Identity and Empowerment of Migrant Women through Digital Storytelling

Learning Scenarios for Adult Education

Prepared by:
VNB Germany

Contents

Introduction

This toolkit has been developed for institutions and staff in adult education. It contains learning scenarios for the use of digital storytelling for migrant women, links different areas of application of digital storytelling with each other and presents components for inclusive and barrier-free (online) learning for marginalized groups.

- **Overarching learning objectives**: Promotion of self-efficacy, linguistic expression and social participation
- **Target groups:** Migrant women as participants in adult education (e.g. in language courses, integration courses, vocational preparation)
- **Prerequisites:** Basic knowledge of second language (A2–B2), no special previous IT knowledge required
- **Methodology:** Project-oriented, action-oriented and biographical learning
- **Areas of competence:** linguistic, digital, social and personal skills

What is digital storytelling?

Digital storytelling (DST) is an educational approach that combines traditional storytelling with modern digital tools such as audio, video, images, and interactive media. In adult education, DST is an effective way to improve engagement, encourage reflection and support the development of digital skills.

Digital storytelling is both an **educational strategy and** a **learning activity**. It enables adult educators to actively engage learners, acknowledge their experiences, and develop essential digital and narrative skills. By using storytelling in digital formats, educators can create meaningful, inclusive, and interactive learning experiences that allow adult learners to express themselves, connect with others, and apply knowledge in practical ways.

Why do we need digital storytelling in adult education?

Adult learners often bring different life experiences, cultural backgrounds and learning needs with them. DST offers several advantages:
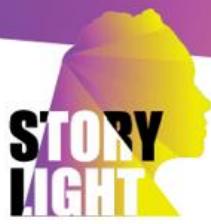
- **Personalized learning:** Learners can share and explore their own experiences, making learning relevant and meaningful.

- **Skills development:** DST promotes critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, communication, and narrative skills.

- **Engagement and motivation:** Multimedia formats make learning interactive and stimulating, which improves learners' motivation.

- **Reflection** Adult learners can reflect on personal experiences, challenges and successes, thus promoting both cognitive and emotional development.

Digital storytelling as an educational strategy

In lessons *with* DST, digital stories can be used as a medium to convey content. Examples:

- **Educational stories:** Using digital narratives to illustrate concepts, case studies, or historical events.

- **Scenario-based learning:** Create digital simulations or interactive stories to explore real-world situations.

- **Multimedia presentations:** Integrate videos, audio clips, or interactive storytelling to explain lessons in an engaging way.

In this approach, the teacher primarily acts as a facilitator, helping learners access, interpret, and interact with digital stories to improve comprehension.

Digital storytelling as a learning activity

Teaching *through* DST focuses on helping learners **create their own digital stories**. This process typically includes:

1. **Story Ideation:** Learners reflect on experiences, knowledge, or skills to come up with ideas for stories.

2. **Scriptwriting and planning:** structuring the narrative, identifying key messages and planning multimedia elements.

3. **Digital production:** Using tools (e.g., video editors, audio software, or storyboarding apps) to create multimedia content.

4. **Sharing and feedback:** Presenting stories to peers for discussion, reflection, and learning.

Through this process, learners improve critical thinking, digital skills, expressiveness, and collaboration, while deepening their understanding of subject content.

Practical considerations for adult learning

When implementing DST in adult education, the following should be considered:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure that tools and platforms are user-friendly and accessible and applicable for learners with different digital skills.

- **Relevance:** Select topics and stories that reflect the experiences and goals of adult learners.

- **Supportive environment:** Provide guidance, framework, and constructive feedback throughout the storytelling process.

- **Curriculum Integration:** Align DST activities with learning objectives and outcomes.
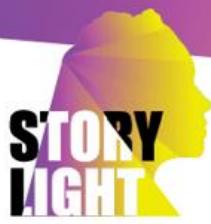
Methodological commonalities of all scenarios

- Narrative identification: Stories are lived through fragmentarily, with decisions
- Reflection: Writing task or exchange (e.g. "What touched me today?")
- Peer learning: Optional group mode: analyze scenes together, swap roles
- Linguistic strengthening: On-demand aids (vocabulary, synonyms, sentence patterns), situation-related

Competence objectives (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

- Linguistic competence: narration, description, argumentation in oral and written form (A2–B2)
- Digital Competence (DigComp): Information Processing, Media Production, Communication in the Digital Space
- Social and personal skills: teamwork, reflection, intercultural communication, self-confidence
- Cultural competence: understanding one's own and others' cultural perspectives
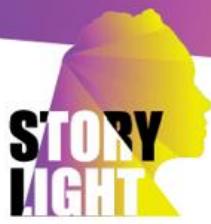
Educational framework for the Storylight learning scenarios

Based on the EU's Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.2)

Objective

Promotion of the digital, linguistic and social competence of migrant women in adult education through interactive digital storytelling.

Guiding principles of the framework

The educational framework for **Storylight** positions interactive digital storytelling as a **bridge between language acquisition, media literacy, and empowerment**. It operationalizes the **DigComp framework** for adult learning by:

- combines digital participation with personal meaning,
- gears learning processes towards self-efficacy and intercultural understanding, and
- offers adult educators a structured orientation for competence-oriented learning.

Basic pedagogical attitude

- Empowerment through storytelling: personal stories as a source of identity, self-efficacy and participation.
- Learning as a social, reflexive and digitally mediated process.
- Equal access: digital inclusion and accessible tools.
- Self-directed, experiential and action-oriented learning.

Methodological basis

- Storytelling cycle: *reflection → creation → production → presentation → reflection*.
- Integration of peer learning, feedback and language support at all stages.
- Project-based learning with interactive digital tools that can be used in a low-threshold and mobile way.

Reference to the five areas of competence of DigComp

DigComp area	Competency Goals (Storylight)	Learning Activities & Methods	Examples from Storylight Scenarios
1. Information and data literacy	Search for information, evaluate it and integrate it into your own narratives.	- Research on places, people, cultural topics - discuss source evaluation, copyright & licenses	Scenario 3 "My place of residence – our home" Scenario 7 "Women tell (hi)stories"
2. Communication & Collaboration	Use digital tools for communication and exchange; promote intercultural understanding.	- Joint production and peer feedback via online platforms - exchange across language and cultural boundaries	Scenario 2 "Women who have shaped me" Scenario 6 "My language – my voice"
3. Digital Content Creation	Design, edit and publish your own digital products.	- Work with video, audio and graphics tools (Canva, Audacity, WeVideo) - Storyboard and screenplay work	All scenarios – especially 1, 4, 5, 8
4. Security	Develop awareness of data protection, copyright and digital self-determination.	- Introduction to data protection and declarations of consent - Reflection on one's own digital identity	Scenario 5 "My Profession – My Path" Scenario 7 "Women Tell (hi)stories"
5. Problem solving & further learning	Choose digital tools independently and use them to solve tasks.	- Tool exploration, creative problem solving in projects - reflection on learning processes in the digital portfolio	Scenario 8 "Images of the Future – Me in 2030"

Pedagogical structure

Learning phases (based on DigComp):

1. **Sensitization & orientation (B1, B2)**

   Introduction to digital tools, reflection on digital participation, discussion on media literacy. → *DigComp 1 & 2*

2. **Development & Production (B3)**

   Creation of your own digital stories taking into account security and copyright. → *DigComp 3 & 4*

3. **Reflection & Presentation (B5)**

   Self- and peer-reflection, presentation in the digital space, development of problem-solving strategies. → DigComp 5

Storylight Competency Grid

Level of competence (according to DigComp)	Storylight Reference / Learning Objective	Exemplary activity
A1 – Basics	First use of digital tools, understanding of media content	Using Canva or Audacity with guidance
A2 – Structure	Standalone use of simple digital tools	Creating Your Own Digital Short Story
B1 – Self-employment	Combination of multiple tools, use of interactive digital resources	Production of a video portrait or podcast
B2 – Extension	Critical evaluation of digital content and self-determined use	Developing an online gallery or empowerment portfolio

Accompanying pedagogical tools

- **Empowerment portfolio:** Documentation of learning progress in relation to DigComp competencies.
- **Self- and peer evaluation:** Reflection on digital skills (tool choice, collaboration, data protection).
- **Trainer Guide:** Guidance on how to assign each activity to one or more DigComp areas.

Reflection questions

- How has my digital literacy changed?
- How can I continue to use digital tools in my everyday life?
- What aspects of my story do I want to make digitally visible – and why?

Learning scenarios

Scenario 1: "My Arrival – Paths to a New Life"

Goal: To reflect on one's own migration experience and to promote linguistic expression.

Description: Participants will create short digital stories (2-3 minutes) about their arrival in a new country: expectations, first impressions, challenges. How was the arrival? What was difficult? What gave courage?

Through their choices when viewing the interactive Storylight videos, they can actively influence the stories. Other participants tell their own stories – as mirrors or inspiration.

Learning objectives:

- Promotion of storytelling skills in the second language
- Development of basic digital skills (sound recording, image editing)
- Strengthening of identity and self-confidence

Empowerment goals:

- Understanding one's own migration biography as valuable and worth telling
- Identification with multiple identities (mother, professional, learner, migrant)
- Exchange with the stories of others – "I am not alone"

Language support:

- Biographical Narrative: Past, Feelings, Hopes
- First and second person (I, you – dialogues)
- Building an individual vocabulary around identity

Materials/Tools: Storyboard Template, Smartphone, Audacity, Canva

Results: Audio or video story about one's own new beginning

Scenario 2: "Women who have shaped me"

Goal: To make intercultural perspectives on role models and female role models visible.

Description: Each participant digitally shares a woman (e.g., mother, teacher, activist) who inspired them. The stories are combined with photos, music and text.

Learning objectives:

- Dealing with gender roles and values
- Expansion of vocabulary on topics such as family, work, education
- Promoting creative expression

Empowerment goals:

- Recognizing one's own appreciation for female role models
- Identification with multiple roles (migrant, daughter, professional, learner)
- Strengthening self-confidence and pride in one's own experiences

Language support:

- Use of past tenses (perfect, past tense) for biographical narration
- Adjectives and evaluations to describe characteristics and actions
- Formulation of opinions and emotions ("She inspired me because...")

Materials/Tools: Photo Archive, Canva for Digital Design, Voice Recording App

Results: Digital portrait or short video
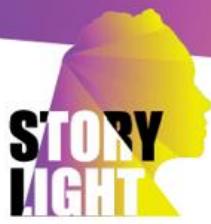
Scenario 3: "My place of residence – our home"

Goal: To promote participation and belonging in the local community.

Description: In small groups, migrant women produce digital tours or video stories about places that are important to them (e.g. market, school, park). The stories show personal perspectives on the place of residence and encourage an exchange about community and integration.

Learning objectives:

- Learning digital tools (e.g. map apps, photo apps, video editing)
- Development of presentation and teamwork skills
- Promoting local integration and citizen participation

Empowerment goals:
- Perception of one's own contributions to community life
- Proud of one's role in the local environment
- Exchange and networking with other participants, promotion of participation

Language support:
- Vocabulary on places, directions, activities and public facilities
- Use of imperatives and directions ("Go straight ahead...", "Turn left...")
- Narrative forms: Present tense for current situation, Perfect for experiences

Materials/tools: Smartphone or tablet, Google Maps/Maps apps
Results: Digital city walk or group video

Scenario 4: "Memories of my childhood"

Goal: To promote narrative skills and emotional expression.

Description: The participants tell childhood memories in the form of a digital picture story with photos, music and spoken text. The stories can include special moments, traditions, family rituals or formative experiences.

Learning objectives:

- Learning digital tools (e.g. map apps, photo apps, video editing)

- Development of presentation and teamwork skills

- Promoting local integration and citizen participation

Empowerment goals:

- Appreciation of one's own biography and experiences

- Strengthening self-confidence and expressiveness

- Exchange with other participants: "My story counts"

Language support:

- Use of past tenses (past tense, perfect tense)

- Expression of emotions and reflections

- Building a personal vocabulary around childhood, family, feelings

Materials/Tools: PowerPoint, Canva, Free Music Archive

Results: Slideshow with music and spoken text

Scenario 5: "My profession – my path"

Goal: Support of professional (re-)integration and self-presentation. Reflection on one's own professional career or presentation of a desired profession

Description: Migrant women develop short video portraits about their professional career and their skills or their desired profession. The video portraits can be used as a digital application element or serve as a personal reflection on one's own abilities and goals.

Learning objectives:

- Teaching professional skills in narrative form

- Building self-confidence in terms of skills

- Introduction to professional forms of communication and digital tools

Empowerment goals:

- Recognition of one's own skills and competencies

- Visualization of professional potential and aspirations

- Motivation to actively shape your career path

Language support:

- Technical vocabulary on profession, tasks, education, competencies

- Use of the first-person form for self-presentation

- Formulations for future perspectives and goals ("I want...", "My goal is...")

Materials/Tools: Video Portrait Tool, Smartphone, Canva CV

Results: Digital video portrait or online profile (e.g. for application)

Scenario 6: "My language – my voice"

Goal: To promote multilingualism and appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Description: Each participant creates a story that combines elements of their native language and the new national language (e.g. bilingual poem, song or dialogue).

Learning objectives:

- Raising awareness of linguistic identity
- Improving pronunciation and language awareness
- Creative use of multilingualism

Empowerment goals:

- Recognition and appreciation of one's own multilingualism
- Strengthening the individual voice and expressiveness
- Promotion of mutual respect and identification in the group

Language support:

- Integration of mother tongue and second language in a narrative context
- Vocabulary and formulations on feelings, experiences and cultural topics
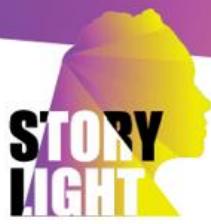- Practice of dialogues, rhymes, rhythm or poetic language

Materials/Tools: Voice Recording App, Padlet, Soundcloud

Results: Bilingual audio or video history

Scenario 7: "Women tell (hi)stories"

Goal: To make migrant perspectives visible in the past and present. Promotion of historical reflection and social participation

Description: In collaboration with local museums or cultural centres, migrant women create digital short films that combine personal and historical experiences. The films can contain interviews, archive material or their own narratives.

Learning objectives:

- Historical and cultural learning
- Media Literacy and Critical Reflection on Representation
- Promotion of social participation

Empowerment goals:

- Visualization of one's own experiences and perspectives
- Strengthening self-confidence and social participation
- Motivation to see one's own stories as valuable and relevant

Language support:

- Use of past tenses (perfect, past tense) for historical narratives
- Vocabulary on history, culture, social issues
- Formulation of connections between past and present

Materials/Tools: Canva Video, Audacity, local partners (museum, media library)

Results: Historical-personal short film

Scenario 8: "Images of the Future – Me in 2030"

Goal: To promote visions, future skills and digital creativity. Reflection on personal goals, wishes and perspectives

Description: Participants create a digital storyboard or video that shows their dreams, wishes, or plans.

Learning objectives:

- Self-reflection and goal orientation
- Promotion of media production (storyboard, animation, sound)
- Strengthening motivation and ability to act
- Presentation in public space

Empowerment goals:

- Visualization of one's own ideas for the future and potentials
- Strengthening self-confidence and decision-making skills
- Promotion of responsibility and active living

Language support:

- Formulation of future perspectives with future tense and conditional ("I will...", "If I..., then...")
- Expansion of vocabulary on dreams, goals and plans
- Narrative Storytelling and Creative Expressions

Materials/Tools: Storyboard Templates, Animoto, Adobe Express

Results: Creative Future Film or Digital Manifesto

Scenario 9: "My Neighbourhood – Encounters and Stories"

Objective

- Promotion of social participation and intercultural exchange
- Making individual perspectives on the local community visible

Description

Participants create digital mini-reports about encounters, activities or special places in their neighbourhood. They document everyday situations, conversations or personal impressions and connect them with their own stories.

Learning objectives

- Describing places, people and situations as well as applying narrative forms
- Promoting empathy, a sense of belonging and intercultural understanding
- Making one's own perspective visible and strengthening self-confidence
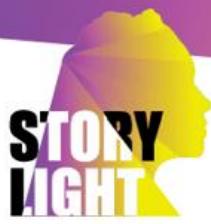
Language support

- Vocabulary about everyday life, encounters, places and activities
- Use of present tense for current situations, perfect for experiences
- Formulation of opinions and observations

Materials / Tools

Smartphone or tablet, video editing apps (e.g. Canva Video, iMovie)

Results

Digital mini-report about one's own neighbourhood

Scenario 10: "Making my talents visible"

Objective

- Promotion of self-efficacy and individual competence development
- Visualization of personal skills and interests

Description

Participants create digital portraits or short videos in which they present their talents, hobbies or special skills. The stories can be creatively implemented, e.g. through tutorials, performances or digital collages.

Learning objectives

- Presentation of one's own competencies in narrative form and use of appropriate vocabulary
- Building media literacy through recording, editing, and presenting digital content
- Promotion of self-confidence and reflection on one's own strengths

Empowerment goals

- Recognition of one's own talents and potential
- Making individual contributions to the community visible
- Motivation to develop personal skills

Language support

- Describe activities, skills, and processes
- Formulations for first-person presentations and instructions
- Expansion of vocabulary on hobbies, interests and competencies

Materials / Tools

Smartphone or tablet, video editing apps (Canva Video, iMovie), storyboard or notesheets for planning

Results

Digital portrait or short video about talents and skills

Methodological implementation

Entry phase
- Content:Introduction to storytelling, show examples
- Methods: Brainstorming, group discussion, video analysis

Development phase
- Content: Storyboard, Screenplay, Media Production
- Methods: Writing exercises, peer feedback, coaching

Production phase
- Content: Recording, editing, design
- Methods Project work in small groups

Reflection phase
- Content: Feedback, language support, digital reflection
- Methods: Learning journal, group discussion

Presentation phase
- Content: Closing event or online gallery
- Methods: Issuance, screening, certificate handing over

Evaluation

Instruments:
- Learning journal or portfolio
- Feedback forms (self-evaluation and peer evaluation)
- Observation sheet (language skills, media literacy, teamwork)
- Presentation evaluation based on transparent criteria

Bibliography and Sources

Technical literature:

- DigComp 2.2: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415
- Lambert, J. (2013). Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Lundby, K. (Ed.). (2008). Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self-representations in New Media. Peter Lang.
- Couldry, N. (2008). Digital storytelling, media research and democracy: Conceptual choices and alternative futures. The Fibreculture Journal, (13).
- Burgess, J. (2006). Hearing ordinary voices: Cultural studies, vernacular creativity and digital storytelling. Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, 20(2), 201–214.
- Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). The Mediated Construction of Reality. Polity Press.
- Cesário, Vanessa e. al. (2021): Promoting Social Inclusion Around Cultural Heritage Through Collaborative Digital Storytelling. Conference paper: https://memexproject.eu/images/Papers/ArtsIT_fieldstudy_preprint_THIS.pdf
- Emert, Toby (2014): Interactive Digital Storytelling with Refugee Children. Language Arts. 91. 401-415. 10.58680/LA201425470.

Migration & Empowerment:

- Bath, Meghna (2019): Empowering Immigrant and Refugee Women Through Digital Storytelling. Ms. Magazine: https://msmagazine.com/2019/10/14/empowering-migrant-women-through-digital-storytelling/
- Tacchi, J., Slater, D., & Hearn, G. (2003). Ethnographic Action Research Handbook. UNESCO.

- Drotner, K., & Schrøder, K. C. (Eds.). (2013). Museum Communication and Social Media: The Connected Museum. Routledge.
- Ramasubramanian, S. (2016). Mindful Media: Media Literacy for Personal and Social Change. Routledge.
- Retis, J., & Tsagarousianou, R. (Eds.). (2019). The Handbook of Diasporas, Media, and Culture. Wiley-Blackwell.

Practical projects / case studies:

- Stories That Move – Online tool for digital storytelling about diversity and migration. (https://www.storiesthatmove.org)
- Digital Storytelling for Empowerment of Migrant Women (DiSoMI) – Erasmus+ Project, 2019–2022 https://disomi.eu.
- BBC Capture Wales – Early digital storytelling project with a participatory approach. (BBC, 2001–2008).
- UNESCO Digital Storytelling Initiatives – Projects to promote media literacy among women and migrants. (https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy)

About the Project

Storylight aims to bridge the gap between migrant women and their sociopolitical inclusion by providing them customized workshops and learning materials to enhance their knowledge and skills required to produce digital stories. Participants will gain the necessary tools to share their personal experiences to enable them feel empowered in times of disempowerment and amplify their voices and visibility locally and across Europe.

To maximize impact, Storylight promotes local learning centers as hubs for lifelong learning, collaborating with educators, civil society, and cultural institutions. As part of the project activities, the intention is to encourage social inclusion, civic involvement, and democracy; to draw in and provide learning opportunities for all members of the community, including marginalized groups.

The project encourages cooperation between adult education providers, local learning centers, libraries, museums, civil society, and the larger community (NGOs, local government, health, culture, etc.) to inspire and facilitate the acquisition of digital competencies that enable migrant women to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change and uncertainty.

The project also strengthens the professional development of educators and adult learning staff, upskilling them to improve learning opportunities for marginalized groups. By integrating digital and sustainability-focused teaching methods, the project aligns with the green and digital transitions, ensuring equal access and inclusion in adult education.

www.storylightproject.eu