Workshop reports: Online-Conference "Sharing beyond borders 2020"

Workshop 2: Fostering Communication and Cooperation between organizations and beyond via New Media Tools

Moderator report: Matthias Holzner, Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg

The workshop had a very interesting mix of participants, obviously very related to the topic which affects us all today: How can make the best use new of tools to communicate between all organizations, across borders and sectors, in such challenging times?

We had a very diverse group with various types of backgrounds, different knowledge in terms of work and experiences, but also geographically, reaching from Ireland across the Danube region until India. So, in effect, a broad mix of cultural and generational backgrounds was represented.

After an introductory round, in which each participant was allowed to quickly introduce herself, the workshop kicked off with two essential presentations, which looked at the subject of digital communication in times of COVID-19 from very different ankles. The first presentation with the title: "Between real and virtual. New forms of senior learning communities" was held by Dr. Carmen Stadelhofer and Charlotte Gollnick. Building on the practical experience of ILEU e.V. and the Danube-Networkers, was presentation was basically looking at various tools: How can we use in an easy way all this kinds of smart translation tools, mindmapping tools to get people together; in a very non-technical manner and actually enabling collaboration across borders in a rather simple way. On top on that: How to get people organized and to self-organize them in structures such as ILEU, who foster this kind of communication. In this sense, it became apparent, that one side of the Corona crisis has been, that many people discovered how to use the many possibilities how to bring people together, even beyond the opportunities that existed beforehand.

The second presentation held by Emese Zombori and Andrea Laux was titled: "Creating meaningful and engaging space online". Reflecting on the work of Mother Centers International Network, they took a different perspective on the overall issue. How do we actually create connections online and how to create a personal emotional connection? How can we motivate people to use technical media and to keep them motivated to stay in this online environment and to engage also on a very personal level? Can we get people to watch something not just like a TV-show, but to get emotional involved and to reflect it to open up their mind? And how to create such an atmosphere on the screen? Concepts such as "deep listening"were presented, which enable a deeper connection between online participants. Many interesting approaches were put on the table.

After this presentations, the group split up into sub-groups in smaller settings; giving all participants the opportunity to get involved further discuss the presented ideas and issues at hand; but also to make new connections and share some thoughts on different issues. It was an interesting experience to split up and have personal conversations about varying topics and to meet other participants and their opinions, just like in a "real" conference setting.

To sum up, a very interesting workshop and discussions on various technologies that basically have become a part of our everyday life in a couple of months.