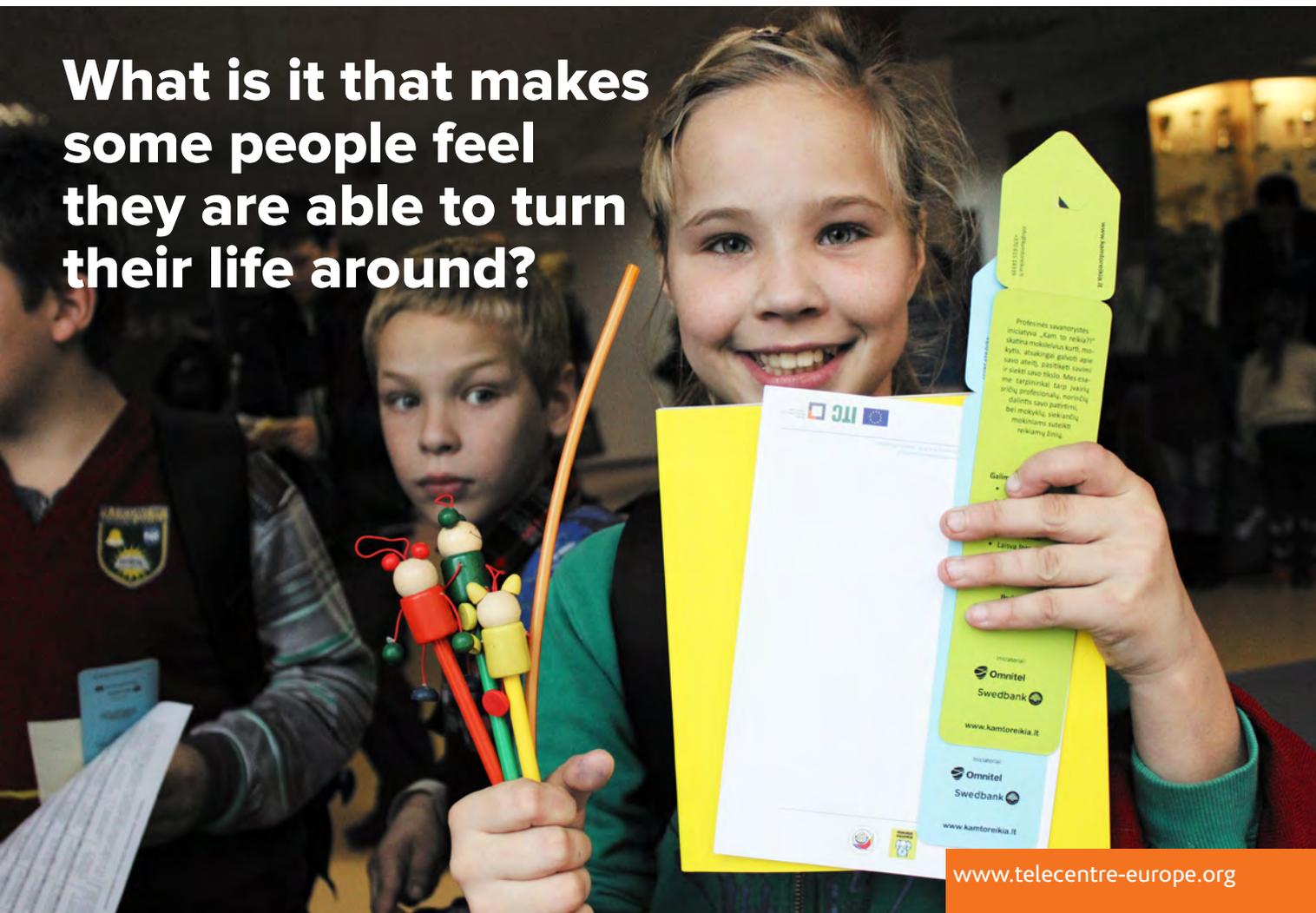# Making the case for **digital empowerment**

1. **Empowering individuals and communities**

2. **Raising awareness on digital skills and influencing policy**

3. **Fostering partnerships and sharing knowledge**

4. **Engaging ICT industry in social inclusion initiatives**

What is it that makes some people feel they are able to turn their life around?

Empowering individuals and communities

Telecentre Europe is a non-governmental organisation that represents a growing sector of "eInclusion intermediaries" such as telecentres, public libraries, community centres, and non-profit organisations around Europe. These play a key role in today's digital economy as they provide people with **free access** to the Internet, technology, certified training and mentoring.

We coordinate a number of **projects and campaigns** that empower people to discover new paths to employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship. We also work on EU funded projects and help our members find funding.

Our members are national and local organisations active in the field of **social inclusion** enabled by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). All our members and partners believe that ICT has an enormous potential to combat social exclusion and poverty.

Our members work to ensure that every person, no matter what their age, social status or level of education, gets an equal chance to participate in the digital society.

Raising awareness on digital skills and influencing policy

Telecentre Europe contributes to **European policy** in education and training (lifelong learning), employment (digital skills and opportunities) and social inclusion. We publish **policy papers and opinions**, participate in consultations launched by the European Commission, collaborate with Members of the European Parliament, promote best practices, organise or attend stakeholder workshops and more.

Our aim is to bring **digital competence and employability** higher on the political agenda while defending the interests of our members at EU level.

The European Get Online Week (www.getonlineweek.eu) is our most successful example of raising awareness on the importance of digital skills all over Europe. The annual digital empowerment campaign has been running since 2010 and highlights our members' continuous commitment in engaging people with ICT and the Internet.

© photo : Emmanuel Crooyn

Our aim is to bring digital competence higher on the political agenda and raise awareness with the general public.

Fostering partnerships and sharing knowledge

Our members use the Telecentre Europe network to learn about funding opportunities, find project partners, participate in surveys, attend webinars and learn from each other. We facilitate informal **online conversations and best practice sharing** on our online space for professionals involved in telecentres and digital inclusion in Europe: www.unite-it.eu

An example of best practice sharing and collaboration is Telecentre Europe's **Local Coalitions for Digital Jobs** (LC4DJ) initiative that connects our members to local governments, employment services and educational or social actors to develop much needed opportunities for ICT training, certification and jobs.

Telecentre Europe hosts every year a General Assembly where all member organisations can have their say in the overall development and direction of the network. Another meeting opportunity is our **annual conference** (TEAC) that is open to a wider community of stakeholders from governments, education and the ICT sector. The conference takes place in a different country each year and centres around the latest topics in the field.

Community networking stands at the core of who we are.

Engaging ICT industry in social inclusion initiatives

Telecentre Europe also aims to bring together the **growing ICT sector** and the grassroot organisations such as telecentres that work with people to bridge the digital gap.

Telecentre Europe has worked with companies such as **Microsoft**, **Liberty Global** and **Accenture.** A certification campaign run by Microsoft and Telecentre Europe offered 10,000 free ICT certification vouchers to young and unemployed people in ten European countries. Together with Liberty Global, Microsoft also helps fund the annual Get Online Week and both companies support us with advice and know-how in our broad communication efforts.

Finally, our **Advisory Board,** consisting of representatives from the ICT sector, was established to provide Telecentre Europe with strategic guidance from the perspective of industry leaders.

"We are excited to work together with private companies to empower youth around the globe with opportunities for education, employment, and entrepreneurship."

Gabriel Rissola, Telecentre Europe's Managing Director on the occasion of Microsoft Voucher Campaign launch in 2013