Participatory Online Idea Labs: Empowering Social Workers in Dealing with Digitalization

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated digitalization processes in the field of social work. While some areas, such as IT infrastructure, improved, others remained the same or even worsened, such as the lack of co-determination in selecting, implementing, and evaluating digital tools. Against this background, we discuss participation opportunities for social workers in their organizations. We ask how they can actively participate in developing digitalization strategies or accompany other processes in this regard. The focus is on our method of participatory online idea labs, which enables the development of recommendations for action from practice for practice. We present the method's goals and structure in detail before we evaluate its advantages, such as empowering employees, and challenges, such as reaching out to techno-skeptic people. At the end of this paper, we discuss individual recommendations for action, which refer to the possibilities for employees to participate in the digitalization of their working environment and which are also presented in a toolbox.

1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of societal changes that are gradually leading to a "digital society" (Lindgren, 2017), the field of social work[32] is undergoing fundamental transformations. Digitalization processes are changing the working conditions for and tools of social workers as much as organizational cultures (Zierer, 2018). With regard to clients, digital technologies and the emergence of new social spaces are shaping their (living) environment (Becka, Evans and Hilbert, 2017). Therefore, social workers must adapt to these new environments and refer to them in their work. Besides, digital technologies open up new possibilities to support clients, e.g., through online counseling (Kutscher, 2016). On a communicational level, social work institutions and professionals are increasingly presenting themselves via social media and on websites relevant to the

[32] We use 'social work' as a convergence term of social pedagogy and social services. Social work takes place in a variety of action fields. In these, social workers support and accompany the shaping and management of their clients' everyday lives. Their responsibilities involve educational, supportive, preventive, and intervening tasks, and they work in counseling centers, residential communities, or youth centers (Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2019).

field (Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2019). Case administration and documentation are progressively digitized and used for billing services or evaluating social workers (Ley and Seelmeyer, 2014). As a consequence, social work employees need new digital literacies that enable them to use digital tools, create online content or discuss the risks of social media with people addressed (Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, 2018). At the same time, social work institutions face the challenge of developing digitalization strategies for their institution. And they have the task of selecting and implementing new digital tools which fit their work environment (Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2022).

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the field of social work in Austria faced many challenges related to digitalization processes compared to other sectors such as education, industry, or media (Klinger, Rauter and Sackl-Sharif, 2022). In our last project digi@work[33], social workers complained about poor technical equipment. They had to work with inadequate software that did not correspond to the logic of their working practices. In this regard, managers mentioned a lack of necessary capital to buy up-to-date tools or software (Klinger, Mayr, Rauter and Lerch, 2020). Furthermore, social workers often expressed skepticism towards digitalization. For example, they feared dehumanization or total surveillance through digital tools. Some had a dystopian future vision and feared the social workers' replacement by robots or the decline in relationship work (Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2022). And most important for this paper: They had hardly any opportunities to select or evaluate the new digital tools. Therefore, social workers often felt unheard and left alone with technical innovations (ibid).

In our follow-up project digi@socialwork[34], we focused on participation possibilities for social workers to support their wish to shape digitization processes. Based on empirical surveys and participatory research in Austria, we developed recommendations for action with social workers. Proceeding in such an inclusive way, our recommendations shall find a higher acceptance and implementation rate among practitioners and shall facilitate and improve their digital literacies, the introduction of new digital tools and the development of digitalization strategies. The results of the project digi@socialwork relate to the aggravated work situation during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is

[33] The digi@work project was carried out between 2018 and 2020 at the University of Graz, FH JOANNEUM – University of Applied Sciences, Know-Center Graz, and x-samples. For more information, see https://digital-at-work.uni-graz.at. We applied a mixed-methods approach and compared for-profit organizations (FPO) with non-profit organizations (NPO). In a first step, we conducted a quantitative telephone survey with executives of 178 different organizations (92 FPO, 87 NPO). In a second step, we conducted 12 case studies (4 FPO, 8 NPO) and interviewed 14 executives in form of problem-centered interviews and 58 employees in 15 group discussions.

[34] The digi@socialwork project was funded by the "Digitalisierungsfonds 4.0" of Arbeiterkammer Steiermark. It was carried out between 2020 and 2022 at the Institute of Educational Sciences (University of Graz). For more information, see https://digital-at-socialwork.uni-graz.at.

also possible to draw comparisons with the pre-pandemic period and see how the pandemic affected and changed the field of social work.
In this paper, we discuss the participatory research design of the project digi@socialwork in detail. After outlining our research design, we focus on the method of participatory online idea labs, explaining the empirical basis, the process, and the evaluation of these labs. In this context, we discuss the advantages and challenges of developing recommendations for action directly from the researched field. In the end, we present selected results of our toolbox as well as our compendium of relevant recommendations for action, and highlight the most useful insights.

2 Research Design: An Overview

In the project digi@socialwork, we focused on the perspective of social work employees in Austria. The central goals of this project were

- to survey how social workers experience digital transformation processes,
- to develop recommendations for action from practice for practice, and
- to discuss participation possibilities for social workers to strategically, transparently, and actively shape digital transformation processes.

In this way, digitalization should not only serve the economy but also support employees and improve their everyday working lives.

2.1 Participatory Mixed-Methods Design

To achieve these goals and to integrate the views of social workers in the best possible way, we chose a participatory research approach. We understand participatory research as a cognitive process of researchers and social workers as co-researchers guided by a continuous exchange of information (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). Against this background, participatory research means entering into a conversation with the research partners about their work lives and making explicit what in practice has long been known already implicitly (Bergold and Thomas, 2010). This approach can succeed if a research environment is created on an equal footing, in which power structures are eliminated as far as possible and in which practical and theoretical knowledge enter into a productive exchange (e.g., Moser, 2008).
In the digi@socialwork project, the participation of social workers was based on a three-stage mixed-methods research design (Kuckartz, 2014). We combined and conducted the following methods sequentially:

1. *Quantitative survey*: an online survey with employees of social work institutions in Austria,
2. *Qualitative survey*: group discussions with employees of social work institutions in Austria,

3. *Participatory online idea labs*: participatory online workshops with social work employees.

In this context, we understood participation in two ways: In the online survey and the group discussions, we included social workers in a more 'classical' sense and asked pre-formulated items or questions. These surveys were relevant to identifying current challenges regarding digital transformation processes in social work. In the idea labs, we involved the participants already in the topic preparation. In this last part, the degree of participation was much higher as the relevance of the topics came largely from social workers.

2.2 Online Survey

The Austria-wide online survey served as a collection of basic information on the digital tools' usage of social work employees.[35] The data collection was carried out between March and May 2021 with SoSci and comprised closed and open questions on the employees' everyday working lives. The questionnaire included nine topic blocks:

- Opinion on digitalization in general
- Self-assessment of private and professional skills in dealing with digital technologies
- Usage behavior of digital technologies at the workplace (end devices and application software)
- Rules and guidelines for the use of digital technologies
- Satisfaction with the equipment in the company
- Need for participation and support
- Effects of digitalization on the compatibility of professional and private life
- Data security
- Socio-demographic questions

Based on a maximum variation sampling strategy (Patton, 2002), we tried to include as different social organizations as possible in our survey. The sample comprises seven selected organizations, which vary in size (number of employees), geographical distribution, and action fields to cover the Austrian social work landscape. We included the following action fields: work with children, youth and families; work with people with disabilities; work with people with a migration background; care; and psychosocial work.

1,273 people completed the questionnaire up to the last question. We excluded 27 questionnaires because there were more than 10% unanswered questions. In the end, our sample included 1,246 persons. The following socio-demographic variables were relevant for our analysis:

[35] Waltraud Gspuring largely planned, conducted, and analyzed our online survey. She was supported in particular by Patrick Hart but also by the rest of the project team.

- *Gender*: Three-quarters of the respondents were women* and one-quarter were men*.[36] A total of nine people indicated their gender as diverse.
- *Age*: About 60% of the respondents were between 36 to 55 years old. A fifth was 26 to 35 years old, 10% were 56 years and older, and about 9% were 19 to 25 years old.
- *Working hours*: About 40% of the respondents were employed full-time, and about 60% were employed part-time. Of the part-time employees, most worked 30 hours per week (n=201), followed by 25 hours per week (n=107) and 20 hours per week (n=97).
- *Care work*: About 20% of the participants had one child, 16% had two children, and 4% had three children up to 18 years. Furthermore, 12% of the participants provided private care for relatives other than their children. On average, these participants cared for their relatives 21 hours per week.

Furthermore, also the participants' affinity for technology was an important topic for our analysis and they had to rate four items related to this on a five-point rating scale. Our sample included many IT literate participants. 53% usually do (tend to) not need support when using new digital technologies, 60% are (tend to be) among the first in the team to use new digital technologies and 60% are (tend to be) asked for advice by others when it comes to new digital technologies. The final item rated the relation regarding the use and the novelty of new digital technologies. It turned out that 80% of the participants (tend to) use the latest digital technologies in their work.

We analyzed the closed questions with descriptive statistical evaluations and selected items with inferential statistics. We clustered the two open questions with the qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2015) and MAXQDA20.

2.3 Group Discussions

From May to August 2021, we conducted nine (online) group discussions (Mangold, 1973) with 25 social workers to learn more about their practical experiences and perspectives. We discussed five topics: attitudes towards and experiences with digitalization; significance of digitalization for one's work context; balancing professional life and private life; digitization during the Covid-19 pandemic; and organizational framework. At the end of the discussion, participants filled in a short questionnaire with socio-demographic information.

We selected the participants based on the maximum variation sampling strategy (Patton, 2015), whereby we also considered particularities of the field, such as the higher proportion of women*. We included seven different organizations which vary in size (number of employees), geographical distribution, and action fields. Our sample comprised five action fields respectively target groups (work with people with disabilities; work with people in a migration context; work with children, young people,

[36] The gender asterisk * after a word serves as a reference to the constructional character of gender.

and families; area of psychosocial activities). 16 women* and 9 men* between 30 and 53 years participated in the group discussions.
In evaluating the group discussions, we were guided by the evaluation strategies of Schmidt (2013) that constitutes a compilation of different evaluation techniques based on existing theories (Kuckartz, 2010). Since Schmidt (2013) mainly referred to interviews, we adapted this procedure for group discussions (for more information, see Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2022). We carried out our analysis with computer support using MAXQDA20.

2.4 Participatory Online Idea Labs and Toolbox

From January to February 2022, we conducted ten participatory idea labs to develop recommendations for action together with social workers. Our findings from the online survey and the group discussions were the basis for these idea labs. Therefore, we used the labs not only to discuss recommendations but also to validate our previous findings. Since this method is the main focus of this contribution, information on the structure and procedure of the idea labs will be provided in the following sections.
In the last step of the project, we transformed the results of the idea labs into a toolbox. The toolbox includes recommendations for actions for the most relevant topics. At the end of this contribution, we give an overview of the toolbox' structure and content and discuss the most relevant results to enable better participation of social workers in their organizations.

3 Idea Labs: Empirical Basis

In the preparation phase of our idea labs, we linked the main findings from the online survey and the group discussions. In particular, we were interested in surprising results that emerged by comparing the situation before and during the Covid-19 pandemic and existing challenges in dealing with digital tools.
One surprising finding from the group discussions was that attitudes toward digital tools improved strongly during the Covid-19 pandemic. The widespread dystopias were hardly present anymore, in contrast to the situation before the pandemic (Klinger, Mayr and Sackl-Sharif, 2022; Klinger, Rauter and Sackl-Sharif, 2022). It seems that former challenges have turned into potentials. The Covid-19 pandemic was a driver of digitalization in the field of social work on different levels. For example, many organizations improved their IT infrastructure, social workers developed and expanded their digital literacies, and they began to perceive digital tools increasingly as necessary. In our idea labs, we discussed how organizations and social workers could maintain these positive attitudes and improvements in the future.
But we also identified different longer existing and new challenges related to digital tools or digital transformation processes. The most relevant topic for this contribution is the lack of opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making. Our online

survey showed that only about 20% of respondents indicated on a five-point rating scale that they are (very) satisfied with the transparency of decisions and the opportunities for co-determination in their organization. There seems to be a deficit in organizational support in considering employees' opinions in selecting digital technologies. About two-thirds of the respondents felt unheard and excluded from decision-making. Our group discussions indicated that social workers have special insider knowledge and a desire to be more involved in decision-making. In their opinion, social workers' involvement in developing, selecting, implementing, and evaluating new tools is indispensable. In our idea labs, we discussed possible ways to implement these wishes in practice.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many social workers had the chance or the obligation to work from home. We identified some challenges also in this context. Across our surveys, it became apparent that data protection was sometimes perceived as problematic in the home office, as the family or flat mates could listen in on meetings, and the protection of clients was challenging. Furthermore, there were uncertainties regarding data protection when working with personal devices. Here, social workers expressed their desire to develop guidelines for using personal devices in the workplace, as these were still lacking at many organizations during our surveys. Therefore, data protection was also a relevant topic for our toolbox.

In addition to data protection problems, working in a home office also led to more work-life balance problems. Employees who cared for relatives in their private lives also rated their work-life balance significantly worse than employees who did not care for relatives. However, the number of children did not show a significant difference. In addition, the respondents often lacked contact with their colleagues in the home office. Digital platforms such as MS Teams could not fully replace analog meetings in their point of view. Besides, the possibility of being permanently available via digital tools was a big problem in balancing professional and private life for many social workers. They experienced this challenge even more intensely in action fields with on-call duty. Almost 92% of our online survey respondents answer e-mails or telephone with colleagues at least sometimes in their free time. Almost a third say they are always available for colleagues or superiors. Interestingly, social workers located challenges concerning the work-life balance to an individual level. Being able to say no, being mindful of oneself, or simply switching off the mobile phone were mentioned as solution strategies for compatibility/availability problems. In our idea labs, we focused on what organizations could do for their employees in this context. For example, we discussed rules and guidelines for accessibility in the free time or possible improvements for the organizational culture in this regard.

4 Idea Labs: The Process

4.1 Preparation

In the first step, we identified challenges in dealing with digital tools and surprising findings in five areas: creating participatory work environments; organizational framework such as organizational culture and the existence or absence of a digitalization strategy; balancing professional life and private life; working conditions such as work hours, salary, equipment, or technical support; and using digital tools (digital literacies).

We organized two idea labs for every topic, each lasting two hours. Zoom, Webex, and Big Blue Button served as communication channels during the labs, and the participants discussed and worked together on Miro, a visual collaborative online platform. It was relevant for us to design our Miro boards very open so the participants could set their priorities themselves.[37]

4.2 Recruitment

We recruited participants through our contacts in the field and participants in our online survey and group discussions. All participants received a reward of 150 euros. In advance, we informed all participants about the goals and topics of our five different idea labs, from which they were able to choose their two favorite topics. In this way, we tried to select the participants by their interests to guarantee their active participation. In the next step, we carried out the time-consuming task of coordinating viable time slots for all participants according to their topic choice. In the last recruitment phase, we sent all participants the link and password for the respective communication platform, their topic, the moderator's name, and their time slot.

In contrast to our previous surveys, we could not carry out the sampling process in such a structured way because the idea labs took place during a hard lockdown which led to many work routines being interrupted. Therefore, we had difficulties finding two to three social workers who had time during the same period and were interested in similar topics.

All in all, 23 people from the field of social work participated in our ten idea labs. They were between 21 and 55 years old, about two-thirds were women*, and one-third were men*. They also came from different action fields and organizations similar to our previous surveys. Most participants were IT literate and open for new digital technologies. Due to the challenges in the recruitment process described above (hard lockdown, time slots shared by several participants), it was not possible to consciously invite participants who were skeptical about technology. Nonetheless, skeptical opinions were also represented in at least a few idea labs. Approximately one quarter

[37] Eva Goldgruber designed and developed our Miro boards and helped us with her expertise in e-learning and online research.

of the participants also discussed the dangers of social media or criticized digitalization in general in the first phase of the idea labs.

4.3 Welcome and Explanation

The labs started on the respective communication platform. At the beginning of the labs, the moderator (Susanne, Sabine, or Andrea) introduced the process, showing the Miro board with a shared screen and the most relevant functions. She explained the different colored post-its on the board and instructed each participant to choose and use one specific color for the whole Miro board. In this way, we could collect the ideas of each participant separately in the following analysis.

4.4 Introduction Round

Afterward, an introduction round served to get to know each other and become acquainted with Miro (see Fig. 1). The participants received the task of writing their names and action fields on prepared post-its and completing the sentence “When I think of digitalization, I think of...”. In addition, the participants had to indicate on a 10-point rating scale how relevant digital tools and digitization processes are to their work practice. This allowed us to estimate their general opinions on digitalization in the workplace.

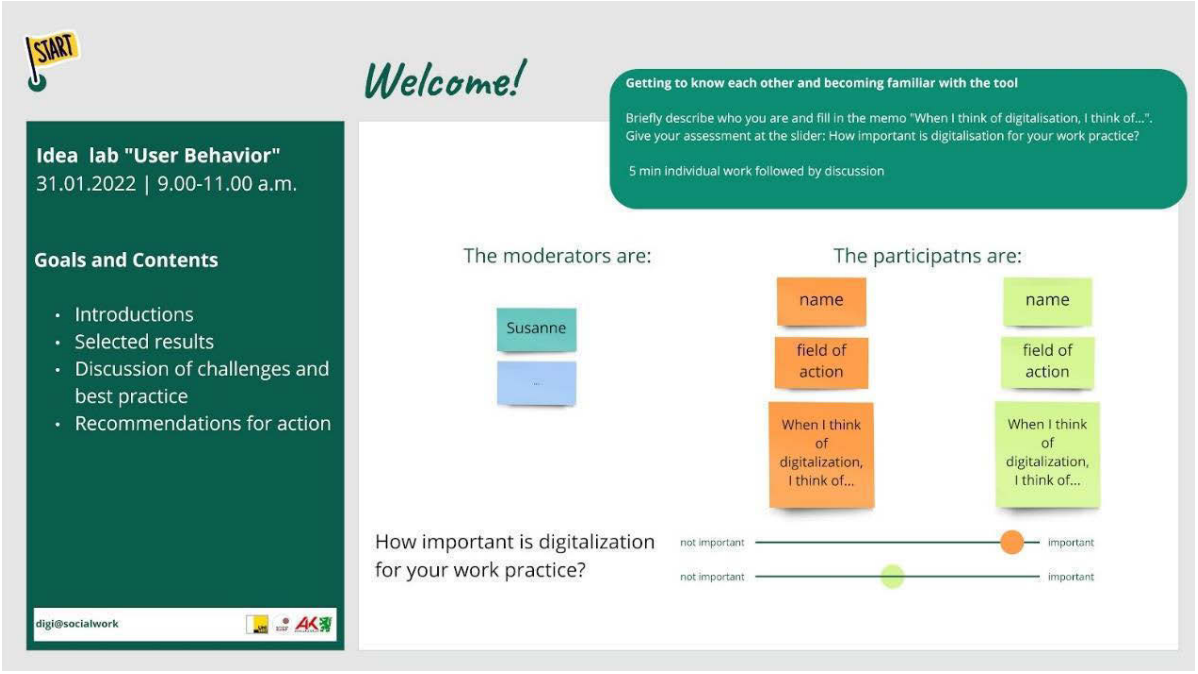

Fig. 1: Introduction Round.

4.5 Empirical Results

In the next phase, the moderator presented the most important results from the online survey and the group discussions that fit the topic of the respective idea lab on a new Miro frame. By this means, the participants could jump back to the results at any time

during the lab. This phase lasted about five to ten minutes and the participants had the opportunity to ask comprehension questions in case of ambiguities.

4.6 Brainstorming

Afterward, the participants were asked to discuss the results, collecting best practice examples from their working practice, or identifying further challenges in a two-step process (see Fig. 2). First, the participants brainstormed alone for five to ten minutes and wrote their thoughts and ideas on the prepared post-its. Second, the social workers presented and discussed their notes while the moderator clustered shared insights and problems.

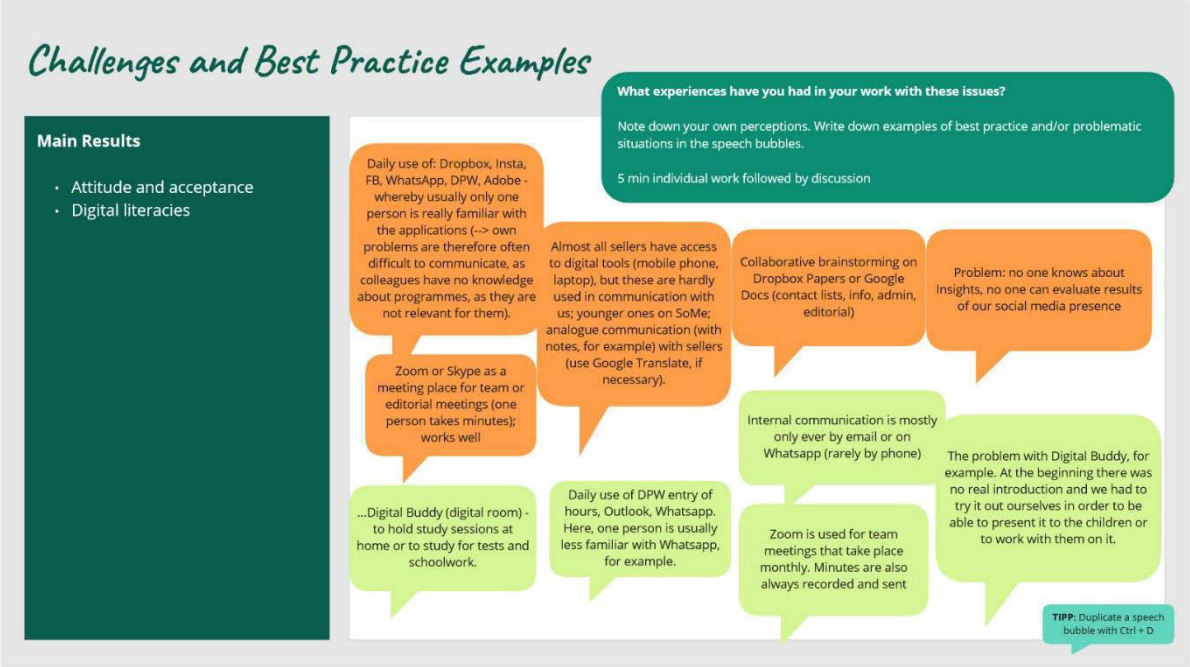

Fig. 2: Brainstorming.

4.7 Selecting Relevant Problems

For the subsequent phase, we provided a separate voting frame to select problem areas for which recommendations for action were to be developed (see Fig. 3). Here, the moderator first noted challenges from the empirical results. The participants were also able to list further challenges from the previous phases in the lab. Afterward, the participants received five points each to assign them to the challenges on the board, whereby a maximum of three points per challenge was allowed. The social workers discussed the topic that received the most points first. Depending on the progress of the labs, they also discussed a second topic if there was enough time. Through this approach, we ensured that the respondents only discussed those topics that were relevant to them.

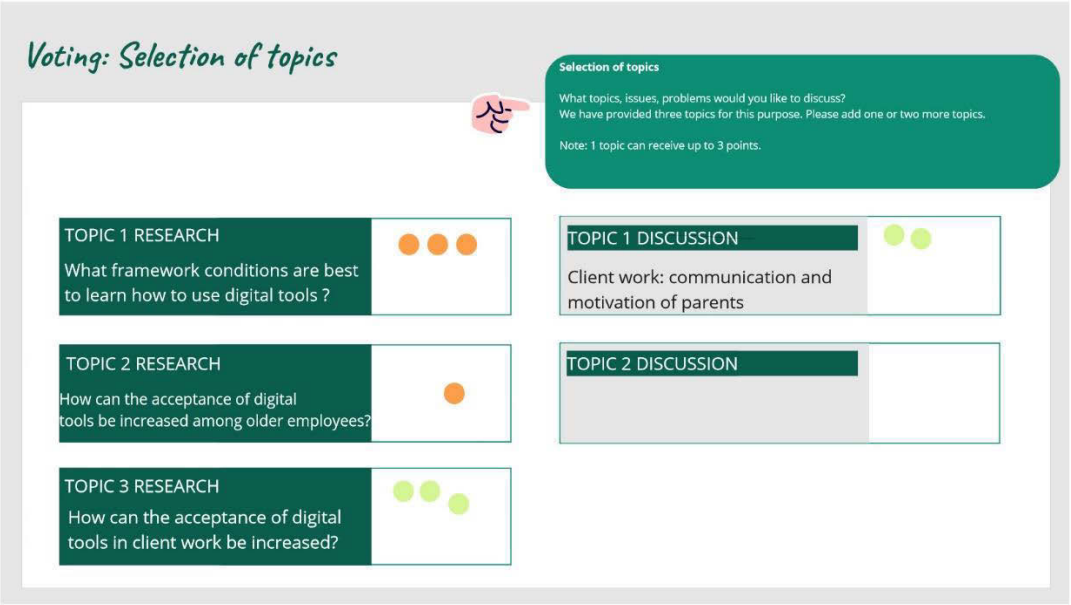

Fig 3. Voting frame.

4.8 Recommendations for Action

In the next phase, we invited the participants to develop recommendations for action based on their professional experiences (see Fig. 4). Once again, we first asked the participants to brainstorm independently and, then, to discuss their ideas in the group. During these complex discussions, the moderators noted relevant findings and recommendations. Due to the collaborative work with Miro, all contents were always visible to all participants. Moreover, it was possible to cluster the outcomes together.

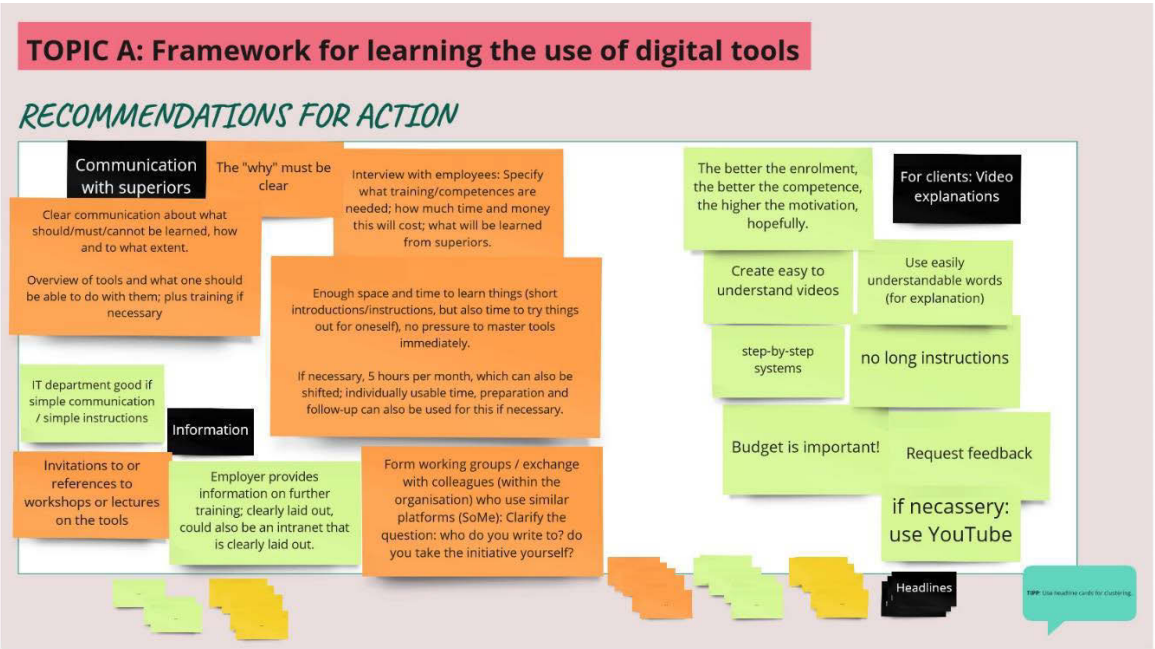

Fig 4. Developing recommendations for action.

4.9 Reflexion and Goodbye

On completion of all tasks after about two hours, each idea lab ended with a short feedback round, in which we asked the participants what they took away from the idea labs, how they liked it, and which topics were most important for them. We also informed them about the next steps of our project and invited them to our closing event.

5 Idea Labs: An Evaluation

From a methodological point of view, the structure and process of the idea labs worked well in practice. The participants accepted the Miro board well and had hardly any problems with its use. In about half of the idea labs, mainly the participants documented the ideas and best practice examples. In the other half, the moderators had to support and note essential findings, as the participants focused on the discussion and sometimes forgot about documenting. Similar to group discussions in general, we had to use flexible strategies in the role of moderators depending on the group dynamics.
The group size of two to three participants turned out to be suitable. In this way, the participants could set the relevance of the labs' contents. With larger groups, consensus-building might not have succeeded so quickly. Due to our step-by-step approach, the participants especially developed recommendations for action for those topics where they had practical experience in. This means that our results came directly from the social workers' practice, which suggests that the toolbox subsequently developed from is more likely to be accepted by practitioners.
The participants perceived the exchange in the idea labs very positively. They felt inspired and empowered. The reflection on their practice led some participants to view digitalization in a more positive or relevant way in the final round than at the lab's beginning. They were also more likely to feel they could change or contribute to their organization by participating in digital transformation processes. The participants felt motivated by the cross-organizational setting of the idea labs as they had the chance to reflect on their practice and learn more about digital transformation processes and digitization strategies in other organizations. Cross-organizational idea labs can also help to reduce reservation and even resistance against digitalization and increase social workers' empowerment.
The only methodological challenge, for which we have yet to find a solution, is the following: We had the impression that especially IT literate social workers participated in the idea labs as well as in our other surveys. With our design, we could hardly reach people with skeptical attitudes towards digitalization. Perhaps the hurdle of using digital tools was too big here, even though our recommendations for action are intended precisely for this group.

6 Toolbox: Recommendations for Action from Practice for Practice

6.1 Creating the Toolbox

The consolidation of all findings from our surveys and idea labs was also carried out with a Miro board, as this tool enables transparent, collaborative, and flexible work. It is also easy to save the intermediate status of the different brainstorming and evaluation phases. The development of the recommendations for our toolbox took place in numerous discussions among the authors, including one active and two former social workers to maintain the practical relevance. We clustered our recommendations into seven main topics:

- *Strategies*: We discuss the advantages of having a digitalization strategy and describe relevant topics as well as possible ways of implementation.
- *Tools*: We deal with the equipment of social workers (hardware, software) and the selection and implementation processes of new digital tools.
- *Digital literacies*: We describe opportunities for sustainable acquisition of skills perceived as essential for the digital age.
- *People addressed/clients*: We explain how it is possible to get or stay in touch with clients via digital tools and work together on creative digital solutions.
- *Flexible work environment*: We show that work independent of time schedule and location requires very flexible rules to, for example, counteract compatibility problems.
- *Data security*: We draw attention to possible data protection problems and show solution strategies.
- *Cross-organizational cooperation*: We discuss the advantages of cross-organizational cooperation.

For each topic, we created an easy-to-understand headline and a motto (e.g., 'Digital change does not come out of the socket but starts in people's heads!'). In the section 'Good to Know', the toolbox explains key terms and summarizes relevant results. Furthermore, it contains a list of recommendations for action and best practice examples. The toolbox is available as a poster, Pdf-file and a short video on our website.[38]

6.2 Recommendations for Actively Shaping Digital Transformation

We identified possibilities for shaping digital transformation by social workers in connection with many topics. In this contribution, we focus on one relevant example: the *digitalization strategy*. Our analyses show that the existence of a digitalization strategy enables better participation of social workers but also enhances other

[38] https://digital-at-socialwork.uni-graz.at/toolbox

processes. If an organization has a clear digitalization strategy and communicates it transparently to its employees,

- this has a positive effect on the perception of the use of digital tools in everyday work,
- it tends to be better equipment or software that fits the work steps and systems in which tools are tried out and consciously selected before their use,
- digitization becomes something self-evident,
- there are more formal support systems (IT, training),
- social workers have more opportunities to participate in selecting, implementing and evaluating tools.

If no digitization strategy is in place, there is often the feeling that organizations implement too many ideas and use too many different software solutions simultaneously. Social workers experience new digital tools' introduction more likely as abrupt and little prepared. They describe more challenges in dealing with digital tools, such as missing digital literacies or too less time for training, and often feel not integrated into decision-making. Therefore, we recommend a clear digitalization strategy development with representatives from all organizational levels to guarantee the support of as many organization members as possible. This strategy should also be transparently communicated to everyone and written in a simple language.

7 Conclusions and Discussion

The Covid-19 pandemic acted as an accelerator for digitalization processes in the field of social work. Challenges that were experienced as a burden before the pandemic, partly developed into potentials. To give an example: Whereas before the pandemic, social workers associated time tracking with digital tools with surveillance and control (Klinger, Rauter, Sackl-Sharif 2022; Klinger, Mayr, Sackl-Sharif 2022), they see it now as a way of facilitating their work by keeping track of clients and tasks. Furthermore, social workers have a more open attitude towards digitalization since the beginning of the pandemic and report being better at using digital tools. Nevertheless, there are a number of new as well as existing challenges, for example, in the area of increasingly flexible working, work-life balance, the selection, introduction, and evaluation of new tools, or digital communication with colleagues and clients.

Against this background, we developed recommendations for action from practice for practice together with social workers in participatory online idea labs. The focus was on what organizations can do to support their employees to accept the digitalization process and improve their digital literacies. In particular, it was relevant to find out how employees can participate in developing visions and strategies and what co-decision making could look like in selecting and introducing new digital tools. The open structure of our participatory online idea labs worked well in practice as social workers had the

opportunity to set their own priorities. This approach made it possible to develop recommendations for action that are relevant to the participants' working practice.
After the end of the project, we distributed our posters and sent our link to the toolbox to all participating organizations and individuals as well as to other stakeholders in the field of social work in Austria. The feedback we have received up to the time of writing this report (August 2022) has been consistently positive. The recommendations for action were written in a language that was easy to understand and could be put into practice. Some also reported that they had hung up the poster in their office so that they could better remember the recommendations in their daily work.
Our participatory research approach, particularly the online idea labs, is also well suited for other research projects with a focus on participatory work with the project's target groups. However, since online tools can reach especially IT literate people, we recommend a broader research approach. In addition to online surveys, offline surveys/events could help reach out to people with less digital literacies and less open attitudes toward digitalization.

Acknowledgments

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