



Training Manual on Digital Citizenship Education

Online training Sept 29 2025

solidar
FOUNDATION

Introduction

In recent years, the topic of **Digital Citizenship Education (DCE)** has gained growing importance among **SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation's membership**. SOLIDAR Foundation has addressed this issue through various approaches, increasingly advocating for a fair digital transition and raising awareness on **Digital Citizenship Education**. SOLIDAR Foundation's projects, such as **the ECHO Network Project**, have focused on DCE and the digital transition, providing valuable opportunities for the network to expand their knowledge in these areas. Finally, the **capacity building of members** has also been actively supported. This **Online Training** represents another step in SOLIDAR Foundation's expanding work on **Digital Citizenship Education**, and we look forward to exploring new opportunities to **collaborate with our members and strengthen our network's engagement** on this important topic.



This manual is designed to be used **at your own pace**.

You can:

- read it quietly and reflect on your own
- pause and write notes
- or later share insights with colleagues

You don't need to answer every question.

Treat the prompts as invitations — follow the ones that speak to you.

Presentation summary:

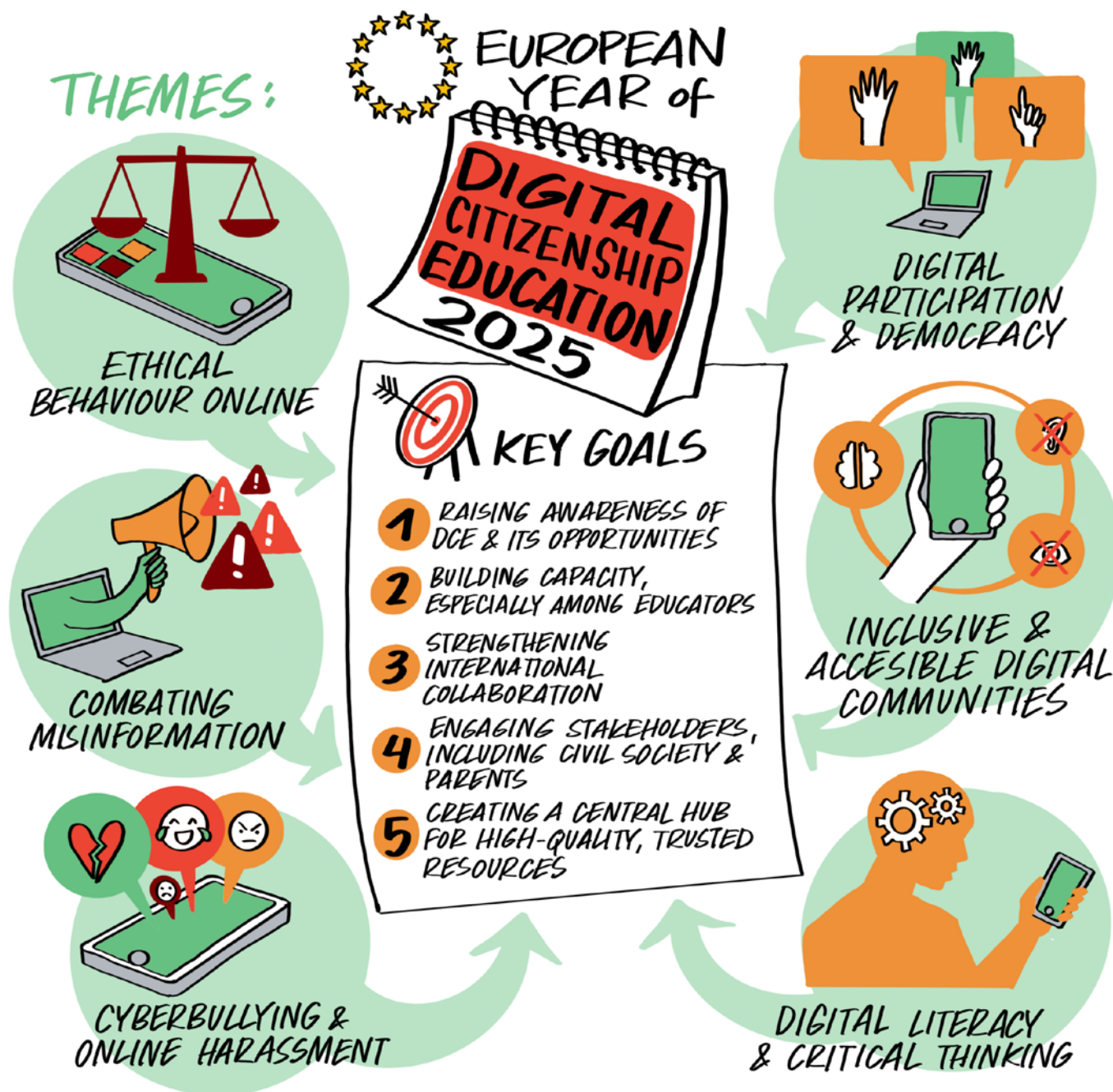
Ahmet Murat KILIC, Head of the Digital Transformation Unit, Education Department

The Council of Europe frames **Digital Citizenship Education (DCE)** as a response to the profound impact of digital technologies on democracy, human rights, and social cohesion. Since 2016, DCE has evolved from a focus on online safety into a **holistic approach to empowering citizens** to participate meaningfully, ethically, and critically in both digital and offline spaces.

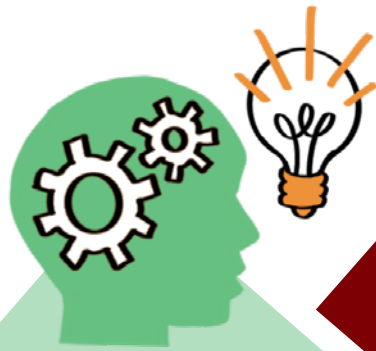
At the heart of the Council of Europe's approach is the idea that digital citizenship is not only about technical skills, but about **competences for democratic culture**. These include values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding. Citizens should be able not only to use digital tools, but also to engage in democratic life, defend human rights, and protect their own well-being online.

The **European Year of Digital Citizenship Education (2025)** was launched to raise awareness, consolidate fragmented initiatives across member states, and elevate DCE to a political priority. Many existing actions (media literacy, digital skills, online well-being) already contribute to DCE, but are not framed as such. The European Year aims to provide a shared narrative, visibility, and coordination.

The European Year is also seen as a **starting point**, leading towards a long-term roadmap (2027–2031) to strengthen digital citizenship education across Europe.



Reflection prompts



When you think about “digital citizenship”, what words or images come to mind first?

In your own life, where do you notice the boundary between “digital” and “non-digital” becoming blurry?

Where does your organisation already work on issues related to digital citizenship — even if you don’t call it that?

“There are great opportunities if we know how to use those technologies”

Ahmet Murat KILIC



Presentation summary: Digital Citizenship Education in the SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation Network

Alexandra Matthys, Education and Lifelong
Learning Officer - SOLIDAR Foundation

For SOLIDAR Foundation, digital citizenship education is closely linked to the idea of a fair digital transition. This means making sure that digitalisation does not deepen inequalities, but instead supports social justice, inclusion, and democratic participation.

SOLIDAR works on DCE in three main ways:

advocacy, projects, and capacity building.

Through advocacy, SOLIDAR supports campaigns that highlight how digitalisation can exclude people if it is not handled carefully. One strong example is the Right to Be Offline campaign, which calls for offline access to essential services. The message is simple: people should not lose their rights because they lack digital skills or access to technology.

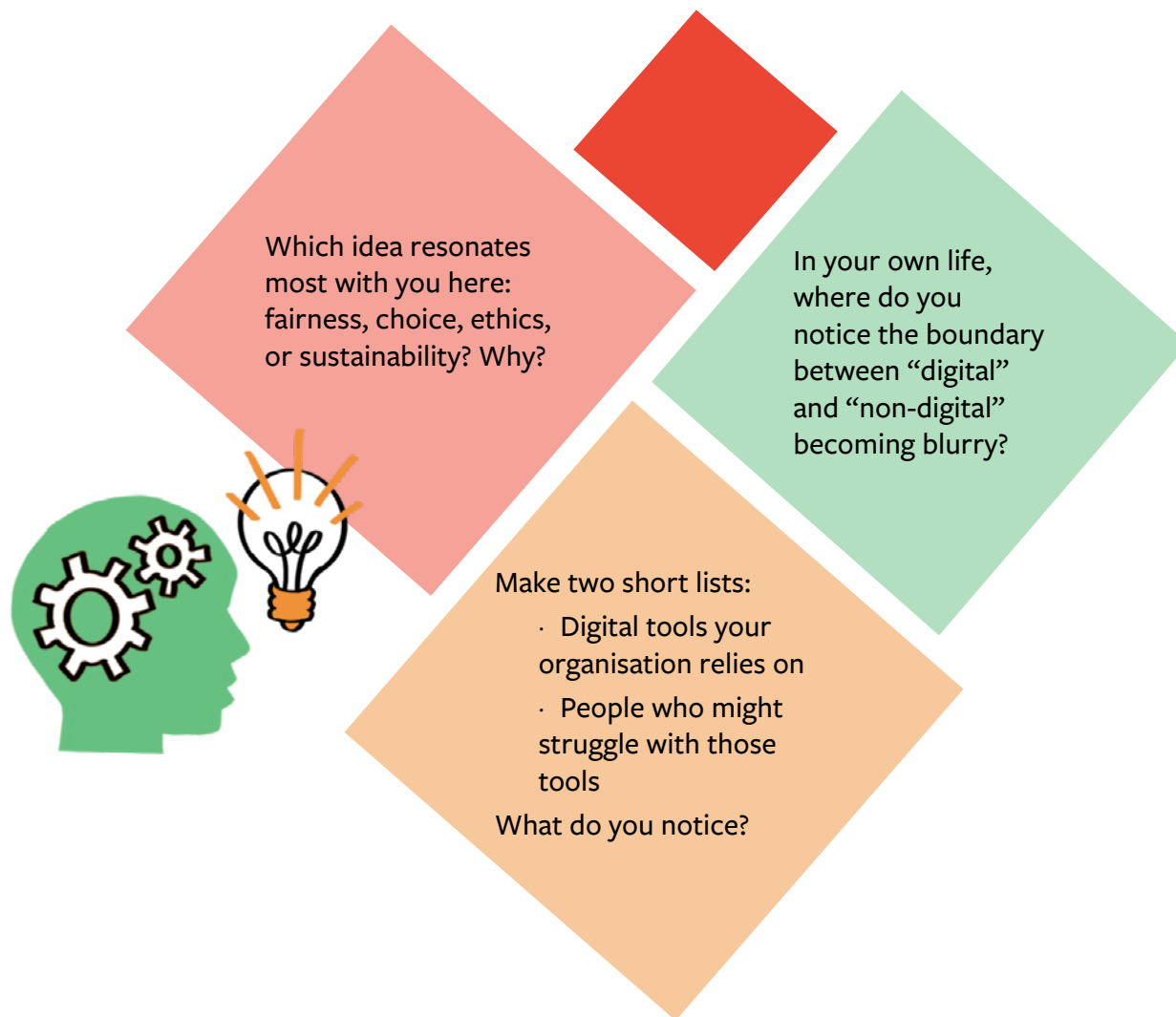
Through project work, SOLIDAR has explored what an ethical and inclusive digital transition could look like in practice. The **ECHO Network project** focused on building a digital space that is human, fair, and sustainable. This work led to clear calls for shared ownership, inclusive digital education, ethical tools, and a digital space that serves the common good.

Finally, SOLIDAR invests in **learning and capacity building**. Training sessions for CSOs help demystify topics such as artificial intelligence, support peer

learning, and strengthen organisations' ability to advocate for ethical digital policies.

Across all this work, SOLIDAR treats DCE not as a niche topic, but as a **core issue for civil society**.

Reflection prompts



KEY TENSIONS

DIGITAL
BY DEFAULT
VS
RIGHT TO BE
OFFLINE

INNOVATION
VS
INCLUSION

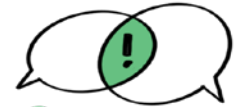
SPEED OF
CHANGE
VS
PEOPLE'S
REALITIES

CONCERNS

LACK OF
FUNDING
& TIME

SENIORS,
YOUNG PEOPLE
& MARGINALISED
GROUPS
LEFT BEHIND

PUBLIC SERVICES
MOVING ONLINE
TOO FAST



SHARED UNDERSTANDING

DIGITAL
CITIZENSHIP
IS JUST
CITIZENSHIP

LEARNING
MUST BE
LIFELONG

TRUST GROWS
LOCALLY,
THROUGH
RELATIONSHIPS

"We are doing
a lot - but often
separately"

"Civil society
work is still
too invisible"

"We need
alliances,
not silos"

PARTICIPANT'S
DISCUSSIONS



How to Advocate for Digital Citizenship Education?

Getting inspired by:

Angeliki Giannakopoulou, Policy and Project Coordinator, EAEA

David Mekkaoui, CEO, All Digital

Oyidiya Oji, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, ENAR

In this part of the learning journey, we move away from frameworks and initiatives, and closer to **how digital citizenship is actually lived**.

The expert debate brought together perspectives from adult education, digital inclusion, and digital justice. Rather than offering definitive answers, the conversation helped surface **patterns, tensions, and guiding principles** that are highly relevant for civil society organisations.

A central thread in the discussion was the gap between **how digital systems are designed** and **how they are experienced**.

Experts repeatedly highlighted that policies and platforms may look coherent on paper, but people encounter them through emotions and everyday constraints: confusion, pressure, lack of time, unfamiliar language, or fear of making mistakes.

Digital participation, therefore, is not just a question of access or skills. It is shaped by confidence, trust, and whether people feel that digital spaces are meant for them.

This insight shifts the focus of digital citizenship education. It invites us to ask not only what people should learn, but also what systems ask of people —

and whether those demands are realistic or fair.

Civil society has a key role in **connecting policy to lived experience**. CSOs are close to communities and can translate abstract policies into real stories — and bring those stories back into policy discussions.

Experts highlighted practical strategies:

- Use clear, accessible language
- Offer glossaries and plain-language versions
- Share concrete stories, not just statistics
- Defend offline alternatives for essential services

Digital citizenship education was described not as a technical fix, but as a **shared democratic responsibility**.

“There is no ‘online citizen’ and ‘offline citizen’. It’s the same person.”



Angeliki Giannakopoulou

“Putting content online is not enough for democracy if people cannot access it.”

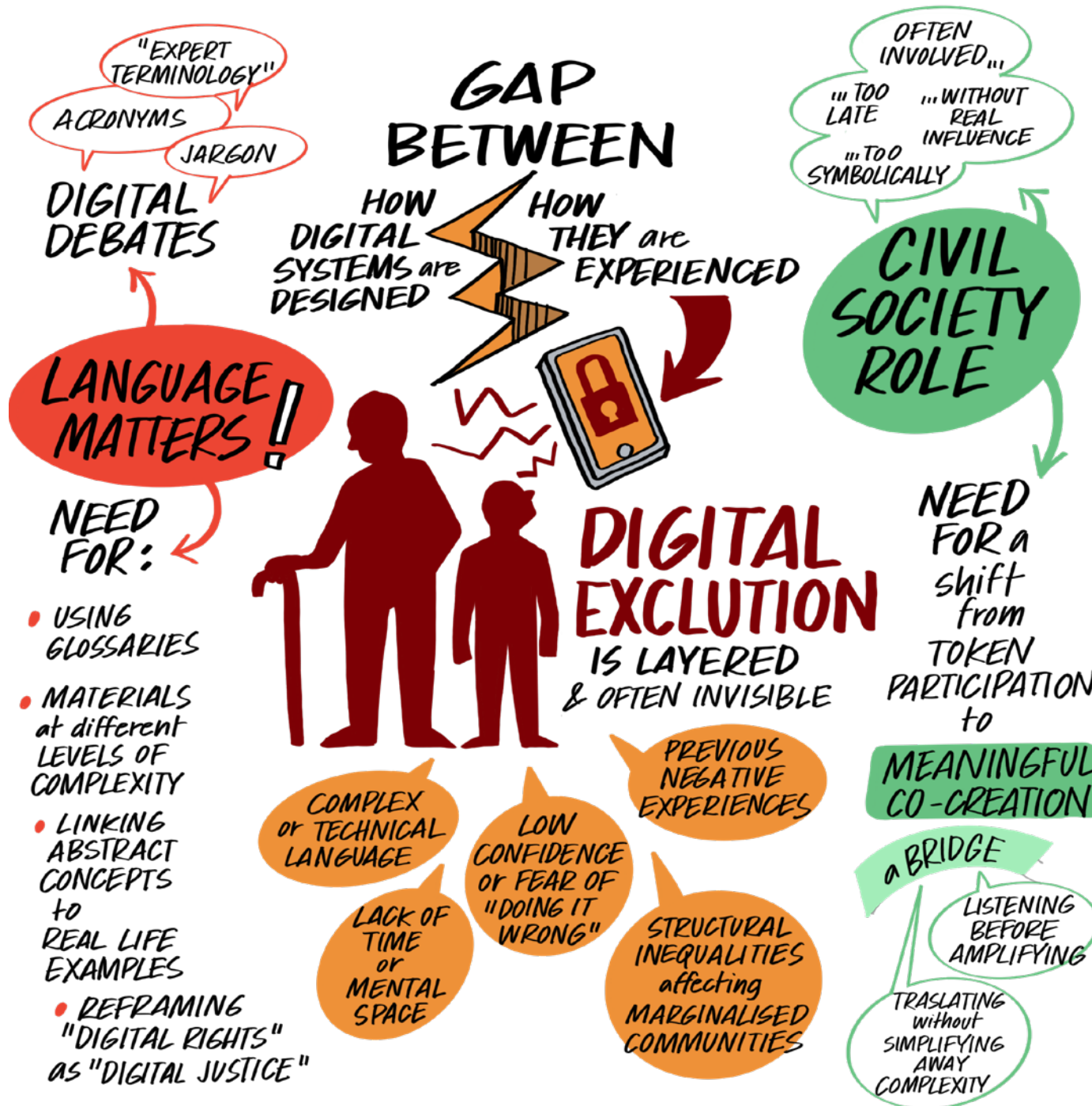


David Mekkaoui

“Choosing not to go digital should not mean losing your rights.”



Oyidiya Oji



Reflection prompts

Take a concept your organisation often uses (e.g. digital participation, AI, online services). Try explaining it in three different ways:

1. for a policy expert
2. for a colleague from another field
3. for a community member

What changes — and what stays essential?

What civil society organisations are asking for on Digital Citizenship Education?

1

Digital citizenship as a democratic competence

DCE as part of **democratic participation**, not just digital skills. It is linked to values, civic engagement, ethics, and active citizenship online and offline.

2

Ethics, justice, and power in the digital transition

- ethical use of technology
- algorithmic transparency
- resistance to surveillance
- moving from “digital rights” to digital justice

DCE should help people understand who holds power in digital systems, and how to challenge it.

3

Inclusion beyond access and skills

Digital exclusion was described is multi-layered:

- rural vs. urban divides
- language barriers
- confidence and trust
- unequal access to tools and support

4

Education across the whole life course

DCE should not be limited to schools or young people.

It also has place in:

- adult education
- lifelong learning
- non-formal and informal learning

Do not reduce DCE to labour-market skills or treat it as “secondary” education.

5

Ethical and alternative digital tools

Strong advocacy for:

- open-source and free software
- European-based and value-driven tools
- reduced dependency on big tech platforms

Using ethical tools was seen is **part of the educational message**, not just a technical choice.

6

Coherence instead of fragmented literacies

Existing confusion caused by multiple overlapping concepts (media literacy, digital literacy, MIL, etc.).

We need **clear frameworks** that bring these together under DCE.

7

From isolated projects to systemic change

There is a need to:

- embed DCE structurally in curricula and policies
- recognise it through micro-credentials or credits
- move from pilots to long-term strategies

Resources

To explore, deepen, and act on Digital Citizenship Education (DCE)

You don't need to read everything listed here.

Think of this section as a **menu**: choose what fits your role, your context, and the time you have.

WEBSITES

CoE European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/european-year-of-digital-citizenship-education-2025>

SOLIDAR's ECHO Network:

<https://echo-network.eu/>

All Digital (projects):

<https://all-digital.org/projects/>

LLLP's DIGIT Project (2017–2019)

<https://lllplatform.eu/lll-projects/digit/>

Global Citizenship Education & DCE working papers (Bridge Project)

<https://thebridgeproject.vdu.lt/post/bridge-project-working-papers-on-global-citizenship-education>

CoE: Virtual Exhibition of Resources

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/virtual-exhibition-of-resources>

PUBLICATIONS

SOLIDAR's Education Policy Pill on Digital Citizenship Education

<https://www.solidar.org/training-material/education-policy-pill-digital-citizenship-education/>

Digital Citizenship Education Handbook

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/handbook>

Council of Europe – DCE Handbook

<https://rm.coe.int/prems-003222-gbr-2511-handbook-for-schools-16x24-2022-web-bat-1-/1680a67cab>

European Commission: DigComp 3.0: European Digital Competence Framework:

<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC144121>



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