Newsletter #4, HEIDI project

Digital action at HEIs as a catalyst for social change in the COVID-19 crisis

New HEIDI publication

The new HEIDI report on hands-on Digital Action (DA) activities with citizens and Higher Education (HE) staff and students is available on the HEIDI website. It aims to enable citizens to voice their concerns through co-creation processes with HE staff and students in Digital Action (DA) projects, and to seek solutions together while fully participating in the knowledge production and sharing cycle.

First, the report introduces the concept of DA, followed by recommendations for designing different types of DA projects and activities that address social change. It then provides a guide for Impact Assessment of DA and finalises with a repository of relevant tools and methodologies that can be used to set DA projects

HEIDI - Past events

Digital action: scope, methodology, tools and practices

On June 2nd, **Web2Learn** organized a webinar on **"Digital Action: scope, methodologies, tools and practices"** which included, as speakers, the coordinators of the HEIDI project from the different consortium member organizations.

It was a very inspiring event discussing **extreme citizen science**, good practices in digital action and the value of **hacktivism**. If you want to learn more, the recording of the event is available here and the slides of the presenters are here.

UCL: #CitizenScience4All Talks in May and June

It's been a very busy spring at **UCL**, which between March and June organised one roundtable with community organisations, seven citizen science training webinars and twelve **"Citizen Science For All" talks**!

Our **"Citizen Science For All" talks** formed a special brand where we would invite 2-3 speakers on some particular topic to each give a 15-20 minute presentation. They might offer very different perspectives, or complement each other's. We livetweeted the talks from the HeidiProject Twitter account and took audience questions when there was time. In that way we got to catch up with many old faces and also met a great many new ones! No less than three of these talks were focused on citizen science with indigenous communities; as you can picture, a common theme was respect and of finding out what local people wanted before imposing outsiders' plans. Other subjects included policy making and data quality, noise and odour pollution, ethnobotany, astronomy and much more! We are very grateful to all the speakers who kindly donated their time and expertise, and the many people who signed into Zoom to listen in. These talks will all be uploaded to the UCL ExCiteS YouTube channel in the coming months - in our copious free time.

It was a pleasure to exchange ideas with old friends and new for the roundtable: some participants were our webinar speakers or regulars at citizen science conferences, but some, such as the **Restart Project** in London which looks into electronic repair, or a social work expert in Bangladesh, were people we had not worked with before - and perhaps we can again in the future.

Alice at **UCL** gave a series of webinars aimed at people who are thinking of starting a citizen science project of their own - researchers and students, or members of the public. They included topics such as engagement and communication, event planning, and relaxed workshops building mini-projects on the **Zooniverse** and **nQuire** platforms.

UM: Co-creating Digital Action workshop

At the end of May, **UM** held a co-creation workshop to bring HEI staff and students together with community stakeholders to discuss digital action and brainstorm on potential student based events using the arts as inspiration.

Participants included entrepreneurs and innovators from the private sector, directors of digital management departments within government ministries, senior academics and students from the **University of Malta**. With each participant carrying their own field of expertises, we brought the topics raised within O1 to light as springboards to discuss how to design a competition for HEI students that would see them produce a digital action that would address societal issues. Using a design methodology as put forward in the O2A1 methodology report, the group envisioned the potential event and examined its reach, scope and barriers.

The key points of the workshop were that there needs to be an emphasis on collaboration and not competition, that digital innovations should be complementary to physical activities and not a replacement, that to increase participation, there needs to be incentives that are experience based, and that mentorship is key in supporting the transfer of knowledge.
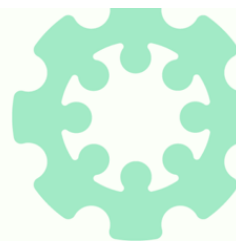
The workshop was held in the beautiful **Valletta Design Cluster**, in the heart of the capital city, the perfect setting for such an event.

Municipalities as Makerspaces for Underrepresented Youth communities

On June 3rd, **CIP** facilitated a makerspace event in the municipality of Larnaca (Cyprus) whereby underrepresented youth communities were re-engaged with technologies of fabrication for Digital Action. The twenty-three participants received training and instructions on the use of Arduino microcontrollers and their application in the context of digital action. As a result, the participants had the opportunity in practising skills gained to create a remote-controlled door lock, a pseudo-theremin with a light sensor and a smart cooling fan.

We would like to thank all those present for powering this event with curiosity, creativity and ideas.

Municipalities as Makerspaces

in Cyprus

The impact of HEIDI Digital Action in the city of Paris

Last December, **UP** organized, in collaboration with **CorrelAid**, a Hackathon that aimed to use public data on the city of Paris to identify - and propose ideas on how to solve - urban problems. One of those problems was related to the difficulty of finding parking spots for bicycles now that Paris counts with a greatly expanded network of bike lanes, which was creating a bottleneck for bicycle usage.

The government of the city of Paris decided to join forces with **CorrelAid** to propose a joint project that can potentially change the urban landscape for good! You can read more (and register!) here.

HEIDI - What's next

During the summer, **UP** will be hosting the SDG Summer School, an intensive 4-week programme in which HE students gain familiarity with real-world development issues around the globe as well as with the new scientific methodologies and technologies that can solve them. Students are trained to think like social entrepreneurs and design impactful, meaningful prototypes in the **MakerLab** of the **Learning Planet Institute**. Experts are there to support and mentor students in game making, medicine, environmental science, digital fabrication, frugal innovation and much more!

Also, following on from the co-creation workshop held in May, **UM** is promoting the **'Design a Digital Action'** collaboration for students to spend the summer designing a digital action which is inspired by the arts and addressing current social issues such as raising environmental awareness. Registration ends on

[30th June](#) and we're sure we'll get a brilliant response.

Finally, UCL will be running an event on **"Skills for Successful Digital Action Activities"** today! (register [here](#)!)