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WORK PACKAGE N° 29

WORKSHOP – PLAYING THE EDUCATIONAL GAME

ITALY

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Document Identification:

Project full name	Media Masters: Enhancing Media Literacy
Project acronym	MEDMAS
Grant agreement no.	101148165
CERV Programme	CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV- Citizens' engagement and participation
Dissemination level	Public
Work Package	29
Partner(s) responsible <i>(Legal Name and Short Name)</i>	CESIE ETS
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EVENT DESCRIPTION		
Event number:	29	
Event name:	MEDIA MASTER WORKSHOP – PLAYING THE EDUCATIONAL GAME	
Type:	workshop	
In situ/online:	<i>In situ</i>	
Location:	Italy, Palermo	
Date(s):	07/11/2025	
Website(s) (if any):	https://cesie.org/en/project/medmas/	
Participants		
Female:	19	
Male:	32	
Non-binary:		
From country 1 Italy:	47	
From country 2 [Germany]:	2	
From country 3 [Slovakia]:	1	
Portugal	1	
Total number of participants:	51	
	From total number of countries:	4
Description		
<p>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</p> <p>This report documents the organization and implementation of a local event carried out within the framework of the European project <i>Media Masters: Enhancing Media Literacy</i>, a highly relevant initiative co-funded by the European Union with the primary objective of addressing the growing challenges of disinformation. In line with the broader project initiative, which spans several member countries, the workshop aimed to strengthen the foundations of media literacy and encourage more informed civic participation. The event actively engaged a target group of young people, using a teaching methodology that combines the playful approach of the "Media Masters" board game with the interactivity of a mobile application, simulating complex media scenarios focused on current phenomena such as fake news, propaganda and disinformation. This experiential approach proved particularly effective in promoting critical thinking and analytical skills among participants.</p>		
<p>1. Venue and Context of the Activity</p>		

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The activity took place on 07/11/2025 at the Benedetto Croce High School in Via Filippo Corazza in Palermo, providing a professional and stimulating environment for in-depth exploration of topics related to digital civic education. CESIE, as the organizing body and event promoter, is a recognized non-governmental organization that has been successfully working for years in the fields of education, development and social innovation at local, national and European levels, thus providing a structured and authoritative context. The initiative benefited from the support and strategic collaboration of prominent academic and institutional partners, such as the University of Palermo and SPPEFF, whose logos were clearly visible, confirming the solidity of the project network. The workshop focused on the crucial theme of *Disinformation and Democracy*, a highly topical issue in the post-pandemic era and in an increasingly polarized media landscape, emphasizing how critical analysis of sources is essential for maintaining active and informed citizenship.

2. Objectives of the Event

The main objective of the day was to trigger deep awareness among students regarding the pervasive impact of disinformation on democratic processes and, consequently, to strengthen their cognitive defenses against fake news. More specifically, the workshop set out three key aims. First, it sought to promote an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of creation, dissemination and reception of disinformation, offering a guided discussion on the topic. Second, it aimed to concretely raise the media literacy level of young people by providing them with a clear conceptual framework. Finally—though equally important—the event intended to provide practical tools that can be immediately applied in daily life to effectively distinguish between verifiable facts, opinions and overt attempts at manipulation, all within a context of massive and constant exposure to digital content mainly circulated on social media.

3. Project Description and Core Activity

The event featured the direct and hands-on application of the project's key intellectual output: the Media Masters board game and digital app. This educational game tool was designed to act as a catalyst for change, reinforcing young people's cognitive resistance against widespread disinformation. The practical workshop used the game to pursue several learning objectives: strengthening digital skills necessary for responsible web use; significantly improving critical and communication skills through debate and justification of responses; and teaching participants to promptly and accurately recognize fake news, propaganda schemes and manipulation tools used online. The game rules were introduced as a system of positive reinforcement for learning, where correct answers allowed players to advance two spaces while mistakes prompted reflection by moving one space back. This playful approach, structured around specific thematic categories, was conceived to make critical thinking training not only stimulating but also deeply engaging and memorable for participants.

4. Participant Profile

The workshop was intentionally aimed at a group of young people aged 14 to 18, an age range considered particularly vulnerable yet crucial for the development of strong media competencies. These students, coming from schools across the Palermo area, represent the primary target group of the Media Masters project, as they are among those most exposed to the fast-paced and often deceptive dynamics of the "post-truth" society. This age cohort lives in constant immersion in the social media ecosystem, where the line between verified information and fake news is increasingly blurred, as demonstrated by the significant spread of misleading narratives during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Selecting this target allowed facilitators to engage with students' direct experiences, making the activity relevant to their daily challenges and maximizing the educational impact of the game as a tool for active and conscious digital citizenship.

5. Structure and Flow of the Session

The workshop followed a well-designed and balanced format, ensuring an alternation between theoretical reflection and interactive practical activities. The event opened with a targeted introduction, during which facilitators immediately initiated a debate on the central theme of disinformation's impact on democracy, laying the groundwork for the subsequent discussion. This initial phase was followed by a key interaction moment, where students were asked open-ended questions, such as their average daily use of social media and their main reasons for using it, to map their digital habits. The session then moved on to an activity focused on visual and textual recognition—an interactive quiz designed to assess and refine students' ability to distinguish authentic content from manipulated or AI-generated materials. The highlight of the event was the *Media Masters Practical Workshop*: students, divided into groups, were carefully guided through the board game rules and the correct use of the mobile app before fully diving into the challenge. The event concluded with an evaluation questionnaire, essential for gathering valuable data and structured feedback in preparation for the final optimization of the project tool.

6. Observations from the Workshop

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The interpersonal and cognitive dynamics observed throughout the workshop were judged extremely positive by the facilitation team. The dual approach—combining the seriousness of the content on disinformation with the playful and competitive nature of the game—created an ideal learning environment. A very high level of active participation and genuine engagement was observed among all students. The most appreciated activity, which sparked the greatest debate, was the quiz on identifying AI-generated images, a topic that proved to be of great practical interest to young people. Despite the intrinsic complexity of certain topics, such as propaganda strategies or the ethical implications of media manipulation, participants demonstrated remarkable curiosity and openness to discussion. Facilitators noted how the game, which required students to justify their answers, stimulated not only knowledge but, above all, real-time critical reasoning skills.

7. Final Feedback and Audience Reaction

At the end of the practical session and discussion, the final debrief confirmed the facilitators' positive impressions. The overall feedback collected was characterized by widespread enthusiasm. Students expressed great appreciation for the methodology adopted, describing the game as an effective, enjoyable and non-boring way to learn how to navigate the pitfalls of the digital world. They explicitly stated their desire to repeat the activity, a tangible sign of its success and motivational impact. Meanwhile, the reaction of the teaching staff who took part in the workshop was also exceptionally positive. Teachers expressed strong approval of both the Media Masters game structure and the interactive methodology employed, recognizing its potential as an innovative educational resource fully aligned with current civic and media education needs. The quantitative and qualitative data collected through the final questionnaire will provide further empirical support for validating and further developing the game.

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, the event held in Palermo was a significant success, confirming itself as a key moment of application and direct testing of the Media Masters product with its target audience. The activity not only made it possible to identify the strengths of the game but also to receive highly positive feedback in terms of engagement and educational effectiveness. The experience clearly reaffirmed the urgency and necessity of adopting innovative, interactive and engaging tools—especially within youth education—to effectively promote media literacy in a rapidly evolving technological and social context. The enthusiastic response from both students and teaching staff highlights the importance of continuing to support and implement experiential learning methodologies to best equip new generations with the critical tools essential for active, informed and resilient digital citizenship.



1. A Transnational Meeting to Strengthen Media Education

A second workshop session was held on 21 November 2025 at the CESIE offices, located in Via Roma 94 in Palermo. This event took on a distinctly international character, actively involving students from various European countries, including delegations from Spain, Portugal, Poland and Germany. The primary aim of this initiative was twofold: on the one hand, to broaden the audience and participant base of the MedMas project and its innovative board game; on the other hand, to contribute to a wider context of promoting media literacy across the continent. The specific intent was to equip young people with concrete and immediately applicable tools to navigate the complex contemporary information landscape with discernment and autonomy—an environment marked by overstimulation and the rapid spread of unverified content.

The activity took place in a space specifically designed to foster collaboration and mutual growth, shaped by an atmosphere of deep respect and intellectual openness. The learners, coming from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, engaged in an intense debate on key issues such as fake news, structured disinformation and the current state of democratic processes in Europe. An in-depth analysis was conducted on how intentional manipulation of information can influence public opinion, generate polarization and weaken trust in the institutions and democratic systems that underpin society.

2. Educational Objectives and Socio-Cultural Interaction

The event not only stimulated intercultural dialogue, but also contributed significantly to the development of a shared European civic consciousness among the young participants, encouraging the concrete exercise of proactive citizenship and the systematic development of sharp critical thinking. In this historical moment—marked by growing distrust of traditional information sources and pervasive exposure to digital content often lacking verification—the acquisition of such skills has become essential.

To introduce the topic dynamically and assess the group's initial awareness, the session began with an interactive icebreaker: facilitators showed participants a sequence of photographs and asked them to determine whether the images were genuine or digitally altered. Despite its simplicity, this exercise became a catalyst for collective reflection on the communicative power of images, the mechanisms behind the construction of visual narratives and the critical impact of visual disinformation in a society where deepfakes and manipulated content are increasingly widespread.

A second dynamic phase followed, based on discussion around five deliberately controversial statements (such as "Everything you read on the Internet is true" or "Fake news can influence people's opinions"). Students were asked to position themselves physically in one of three designated areas in the room—"I Agree", "I Disagree" or "I Have Doubts"—according to their personal beliefs. This methodology greatly facilitated the exchange of perspectives across different cultural backgrounds, making it immediately clear how perceptions of truth and reliability can be shaped by personal background, educational context and socio-cultural experience.

3. Practical Simulation with the Media Masters Game

In the next phase of the workshop, participants were organized into small teams for the practical simulation and testing of *Media Masters*, the board game designed and developed as a key output of the project. Facilitators provided a detailed explanation of the rules and assisted learners in logging into the companion application, emphasizing that the primary objective was not merely recreational but deeply evaluative: the feedback collected during the session would serve as critical input for optimizing the game's design and refining its educational impact.

Media Masters is a play-based educational tool developed under the European CERV project — "*Media Masters: Enhancing Media Literacy*". It is specifically designed to strengthen media education among young people by stimulating critical awareness of the mechanisms of disinformation. The structure of the game serves as a flexible tool that helps participants quickly identify fake news, analyze media messages and learn strategies to distinguish objective data, subjective interpretations and explicit attempts at manipulation. Its methodology is grounded in active learning and experiential education principles, fully aligned with the standards of non-formal education.

Designed for young people aged 12 to 25, *Media Masters* can be used in various formal (schools, vocational institutes) and informal settings (youth centers, libraries, associations). Its mechanics are simple yet highly engaging: players progress along a 34-space board by answering questions divided into five key thematic areas:



- The Internet ecosystem and its contemporary influences
- Culture and society
- Controversial and polarizing issues
- Online safety and potential risks
- The European Union under scrutiny

Each question card is linked to a specific subcategory (e.g., conspiracies, phishing, influencers, propaganda) and includes a QR code. When scanned through the digital platform, the code generates a random question. Players move forward for correct answers, while mistakes result in moving backward, reinforcing the value of reflection and strategic knowledge. This blended system, combining a physical board with digital interaction, mirrors the media consumption habits of younger generations and maximizes engagement.

The game can be played individually or in teams of 3 to 8 participants and ends when a player reaches the final square. However, success is not measured solely by speed but also by the total number of correct answers, rewarding critical acumen, preparation and cooperative interaction rather than chance alone. The game's multilingual availability underscores its scalability and adaptability across Europe.

4. Educational Feedback and Participation Dynamics

Throughout the session, learners demonstrated a high level of participation and genuine interest, especially when the topics discussed related directly to their everyday experiences—for example digital scams, misleading advertisements, the reliability of social media news and the risks of phishing. Despite the overall enthusiasm, some participants encountered difficulties with overly technical terminology or more abstract questions, especially those relating to international politics or the internal dynamics of the European Union. Nevertheless, the continuous support provided by facilitators and the opportunity for discussion within small groups ensured effective and inclusive engagement for all, regardless of their initial level of competence.

The interactive format and peer-to-peer exchange were greatly appreciated by most international participants. The activities clearly highlighted the need to tailor educational content to the different levels of media literacy and cultural contexts of the learners, while maintaining a high standard of accessibility and relevance for the youth target group. The diversity of languages used, the presence of practical examples and the intentionally informal tone of the game brought the learning experience closer to the participants' everyday reality. Survey data collected from the group—which included Spanish, Portuguese, German and Polish participants born between 1996 and 2006, predominantly with upper-secondary or technical education—revealed a generally optimistic attitude toward their digital skills, offering valuable insights for refining future educational tools.

Conclusion: Play-Based Learning in the Service of Active Citizenship

The successful outcome of the session clearly shows that activities rooted in play and proactive participation represent a highly effective pedagogical model for strengthening transversal skills, fostering constructive intercultural dialogue and cultivating a shared culture of informational responsibility. Using the game as a pedagogical catalyst made it possible to stimulate learning through direct experimentation, peer interaction and the exercise of critical thinking, generating greater motivation and a deeper understanding of the concepts addressed.

In particular, the *Media Masters* experience confirmed its ability to make complex concepts accessible and interactive, elevating the playful dimension into a tool of awareness. Participants not only acquired essential notions of digital information literacy, but also grasped the intrinsic value of concepts such as collaboration, active citizenship and collective responsibility. The strongly intercultural context amplified the value of the experience, underscoring the importance of using flexible and inclusive methodologies adaptable to a wide variety of backgrounds and competence levels.

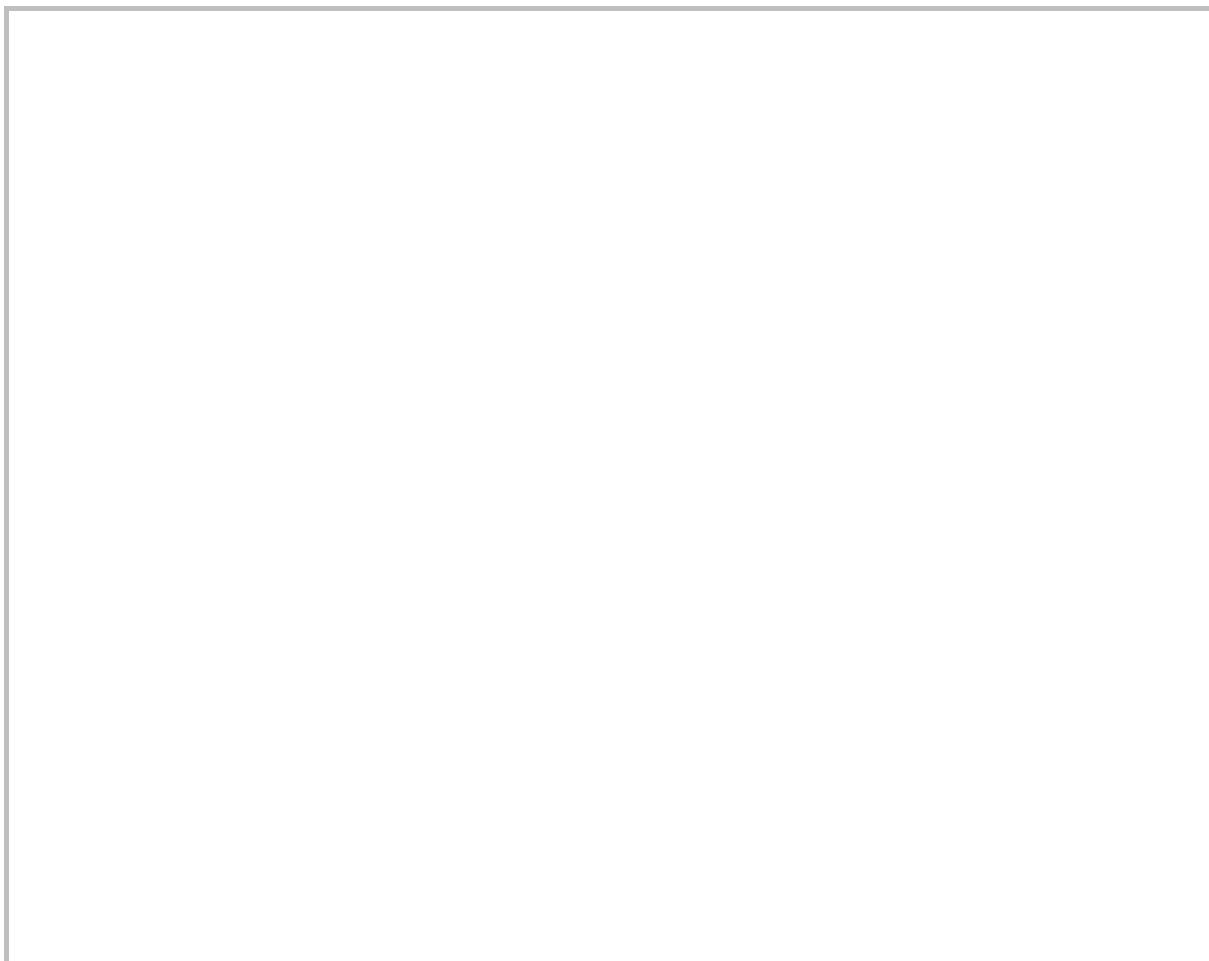
In an era in which disinformation represents one of the most significant threats to democratic stability, initiatives like this are crucial for shaping a mature and resilient digital citizenship. Investing in educational pathways that integrate innovative teaching methods, active engagement and a European dimension means laying the groundwork for a generation of young people who are better prepared, more critical and more proactive.



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HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0		Initial version

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