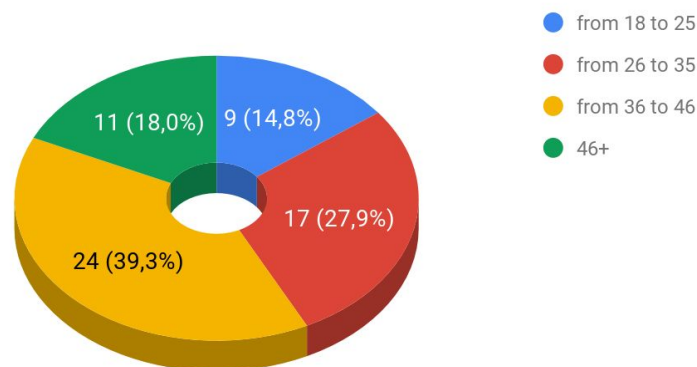
- people in risk of dropping out of society, unemployed, with low (or without) income, homeless
- people from the Roma community in risk of dropping out of society, unemployed, with low or without income, functionally illiterate

A total of 61 respondents filled in Target Group Questionnaire. All responses were received throughout the online version of the questionnaire. It was sent by e-mail to experts and partner organisations which have direct contact with the target groups, as well as published on the FB page of the Adam Smith College of Management (NTCenter).

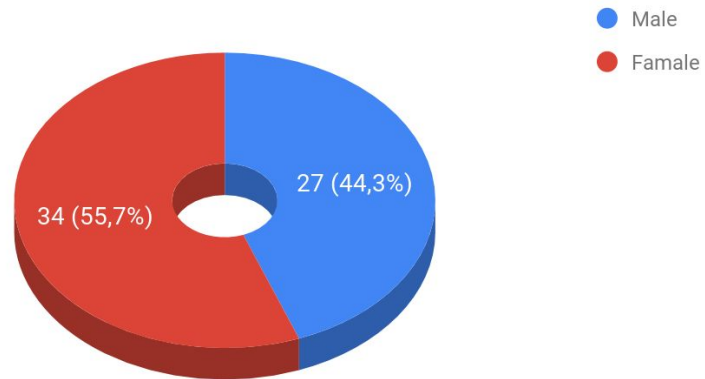
The Questionnaire consists of two parts: the first one concerning the demographics of the respondents, including membership of one or more of the identified target groups, and the second one aimed at finding out which specific needs of the target group are to be covered by the RED platform.

Hereafter are graphics which present the main demographic characteristics of the respondents.

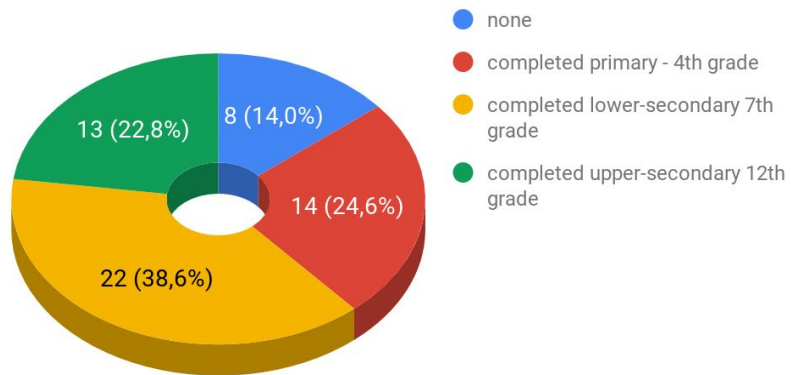
Respondents by Age



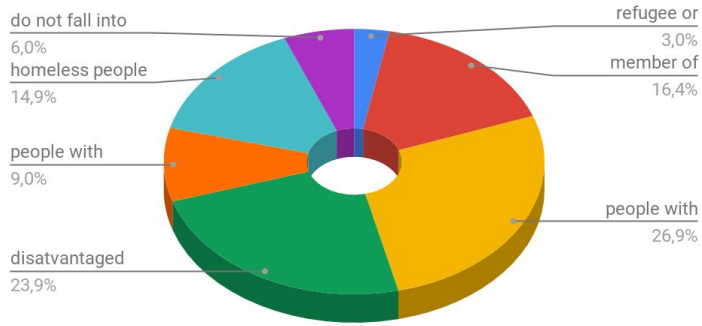
Respondents by Gender



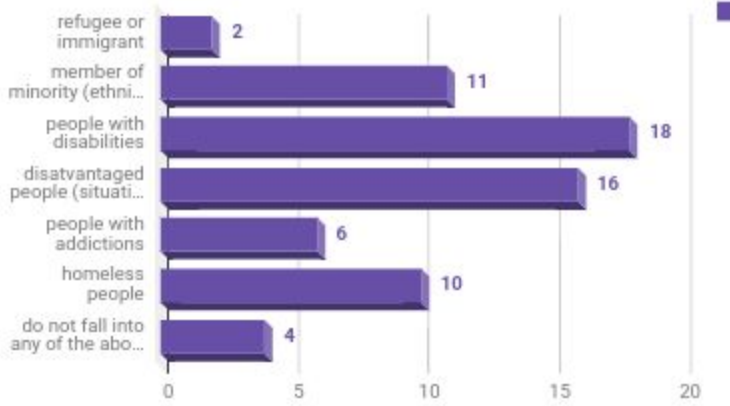
Respondents by Educational attainment



Respondents by RED Target groups



Respondents by RED Target groups



The processed results from the questionnaire revealed the following ranking, indicating how desirable/needed a particular item from the initial list (compiled together with experts and stakeholders) is.

NTCenter intends to use this list as an order of activities, starting to produce informational and support materials for items at the top of the list and working our way to the bottom.

Major items of interest to respondents	Rating 0 = no interest 10 = great interest
How to find professional courses for computer literacy, hairdressing, cooking	6,89
Information on adult learning centers	6,64
What is the procedure for accommodation at a temporary accommodation center	6,25
Terms and conditions for using different social services: offices for social services, day center, CSRI	5,49
What is the procedure and submission of invalidity pension documents	5,41
Financial aid/services from Agency for Social Assistance	5,25
What is the procedure for registration in the labour office	5,08
How to write a cover letter and CV	5,00
How to isyung personal health card	4,67
Looking for a job online	4,67
How to check my bank account and how to pay my bills?	4,59
What is the procedure for accommodation in a municipal house	4,59
How to check my social security	4,51
Criminal record certificate - Documents and Procedure	4,10
What is the procedure for issuance of ID card, driver's license, debit card	3,93
What about traveling with a child abroad	3,85
How to check my health insurance status	3,61
Help in case of domestic violence	3,52
When can I get help on 112?	3,08
What is the procedure for changing the GP	2,38

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The main output of the RED project is the RED online platform which will incorporate different tools meant to help people with low literacy, numeracy and digital skills to cope with social problems they encounter in their everyday life. The aim of the needs analysis in each participating country is to give solid foundation for the process of selection of the main topics to be covered.

NTCenter conducted the needs analysis of the target groups in the Bulgarian setting. Our objective was to specify which are the most appropriate and needed topics and subtopics to be covered on the Bulgarian part of the platform. In this process we approached experts/organisations, which are in direct contact with the main beneficiaries of the project and representatives of the target groups themselves. Our research revealed that the RED platform will be not only convenience but it is a necessity for some of the target groups under consideration in Bulgaria. The target groups's lack of knowledge on how to use basic social and government services should be supported in order to integrate these people in the society and in the labour market.

Several topics have emerged which have been essential for the Bulgarian target groups. These would be proposed to the project partners and namely are:

- Personal finance
- Health care
- Social services (municipal and governmental)
- Education
- Work
- Household
- Online safety
- Legal assistance
- Digital literacy

Further, our discussions with stakeholders and experts revealed and confirmed that videos have a particular advantage as medium of conveying practical information and advice:

- Power of image and sound
- Easily understood by all, even by individuals with special needs or speaking a different language
- Promotes creativity and critical thinking
- Contributes to digital literacy
- Consistency with the modern way of communication
- Can be used in different environments and science fields

During the research we found out one main obstacle to be overcome: how to reach the target group. These are some problems which we consider will have to be solved during the project:

- Which channels and means will be used in order to inform the different target groups about the existence of the RED platform?
- Which channels and means will be used in order to make the different target groups to use the RED platform?
- How should be designed the navigation in order to facilitate the use of the RED platform?
- How should be prompted the experts to promote the platform amongst their target groups?