

CASE STUDY:

MOLA in Kyustendil, Bulgaria



Activation of young mothers to become opinion leaders and role models in their communities



Executive summary

In the period of February to March 2023, [HESED](#) conducted a training for 13 young mothers from Kyustendil, Bulgaria using the methodology MOLA. The training aims to activate opinion leaders in social networks (Facebook) to conduct campaigns on important topics for the communities in which young people live. The programme and the model were easily adapted to any other topic on youth activation. **In the training, we had 13 enthusiastic young girls – mothers who categorically stated their desire to participate** and to comply with the arrangements made for the sessions, participated actively in the discussions and with a specific proposal for activities in the time between two sessions. The atmosphere in the group was extremely pleasant, motivated and willing, and the participants were invested in their development.

The MOLA training program offered:

- The opportunity to see what their online image is and how others perceive them
- Easy algorithms to search for information that is useful for them and their children
- Accessible means for the detection of fake news and disinformation
- Provision of a database of verified online sources and materials related to raising children and helping them extract the most important messages and how to apply them in their daily lives
- The opportunity to improve their skills in digital storytelling in order to be useful to other young people who have similar interests and searches.

The MOLA model has the potential to be used to activate opinion leaders and conduct campaigns on other important topics for young people. Positive campaigns can be conducted to raise awareness on various topics related to health, active lifestyles, access to services, etc.

Case study

The reality in which we live implies the active use of new technologies, one's inclusion in various social networks and a significant existence "online", professionally or personally, for work or pleasure. Being "online" is a way of life, especially for young people. HESED conducted a MOLA training for activation of young mothers from Kyustendil, Bulgaria. **The training aimed to activate opinion leaders in social networks (Facebook) to conduct campaigns on important topics for the communities in which young people live.**

The trainings objectives were:

- To enhance the digital citizenship of young people from disadvantaged groups by improving their digital literacy and critical thinking
- To empower active participation of the young people
- To improve their access to information, services and rights
- To activate them to become opinion leaders and role models in their communities.

Outcomes, impact and sustainability

The MOLA model has the potential to be used to activate opinion leaders and conduct campaigns on other important topics for young people. Positive campaigns can be conducted to raise awareness on various topics related to health, active lifestyles, access to services, etc. This is what we did with 13 enthusiastic young girls – mothers who categorically stated their desire to participate, gained knowledge for the proper use of social media, created online materials and were influencing their community. A great advantage of the model is the use of natural channels of communication and social networks of the young people themselves, which makes it possible to reach homogeneous age groups and audience interests. The model can be further applied and adapted to other social networks in which young people have an increased presence, such as Tik-Tok, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

Trainer's experience using MOLA

“The MOLA model was relevant to their needs because it enabled them to develop extremely useful skills and competencies – to search for information online on topics that are important and significant to them and to be critical, to use algorithms and mechanisms to check the credibility of content, to participate in digital media in a pleasant and safe way, and to send good, clear and useful messages to their community.

The skills related to the recognition of false information were most clearly noticed. The young people actively used the "THINK" model. Even during the session, they shared personal experiences of how they succumbed to fake content online and, accordingly, their desire to distinguish truth from falsehood intensified through their personal experience so far. In the following sessions, they continued to share how they used the model in relation to various information they came across online.

After the e-health session and their introduction to the Superdoc platform, which was already known by 3-4 young mothers, there was an increased interest in using the application. Assistance was provided in keeping a few hours with various specialists. We have found that there are only a few medical specialists from our town who are presented in the platform, and the young people suggested motivating family doctors to register on the platform and provide better opportunities for the mothers who are about to choose a paediatrician for their new-born children to make an informed choice by knowing the rating of the specialist and the comments of the users. This is a good example of active citizenship that was initiated by our group.

Knowing the program and the model, I believe it could be easily adapted to any other topic for youth activation.

As early as the invitation stage, we met enthusiastic young people who categorically stated their desire to participate. They themselves invented publications that challenged themselves – for example, whether people would react to them in the expected way or whether a publication about healthy foods with chia and seeds would garner as many likes as the familiar and preferred foods. This gave them the opportunity to break their own prejudices and broaden their worldview.

I was pleasantly surprised by the digital skills of some of the young girls related specifically to making digital storytelling through various applications. The topic of digital storytelling caused great interest among them. During the session on digital stories, emphasis was placed precisely on the power of these short videos to convey strong messages with appropriate video material (pictures, photos, text, music). They were very inspired and created interesting products. They managed to do so extremely independently.

I think, with confidence, that each of the topics set in the sessions is in place. There is a need for every activity and exercise. In such a structured way, the training gives you the opportunity to build and upgrade your skills, which are extremely useful in the online environment in which we all live.

It is evident, on the basis of weekly publications, how the young people use the acquired knowledge and try to build an image of a role model for their communities. They check the information they share and aim to send specific messages with it in an appropriate and safe way. Their activity continues to be as high in connection with weekly publications.

*If I have to describe the programme in 3 words they would be:
Attention, care and give away."*

Teodora Fetinova, Trainer from HESED

[The full interview is available in Bulgarian.](#)

Young mothers' experiences with MOLA

Interview 1: *"Lots of energy, warmth, positive emotion, and new friendships. We went through several topics. which were very important for our families, for our children and for the digital space in which each one of us is present and is constantly there. We need to know how to distinguish false and true information and what sources of information online we can trust. Each of us learned the necessary lesson. I think everyone should participate in such a group to understand what is hidden in the digital space, how we can be opinion leaders, distinguish real and false information. I can tell all mothers, all citizens in society to participate and learn the necessary lesson"*

Interview 2: *The group brought me amazing experiences with great moments and many positive people. I would recommend my close friends to participate in such a group, I think it is useful for others to participate because they will learn a lot of new things. Everything was more than fine."*

In the session "Digital story telling", participants made short videos on different topics related to health. The short videos created by the young people in Bulgarian can be seen here:

- [Unhealthy foods](#)
- [Breastfeeding facts](#)
- [Benefits of Eating Fruits and Vegetables](#)