CoCreAid Kit 4.0

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CoCreAid Kit 4.0 User Guideline for HEIs

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1- Introduction

CoCreAid Kit 4.0 user guideline aims to guide the acceptance of the Graphical user Interface (GUI), generalisation of the project results, and scaling of the concept to make it available to a larger audience, especially for the 'Cultural exchange of the application of co-creation tools in rural regions'. The GUI and suggested digital tools were prepared by our project team and piloted by academicians, NGO project leaders, and citizens throughout the project's lifetime in workshops and project events. This Guideline also presents feedback, good examples, and practices from the relevant target audience throughout the project implementation. Sharing the experiences of consortium partners based on previous project results will guide you in preparing effective projects and facilitating digital access. It will have a social impact by increasing digital literacy thanks to the examples of good practice we provide from our transnational multiplier events. Thus, higher education institutions and NGOs will increase the impact of their projects by establishing sustainable partnerships with the help of these digital tools in their joint projects. It also serves as a reference source for citizens to have at their disposal in their project development activities.

1.1- CoCreAid Project Introduction

Our Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project CoCreAid Kit 4.0 aims to increase social inclusion by connecting NGOs in rural areas with European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This project addresses the social challenges and needs of citizens in rural areas and promotes inclusion through co-creation projects. Despite the social and physical interaction barriers caused by Covid-19 pandemic, the CoCreAid Kit 4.0 provides a digital solution to facilitate collaboration between HEIs and NGOs. Thus, the project can unlock the potential of digital co-creation between HEIs, NGOs and citizens. By providing an "easy to use" graphical user interface (GUI) with various co-creation methods, the project aims to overcome barriers and enable successful, high quality digital co-creation projects. These methods, from different disciplines, will guide users through the entire co-creation process, from project definition to integration, addressing social challenges and promoting civic engagement. Led by Fachhochschule Münster - Muas (Münster), the project involves a consortium of 4 partners from five different countries, including Turkey (Ege University (EGEU)), Poland (Szczecinski University (SU)), Denmark (European E-Learning Institute (EUEI)) and Italy (Meridaunia Scarl (MS)). CoCreAid Kit 4.0 will strengthen digital competencies between HEIs and NGOs and improve the inclusion of rural citizens in co-creation projects.
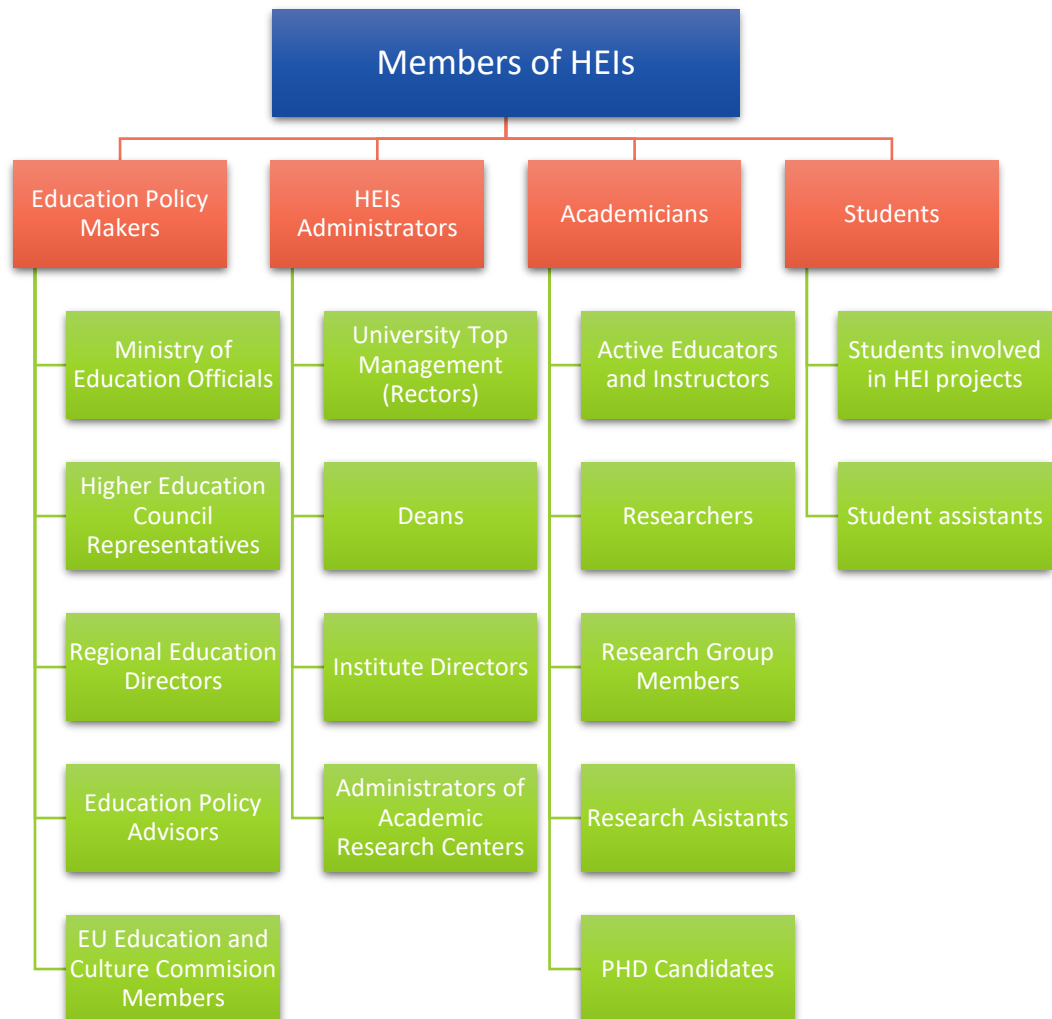
1.2- Target groups

The project has three main target groups: HEIs, NGOs, and Citizens.

2- Cocreaid Kit 4.0 User Guideline for HEI's

2.1- Who is this guide for?

This guide has been generated for the members of the European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which conduct co-creation projects between HEIs and NGOs. The members of HEIs encompass a diverse group of individuals dedicated to various academic, administrative, and socially responsible activities. This guide is designed for:

Members of HEIs

Education Policy Makers
- Ministry of Education Officials
- Higher Education Council Representatives
- Regional Education Directors
- Education Policy Advisors
- EU Education and Culture Commision Members

HEIs Administrators
- University Top Management (Rectors)
- Deans
- Institute Directors
- Administrators of Academic Research Centers

Academicians
- Active Educators and Instructors
- Researchers
- Research Group Members
- Research Asistants
- PHD Candidates

Students
- Students involved in HEI projects
- Student assistants

The CoCreAid Kit 4.0 addresses HEIs' members regardless of their field of study. The implication of digital co-creation tools and methods allows us to achieve an increased motivation and readiness to plan and carry out remote co-creation projects. In addition to these, HEIs' members develop their digital competencies and skills, through the effective usage of digital co-creation tools and methods.

2.2- What does the CoCreAid Kit offer for HEIs?

The CoCreAid Kit provides HEIs an extensive digital platform with a variety of tools and methods that have been adopted to help facilitate co-creation projects with NGOs and other stakeholders. The CoCreAid Kit overcomes barriers to co-creation, thus enabling higher education staff to participate in effective projects, extend their networks and improve their digital skills. HEIs will benefit by leveraging their third mission activities by promoting and carrying out projects with social impact and eventually increasing their regional visibility. Furthermore, the CoCreAid Kit reinforces the implementation of innovative methods in teaching and research, encouraging a dynamic learning environment and addressing the real needs of society.

In short, the CoCreAid Kit offers them:

Organization and Implementation of Digital Tools

- Effective organization of co-creation digital tools
- Utilization of methods for setting up and implementing projects
- Innovation in teaching and learning trough dynamic and interactive environments

Enhancement of Digital Literacy

- Enrichment of perspective on digital tools
- Improvement in digital fluency and digital adaptability
- Inspration and opportunities to engage stakeholders

Understanding Barriers

- Better understanding of barriers NGOs face when engaging in digital co-creation projects
- Methods applicable in courses for engagement and idea generation

Supporting HEI's Third Mission

- Enhancing the third mission by engaging communities and aligning R&D with real community needs
- Promoting non-scientific methods to facilitate broader community engagement

Different functions of the CoCreAid Kit will be used by HEIs. First, to present structured insight into innovation, **methods for digital co-creation** will offer various instruments for carrying out projects with stakeholders, especially NGOs. Moreover, the **transfer barriers and toolbox** functionality will increase the impact of co-creation projects by addressing and reducing common barriers. Lastly, the **digital tools** the CoCreAid Kit provided will help to improve digital literacy within HEI staff, enabling them to adopt technology into their teaching and research activities, too.

The CoCreAid Kit User Guideline is expected to have an important impact on HEI, as it ensures identification of the barriers and drivers of digital co-creation. The Kit will provide technical and practical support for project management. Beside this, it will enhance digital collaboration and innovation so that operational efficiency and educational impact will also increase. Furthermore, the guideline will expand the range of tools and methods currently used for collaboration and education. Thus, it will support the successful implementation of both research and student

projects. It will also leverage students by extend their perspective and knowledge about co-creation and digitalization in cooperative working. By the help of Kit students' skills in building community will improve. Finally, the user guideline will boost the attractiveness of digital co-creation for HEIs.

2.3- Cocreation examples from the viewpoint of HEIs

It is important to identify the challenges HEIs face to ensure that the tools, methods, and information in the CoCreAid Kit are used, internalised, and sustained. In this concept, feedback, discussion outcomes, and activities during multiplier events are essential.

2.4- Recommendations for take-up and mainstreaming

Name of the case: 6th Biodesign Workshop

Aim of the case: The theme of the workshop was determined as "Biodesign in Climate Change and Disaster Combat". The aim was to raise awareness about Biodesign, to create a productive and creative discussion environment with the participation of undergraduate and graduate students studying in different disciplines, and to guide young researchers interested in Biodesign.

Target Group: Undergraduate and graduate students studying in different disciplines

Tools and Methodologies used: Zoom, Discord, Miro Board, Expectation Matrix

1.What challenges did you face as a project designer?

Choosing and using the right tools for the workshop was challenging. We had a diverse group from different backgrounds, including engineering, architecture, industrial design, etc., and the communication styles among these disciplines varied. We needed to find common ground. It was also challenging to ensure contributions from all participants through digital means due to discrepancies in skill levels and expertise.

2.What kind of problems did your target group face?
We had a lot of technical issues. Many of the participants were not familiar with the digital tools. They faced some coordination problems among themselves. It was harder to break the ice among the participants without face-to-face interaction. Some participants experienced low motivation in the beginning, and they were hesitant to get engaged in the group activities. Everybody had a different learning curve; but at the end, all participants overcame these challenges.

3.How did you find solutions to these challenges considering CoCreAid Kit and your experience?
Zoom proved to be an effective communication tool. Discord was very valuable in terms of creating and organizing teams and provide interactions within the team members as well as across different teams. It also helped us to follow and coordinate the discussions and the progress of different teams. Miro Board helped keeping all participants motivated and engaged throughout the project with its highly interactive structure. Using expectation matrix helped their organization within the team; and at the end it helped us get valuable feedback from the participants to evaluate ourselves and prepare for future workshops.

The feedback and outcomes of multiplier events show that HEIs could face many challenges as project designers. The major challenge is the lack of motivation and low participation of project stakeholders. These can hinder the project's progress and reduce collaboration's impact. Another issue is freedom of expression on the record, which can inhibit open communication. Additionally, mismatching between stakeholders and digital tools can prevent achieving expected results. For the success of projects, meeting deadlines and fulfilling commitments on time are critical. Therefore, another problem faced by HEIs is time management. This problem sometimes causes extreme pressure on them, which affects their performance. Furthermore, the intimacy of face-to face and digital communication are different. Confidence and familiarity can vanish in remote environments. Finally, the engagement of all participants in project processes and their internalisation of project goals depend on building on common understanding of the target groups.

The outcomes of the multiplier events indicated that target groups could also face with different problems. Not sharing a common perspective is one of the primary problems that can block the communication and decrease the speed of progress. In addition, low digital literacy and lack of digital infrastructure reduce the participation rate and cause demoralization especially among people who are not used to work with digital tools and methods. Reluctance and low participation of stakeholders is another problem, which can discourage target groups and undermine the impact of cocreation projects. Some individuals may think like they have lost their freedom of expression because they feel uncomfortable in digital environments. This may also cause hesitation to use digital platforms and take floor during digital meetings. Moreover, target groups can face with multiplatform project processes that lead to confusion. Eventually, this becomes an important problem through the coordination of projects. Inequality of opportunity faced by disadvantaged groups can increase the gap within the target group and reduce the expectation of reaching the common understanding of project objectives. Considering for all of these, it becomes obvious that target groups need some strategies for active participation in cocreation initiatives.

HEIs can find different solutions regarding CoCreAid Kit and their own experiences to cope with these challenges. The best solution will be choosing suitable platforms for both project processes and stakeholders. Notably, open-source platforms can encourage collaboration and foster communication. Adding ice-breaking activities in the beginning, including a reward mechanism and gamification strategies can strengthen motivation and reinforce participation. Furthermore, experience sharing and dissemination of good practices will support stakeholders to overcome common barriers. CoCreAid project will be a good source of good practices in digital co-creation. To success of projects clear division of task is not only sufficient but also necessary condition. Thus, project designers must plan this step very carefully. Participants can improve their digital competence and skills by technical and practical support, including mentoring, guidance, videos and trainings. Active

use of social media will be useful to promote participation and enhance visibility. Access to disadvantaged groups through one-to-one communication can support their active participation.

Several tools from the toolbox can help with these challenges. The Expectation Matrix could help align the participants understanding of the project activities. Appreciative inquiry could be used to achieve a common understanding of the project goals and target groups. Further thoughts can be seen in the attached mindmap of one participant.
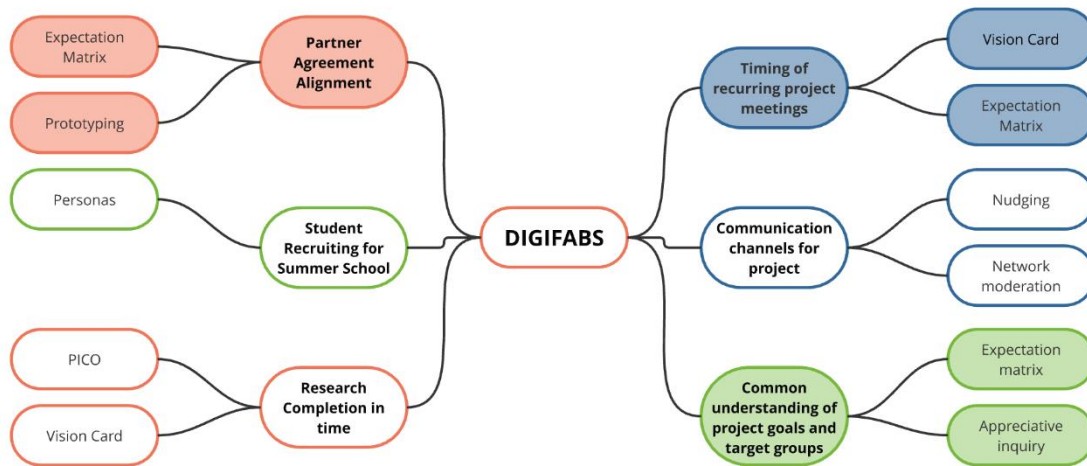

Figure 1: Mindmap Challenges and Solutions within Multiplier Event

3- HOW TO NAVIGATE COCREAID WEBSITE?

4-   FAQs for HEIs

Q: What are the potential benefits of engaging in digital collaboration with NGOs and citizens for our HEI, and how can we communicate these benefits to stakeholders?
A: Engaging digital collaboration saves effort, time, and reduces the barriers of collaboration. Before communicating these benefits, you may learn more about digital co-creation here.

Q: What methods can you offer for digital co-creation to HEI members?
A: You can reach our suggestions for digital co-creation methods for the project start, implementation and closing stages here

Q: What strategies can a HEI implement to overcome transfer barriers among stakeholders who may not be familiar with digital co-creation tools?
A: You can find our strategies for overcoming transfer barriers among stakeholders here.

Q: Which digital platforms can you suggest HEIs to reach and work with their stakeholders?
A: We offer digital platforms divided into five categories collaboration, creativity, communication, engagement and file sharing, here.

Q: We are unsure which methods best suit our needs. Can you help us decide?
A: Our Co-Creaid toolbox can advise you on selecting the best methodologies for your digital co-creation. Click on the boxes here, and it automatically filters and selects the suitable methodologies according to your needs.

Q: Are there any templates HEIs can use for digital co-creation activities?
A: We have some Miro templates that you can use for digital co-creation activities. For example, a mind-mapping technique Miro template is at the bottom of this page. You can search for other templates at the bottom of the relevant method's page.

Q: Are there any good examples of digital co-creation that HEIs can inspire?
A: You may find some best practices of digital co-creation with their explanations here.

Q: Are there any other resources that a HEI can use for enhancing their members digital skills?
A: Here is one guide for improving digital skills of HEIs.

Q: What measures should be taken to address potential technical or connectivity problems that may disturb digital collaboration sessions?

A: Beware that you are addressing more than one digital platform for collaboration, if one platform has connectivity problems, you can switch to the other alternatives. For the list of digital platforms, see here.

Q: How can we ensure that the co-creation process remains inclusive and equitable for all stakeholders involved?
A: You can use several methods for inclusion, you may see different methods and approaches that are suitable for your needs here:.

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