Virtual Neighbourhoods against loneliness

Carmen Stadelhofer, Chairwoman ILEU e.V. and DANET e.V.

JLEU

Institute for virtual and face-to-face learning in the area of adult education at Ulm

- Not-for-profit organisation, founded in 2002
- Since 2013 office of the informal education network Danube-Networkers (founded in 2008), and the association DANET e.V. (founded in 2014)
- Coordinator of many European projects
- Supported by the working group Danube-Networkers
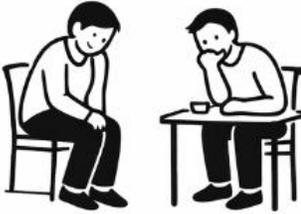

The Danube-Networkers Ulm

A working group of senior citizens who come together to build bridges between people in the Danube region and Europe

danube
networkers

Who is affected by the feeling of loneliness?

Seniors

People who are living alone and young people

Care Workers

Migrant Groups

People who are new in the city/neighbourhood

Single Parents

Various indicators for the physical and psychical well-being in all age groups!
Most important: to be connected with people, not feeling lonely!

**Be active,
physically, mentally, socially**

Continue to learn, be open for new developments in society, science and technology

Within families schools, jobs, circle of friends neighbours associations and networks

Offline and online

**Sharing knowledge, interest and capacatites with others!
Older adults, young people, migrants, self-help groups**

Take on responsibility, be aware of what is happening around and identify needs for action

To profit of all analoge and digital possibilities, which are offered

Causes of loneliness

- In former times family and neighbourhood was a very normal possibility to be connected.
- Society changed caused by rapid changes in demography, technology, mobility, individualism.
- Consequences:
- 1. less stable communities, transitions and breaks in life
- 2. pressure to perform and time pressure
- 3. superficial networking instead of deep relationships
- 4. individualisation

Loneliness

Many have people around them, but still feel lonely because they can't show themselves as they really are. Loneliness doesn't just mean "being alone", it also means "not feeling seen".

What can help against loneliness

- On individual level:

- The feeling of loneliness should not be pushed away, small, real contacts instead of many superficial ones, doing something together

- On social level:

- A place to meet and create meaningful offers: Neighbourhood centres, open meeting places, clubs, libraries, cafés with no obligation to consume - real meeting places are missing in many places

- But not all people are 'mobile' - old people, people with disabilities, single parents, carers, professional, time restrictions, etc.
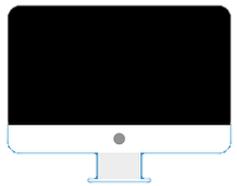
Question:

How can digital media help to minimise feelings of loneliness?

- Increasing usage of social media by all, also senior citizens due to the pandemic
- About 40% of people over 65 use videoconferencing
- Prior to the pandemic only 31% used it
- Every third senior citizen is socially connected
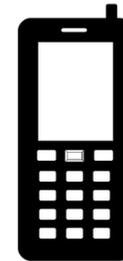
Preferred social network amongst senior citizens (57 %)

Usage 50%

41% use a smartphone

Usage 40%

25% use a smartphone without a touch-display

Usage 20%

What can be done against loneliness in neighbourhoods by digital tools?
Examples

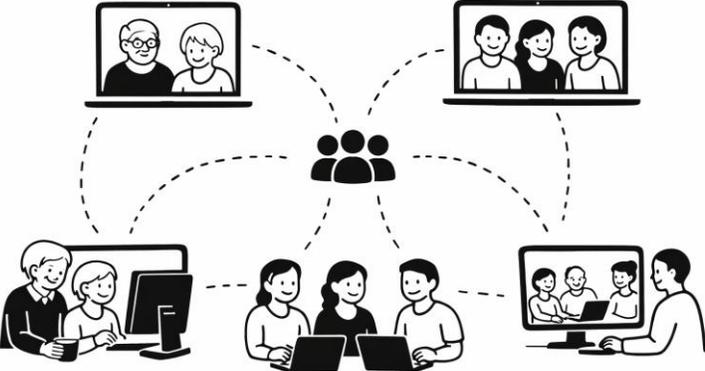Interactive maps-information, offer-search for..

Communicative offers-telling offers

Interactive offers-workshops-qualifications

Matching: Needs and Ressources

Building interest groups

ILEU e.V. and network Danube-Networkers.
in times of Corona, Start: „Social distancing"- no!
Closeness and exchange despite „**Physical Distancing**" thanks to digital media

Since February 2020: Trial of new methodical ways and their intelligent
integration **on an** international level in various EU projects:

Codanec:
My personal cultural treasure

Come together,
Vives@bw.de

Self-organized groups, i.e.
languages

Projectmanagement and
qualifications in the DENTA
project

Our approach and our methods

- Starting point: a **secure, stable videoplatform – ZOOM** with tools like surveys, reactions, chat, whiteboard, break out rooms, translation channels and more

- Objective: To build virtual groups of interest, meet friends and make new friends **for and with senior citizens**

- Approach **focused on topics** – the **person as focal point**, digital tools are means to an end

Following the principle of „Learning by doing"

International Come together Sessions

In times of Corona by culture

- Sunday evening **via Zoom**
**- Since March 2000, weekly participants
from different countries, all ages
50-60 participants from 6-8 countries,** in
English with consecutive translations into
Bulgarian, Romanian, German via Zoom

Motto: From friends for friends

- Music and dance

- Presentation of personal cultural
treasures at an international level

- Live and through video recordings

http://danect.eu/come-together-video-collection/

Radka Marinova (Ruse, Bulgaria)
„Залюбихмаоп, Еленка/Китка ти падна, Дено" bulgarian folk songs

Roxana Bacanu (Galati, Romania)
„The spiritual significance of the traditional Romanian blouse IA"

International: Presentations and workshops

- Presentations about socially relevant topics for anyone interested in English with consecutive translation

- Conversational groups moderated by

native speakers (e.g. in English, French,

Italian, German)

- Regular virtual topic oriented round table

talks

Project management and qualifications with and for our partners in the Danube countries and other European countries

Qualification from project managers
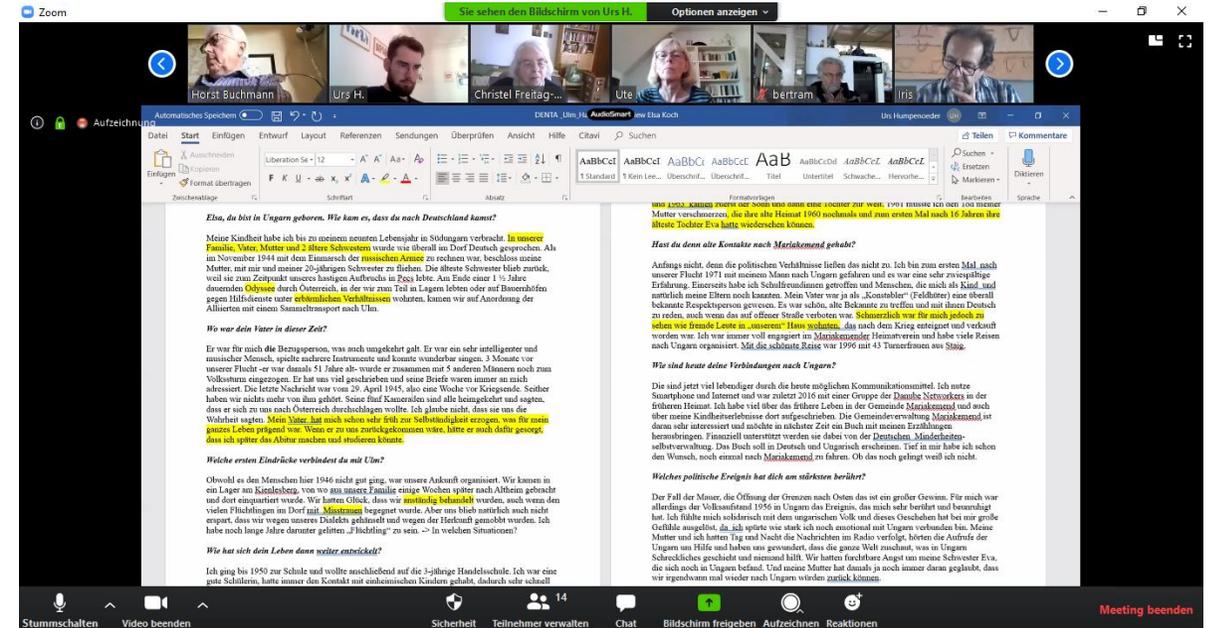
Online training for creative writing as part of the work of the Ulmer group of the Danube-Networkers

VIVES@BW on a national level

Virtuell verbunden – Seniorinnen
und Senioren in Baden-Württemberg

2020 - 2022 further development of the online-platform Vives@BW, combined with events via Zoom

Interest focused presentations about topics from a diverse range of areas, e.g. literature, art, environement, travel, Europe, and more

Workshops: Living sustainably!, cooking together online, singing online,

Working groups: movie discussions, literature, photography

In collaboration with senior citizens:

Motto: Create your own programme

WEBSITE: http://vives-bw.de/

VIVES@BW

Virtuell verbunden – Seniorinnen
und Senioren in Baden-Württemberg

Pilot phase „Get together without borders"
until Dec 2020
Project phase VIVES@BW until Dec 2022

Starting points:

- Offers for different target and
  interest groups with participative
  methods

- Participation and co-creation:
  sharing knowledge and emotions,
  learning new things, building
  community

- Foster intergenerational dialogue

Motto: Create your own individual virtual programme!

Organized with the support of Gisela Erler,
privy councellor for civil society and citizen
participation of Baden-Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg
STAATSMINISTERIUM

„Worlds are coming together" online : Meeting of old and young

Presentations by senior citizens for senior citizens and anyone interested about topics from the areas of art, culture, natural sciences, technology, environement, travel and many more

Rosemarie Kurz (Graz, Austria)
"Unterwegs zur Kunst " (eng. On the way to art) presentation
Prepared by Rosemarie Kurz (Graz, Austria)

„Singing together online"

„Cooking together online"

Welcome to ViMA! Virtual.Participate.Active!

On the basis of the Come Together project and Vives@BW **on a local level**

Development of digital neighbourhoods through an open, multifunctional online-platform

ViMA danube   **Virtual.Participate.Active.**

- a **digital meeting point for all people** of any background (age, ethnos, social),

Objective: Offer all citizens the opportunity through digital tools to

- meet people with **similar interests**,

- **share knowledge** or **provide competencies** for others,

- to discover something new (people, skills, capabilities).

At the same time a contribution to the **advancement of digital competencies** through „learning by

doing"

(especially for the elderly and people who have so far struggled with getting access to digital media)

CATEGORIES FOR SEARCH / OFFER

HIDE FILTER ∧   **NEW ADVERTISEMENT** +

Search by category ...

SHOW ALL ENTRIES

Name ▼	Keywords	Description	Posts
Countries and travel	activities activities,traditions,customs,youngandold,custome Culture Environment nature Travel	Are you looking for beautiful places in the area, information about tours and trips? Find exchange or even excursion partners here.	14
International Exchange & Languages	activities culture famouspeople învățare Language	Would you like to learn a new language or practice with native speakers? Or exchange ideas with people from other cultural backgrounds?	4
Leisure and hobbies	activities activities,traditions,customs,youngandold,custome cooking famouspeople handicraft IT Language Music Travel	Would you like to do sports, dance, hike or bike with others? Or arrange to go to the cinema or theater?	11
Life and career orientation	Culture Environment	Do you need advice for school, training, university, career or further education? Or would you like to share your knowledge and experience?	1
Literature, art, culture, history and religion	activities,traditions,customs,youngandold,custome AI cooking culture Environment handicraft Music nature	Are you looking for new interesting conversation partners on topics such as literature, art, culture, history or religion?	11
Natural Sciences, Environment & Sustainability	Culture Environment	Are you interested in biology, physics or chemistry? Or do you want to exchange ideas on topics such as the environment, climate and sustainability?	3
Practical joint activity	activities,traditions,customs,youngandold,custome cooking Culture Environment handicraft	Are you looking for people with whom you can meet for practical activities together? Whether it is for cooking, crafts, handicrafts or handicrafts?	3
Social, Society & Assistance in Everyday Life	Social	Do you need help with everyday things, social issues or would you like to support others in this area?	2
Technology	AI IT Social	Do you need good advice about technology, IT, computers or new media? Or are you good at helping others with it?	5

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SHOW ALL ENTRIES

ViMA danube
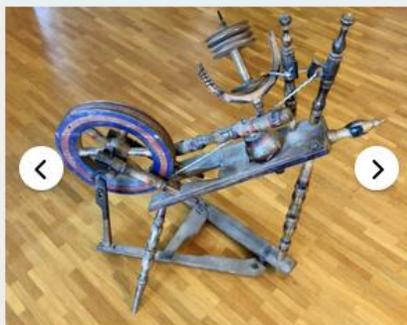
Offers and search requests are posted anonymously. The adverts can be filtered by title, date, category and keywords. In order to post an advert or to reply to an advert, the user has to have a profile on the platform.

Anyone interested in one of the advert, sends a reply via the ViMA-platform and they can then communicate via the chat function of the platform.

Public interest groups
Are visible for all visitors of the platform.

For **closed** groups only the name and the description are visible. To read the discussion within the group one has to be a member of the group.

Similarly, groups can be filtered according to name, date, category and keywords.

DISCUSSIONFORUMS

HIDE FILTER ∧   NEW DISCUSSION TOPIC +

Filter by title ...   Filter by categories ... ▼   Filter by keywords ... ▼

Title	Created	Latest post ▲	Categories	Keywords	Posts	View
What does education mean to you? ⚠	15.03.2025, 10:20 Clock	24.09.2025, 16:21 Clock	Life and career orientation		8	→
Should 16 year olds be allowed to vote? 🌐	25.03.2025, 15:57 Clock	21.09.2025, 11:20 Clock	International Exchange & Languages		6	→
What does Europe mean to you? 🌐	12.04.2024, 11:49 Clock	21.07.2025, 09:54 Clock	International Exchange & Languages · Social, Society & Assistance in Everyday Life		22	→
What does democracy mean to you? ⚠	16.12.2024, 17:04 Clock	21.07.2025, 09:49 Clock	Social, Society & Assistance in Everyday Life		39	→
My personal Danube Story ⚠	28.04.2024, 17:28 Clock	28.05.2025, 18:54 Clock	Countries and travel · Literature, art, culture, history and religion · Natural Sciences, Environment & Sustainability	Culture Environment	14	→

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In **the discussion forum** relevant topics are put forward for discussions by ILEU e.V. Every visitor of the platform can follow the discussion. To actively engage in the discussion, one needs to create a personal profile. The filter functions here as well and you can search by discussion title, category and keywords.

VIMA→ danube

My Profile

My settings

My Chats

My search / offer

My discussions

My interest groups

Find members

Every user who registers on the platform and is logged in, will have access to a personal ViMA area. Under „Open my ViMA", the individual will see all information about their own profile as well as their own activities in all three areas: offers/requests, discussions and interest groups. The user can edit as well as delete their own contributions as they go along.

Under „My settings" one determines when and how one is notified about any changes and relevant news.

Via „Find members" you can search for other members via their user name and contact them via the chat function.

ViMA danube

News VIEW →

Find out about news from the Danube countries and about ViMA here.

Events VIEW →

Here you will find an overview of events from the Danube countries. If you would like to publish an event of your organisation or group yourself, please contact vima@ileu.net.

Cooperationpartner VIEW →

ViMA danube thrives on networking with civil society organisations from the Danube countries. Here you can find an overview of our cooperation partners.

Additionally, ViMA offers a selection of news as well as events. Going forward, this will be an area especially for our cooperation partners – civil society organisations from Danube Countries – to publish their own events online

ViMA danube

YOLDIC – Young and Old Digital Connected

- Tandems between Students from danube countries and Seniors from Germany

- Weekly conversations 45-60min over Zoom or other video conferencing systems

- digital learning coaches are available to provide targeted expertise on specific topics and support learning processes as needed

- In addition to the conversation pairs, topic-oriented interest groups are established via the online platform vima-danube

- A pool of materials is provided for senior mentors, while still allowing space for independently developed topics from the tandems and groups

In times of Corona we were challenged to use these and other digital tools and we are excited about all the opportunities we created and experienced to build virtual neighbourhoods and networks.

There are existing a lot of digital platforms which can bring people together , look and participate!!

Loneliness: Using digital platforms in combination with real life meetings, this is a strong factor in determining our well-being – for all age groups.

Contact and more informationinformation

Institute ILEU, Weinhof 9, 89073 Ulm, Germany

Carmen Stadelhofer, Chairwoman

Websites:

ILEU https://ileu.net/

http://vives-bw.de/

http://danect.eu/

http://codanec.eu/

http://www.denta-europe.eu/

https://vima-ulm.de/

E-Mail: info@ileu.net