ANNUAL CONFERENCE
17-18 NOVEMBER 2021
FLASH REPORT
BACKGROUND

Every year, the EAEA Annual Conference is held under a different theme, which is also the topic of the Grundtvig Award. The 2021 conference took place online on 17-18 November and focused on **Learning to exercise democracy in a digital world.**

HIGHLIGHTS

- **135 participants** representing **26 countries** and different profiles: umbrella organisations, NGOs, adult education providers, public authorities and more
- Two-day programme with a mix of **inputs, workshops** and **small-group discussions**
- Two excellent projects with a focus on digitalisation and democracy awarded the **2021 Grundtvig Award**; the Award Ceremony also celebrated winners from last year
Building democracy in a digital world: a conversation

Why are we predominantly preparing the citizens for a rational world, ignoring that they will also be living in a relational world? Why obliterate thousands of years of evolution of traditional communication, and refuse to strengthen it now with a digital dimension? Why separate and not unite? During his keynote address, Prof. Antonio Dias de Figueiredo looked at the myth of separation, at algorithmic injustice and at new generation pedagogies.

"IF WE WANT TO DEVELOP TECHNOCLOGICAL SKILLS, WE SHOULD NOT USE TECHNOLOGY AS A MERE INSTRUMENT BUT INCORPORATE IT INTO EXISTING CULTURAL PRACTICES. IT’S THE CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT TAKE US TO KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS."

- ANTONIO DIAS DE FIGUEIREDO

Consult the video of Prof. de Figueiredo's input and his slides.
Digitalisation as an opportunity to democratize knowledge

With the emergence of new and more open approaches to knowledge, has education become more democratic? During a panel discussion, three speakers: Alek Tarkowski (Open Future), Aleksandra Czetwertynska (Centrum Cyfrowe) and Marion Fields (Sivis Study Centre) have exchanged on the importance of peer-learning and learning how to learn.

Consult the video of the panel discussion facilitated by EAEA President Uwe Gartenschlaeger.

"Peer learning is much more transformative than we think: it is a safe space to learn dialogue skills." - Marion Fields

Context paper presented

In 2020, EAEA set up a working group on digitalisation. Angeliki Giannakopoulou (Dafni Kek), representing the group, shared key conclusions of the context paper that has been drafted. From digital politics to the role of adult education, the paper offers an in-depth look into shifting roles and responsibilities in the face of digital transitions.

Consult the video of Angeliki’s input and her slides.

You can consult the results of the Working Group on the EAEA website.
What did you find important?

Three parallel discussions allowed us to look at the issues that have emerged in your context. From the need for guidance and support, rural versus urban divide, lack of confidence and fear of the unknown, we discussed the diverse challenges that adults are confronted with, and the role of adult learning organisations. Have a look at our notes on Mural to see the summary of our discussions!
Grundtvig Award Ceremony

While we could not organise a physical ceremony this year, we celebrated the winners from 2020 and 2021 during a virtual event. During the ceremony, we also enjoyed a musical interlude from Marko Ostojic.
Grundtvig Award winners

Grundtvig Award 2020, Outreach and access
Winner: Citizens’ University of Larissa
Award accepted by Apostolos Kalogiannis, Mayor of Larissa.

Grundtvig Award 2021, Digitalisation and democracy
Winners:
National / regional / local category: #GEMMA project. Award accepted by Chiara Palazzetti
European category: DIGIT-AL project. Award accepted by Nils-Eyk Zimmermann.

Watch the Grundtvig Award Ceremony on the EAEA Youtube channel.

"THE GRUNDTVIG AWARD GIVES US THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE OUR ACTIVITIES IN THIS CURRENT DIFFICULT ERA!"
- APOSTOLOS KALOGIANNIS

"DIGIT-AL IS A RESULT OF A TEAM EFFORT FROM MANY ORGANISATIONS. DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP WAS THE STARTING POINT OF THE PROJECT."
- NILS-EYK ZIMMERMANN

"OUR MOTTO IS 'KNOWLEDGE IS PRECIOUS'. DIGITAL COMPETENCES ARE A MATTER OF INCLUSION, OF NOT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND."
- CHIARA PALAZZETTI
The Internet is a diverse ecosystem, and an increased platformation in digital infrastructures limits how interactions are organised. At the same time, there are several intersectional aspects of the digital divide, from wealth, education, country, to gender or age, to only name a few. What mechanisms impact accessibility of platforms? These were some of the issues discussed by Nils-Eyk Zimmermann in his workshop on
power dynamics in participation and exclusion in virtual spaces. Nils also shared the results of DIGITAL, a project that won the EAEA Grundtvig Award in 2021.

Consult the slides shared by Nils and the toolbox that resulted from the DIGITAL project.

During the workshop on competences for digital transformation and active citizenship, participants got to discuss EU 2030 challenges and the most urgent competences that need to fostered.

According to the participants, a wide range of competences is needed to be a digital citizen, including communication skills, literacy and civic skills. It is also important to look at the wider context, including the persistent gender gap and digital divide across the continent.

Consult the results of the workshop visualized by Helder, the slides shared by our speaker Chiara Palazzetti and information about the #GEMMA project: its website, Facebook and Youtube channels.

What competences are needed to be a digital citizen?

- digital competence
- digital identity
- information literacy
- critical thinking literacy
- problem solving
- understanding user data
- practicing digital resilience
- technology understanding
- use depending on context
- intercultural communication skills
- core skills
- know how - what - why
- active participation
- accessibility
- digital
- securing digital devices
- keeping the internet works
- understanding of fake news
- essential digital skills
- access to internet
- practicing digital resilience
- civic motivation
“Our game is educational because it provides you with information, but not with a mindset.”

— Suncica Pasuljević-Kandić presenting the game on AI developed in Serbia

Undeniably, Artificial Intelligence is present in our daily lives, but to which extent are we aware of it? With new developments accelerating fast, even the most informed adults lack the time to reflect on issues like ethics, privacy or trust.

During the workshop Al in adult learning: the way forward?, Maja Maksimovic led a conversation with Suncica Pasuljevic-Kandic about the role of informal learning and game-based learning, taking as an example a pervasive game about AI developed for citizens of Belgrade.

Participants also discussed diverse issues related to AI literacy, including the need for standards and citizens’ rights, and the impact of AI on democratic spaces.

To find out more about what happened at the workshop, you can watch the video of the conversation between Maja and Suncica and explore the game they presented.

You can also access the notes taken during the three workshops on the event Mural.
What policy environment is needed to support adult educators and adult learners alike? During the fishbowl discussion, we heard from Sabine Lauwers, an adult educator at LBC Volwassenenonderwijs, Belgium; Altheo Valentini, Chair of All Digital, and Sofie Doskarova, Policy Assistant at DG EMPL, European Commission, as well as some of our event participants. Holistic approaches, life-wide education, and joy of learning are all key in ensuring that the digital transformation puts humans first.

"MY CONCERN IS THE LACK OF SUPPORT FOR ADULT EDUCATION. FOR ME AS A LANGUAGE TEACHER, FOR THE LAST YEAR, IT FELT MORE LIKE BEING AN ICT TEACHER"

- SABINE LAUWERS, ADULT EDUCATOR

Watch the fishbowl discussion on EAEA Youtube channel and consult the Manifesto of All Digital shared by Altheo.
The event was closed by EAEA Secretary-General Gina Ebner, and by Dina Soeiro, member of the EAEA Executive Board, who shared her key take-aways from the two-day conference and called for a human-first digital society with values at its heart.

"We need to work more together, building democracy in a digital world by improving pedagogy, restoring dialogue, supporting guidance - not just to learners, but to trainers, empowering everyone. We need to create a human-first digital society with values at its heart."

— DINA SOEIRO, EAEA EXECUTIVE BOARD

We hope to see you next year!

But before that, we'd like to hear from you! What did you think about the event? Tell us in the evaluation form!