

Newsletter #6, HEIDI project

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

HEIDI - Past events

Supporting local residents to clean up the River Lea

On Saturday the 6th of August 2022, our **UCL** team ran a successful workshop with the title ‘**The River Lea: Conversations for Action**’. The purpose of the workshop was to work with local residents in East London to understand the issues they are facing caused by the river’s pollution, the ways they currently interact with the river (or how they would like to interact in the future), and how UCL can support them through digital action (a citizen science project in this case) to clean up River Lea.

During the two-hour session, participants, who are very passionate about their local area and River Lea, identified over 30 separate problems that are impacting a four-mile stretch of river. These included environmental problems (e.g. sewage pollution, invasive species, declining wildlife), social issues (e.g. crime, lack of access to green space), health concerns (e.g. Weil’s disease), and political challenges (e.g. difficulty pursuing legal action against polluters). In the next step, the [People Nature Lab](#) team at UCL in a project led by Dr Izzy Bishop, will work further with the broader local community to design and run a citizen science project, which will aim to address some of the issues that were identified during our workshop!

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this workshop! You can find more information about the workshop in this [blog post](#) on UCL’s website.



How did Covid-19 affect engagement in DA?

On September 20th, **UP** organized a round table and workshop with a group of people that were either in active search of employment or trying to kickstart their own small businesses. The focus was on understanding the potential of Digital Action to help them in their professional development while also understanding how the Covid-19 pandemic was shaping the needs and opportunities for DA.

The event was organized in the [Learning Planet Institute \(LPI\)](#), as part of a wider [inclusion program](#) aiming to support the local community in their education and professional development.



"Design a Digital Action" in Malta

On August 22nd, the **UM** team was invited to hold the HEIDI Project "**Design a Digital Action**" event at **Invent3D's makerspace** in Zejtun, Malta. We had previously put out a call for students who wished to participate in conceptualising a digital action that addressed realtime issues, and we were lucky to have **Ruby Ai Young** and **Olivia Schneider** on board to brainstorm and analyse under the mentorship of local entrepreneur and all-round good guy, **David Sciberras** (CEO and founder of Invent3D).

Using the methodology that had been drafted in [HEIDI's output 2](#), we were able to identify an issue and work from that point to identify possible obstacles or barriers to a successful digital action. Ruby and Olivia designed an app that would log and monitor public bin use across Malta, and considered the transferability to other localities across the globe. They saw that litter and public waste was a problem, both socially and environmentlally, and sought to design a citizen science project that would help raise awareness and encourage people to be more sustainable and eco-aware.



The students then presented their work to a panel of industry leaders including ministerial representatives, and then hosted a 20 minute Q&A session. Considering the students only had two hours to brainstorm and conceptualise their ideas, their citizen science project was impressive and wowed the panel. The recorded webinar will be made available on YouTube soon!

UM were also part of a webinar series with local NGO **Dawra Madwarna** to discuss the role of community participation in local planning and how the use of citizen science projects can help local councils with their longterm planning. **Carlos Cañas** used his app **Walking Malta** to show how important social engagement was to gather data, and that this can be use to understand the needs of people in relation to their environment.

Student Roundtable Event “Shaping Digital Action”

Our **UCL** team invites you to join this event on **September 30th at 4pm BST** and discuss how students can shape digital action. This is a specific roundtable designed to bring together students across undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD level, accorss all departments and across the whole of Europe, and provides the space to explore your ideas about digital skills, how these have impacted your student experience, any you think are essential, and how digital action can offer opportunities to develop such digital skills.

When will the event take place?

September 30th 16:00-17:30 pm BST

How can I join?

You can join in person at UCL or you can join us online after you register [here](#).

Can I join if I am not a UCL student?

All students (undergraduate and postgraduate from any university or country) with an interest in digital action, **are very WELCOME!**

How can young students contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals locally?

UP, in collaboration with [Lecturers Without Borders](#), is organizing a workshop for students discussing practical ways to address the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their local communities.

This event is also open to non-students (who could spread the message to more students!), so please [register here](#) to join!



Université Paris Cité

LECTURERS WITHOUT BORDERS

HEIDI

How can young students contribute to Sustainable Development Goals locally?

October 7th, 2022 - 2pm CEST
Speaker: Hameed Sulaiman, PhD

In November, **UCL** will hold two more roundtables for specific stakeholder groups and their experiences with Digital Action: one for **HEI staff**, the other for **community and voluntary organisations**. As soon as tickets are available for these events, they will be announced on the HEIDI website and on our social media. Please keep an eye on [our Twitter account](#) in the coming weeks if you would be interested in joining:

HEI Staff Roundtable - 9th November 4pm GMT

We will discuss the different challenges for Digital Action, and in particular what the barriers might be to participation, what an organiser can do to overcome these barriers, and how their HEI can provide them with support or adapt as an institution to create a more visionary environment for initiatives such as Digital Action to take place. We will also discuss anticipated and achieved impacts of Digital Action, and what the needs and requirements are for participants and organisers in order for it to take place.

Community groups Roundtable - 15th of November 5:30pm GMT

This is a specific roundtable designed to bring together anyone from around the world who are members of community groups, working with them, or interested in them. By community groups we mean groups of people who work for the benefit of the public, within a certain community. Over the one hour session we will explore through discussion and online activities about what support community groups need from Higher Education Institutions, voluntary organisations, resources, and what digital skills are necessary for Digital Action. We will also discuss how digital skills have impacted your experience with Digital Action, and how Digital Action might offer opportunities to develop these skills!

Registration links for both events will be made available soon through [Eventbrite](#).

UM team in Local Democracy Week in Senglea

UM will be showcasing the HEIDI Project and showing locals how to use the **Walking Malta app** at an event for the **Local Democracy Week in Senglea**, along with **Dawra Madwarna** and **Ecostack Innovations**. This event will be held on **22nd October** and will see the **UM** team explaining the benefits of using citizen science for social change and demonstrating the Walking Malta app.

Other activities will be held such as greening and placemaking of urban areas, and gardening workshops.