

Telecentre Europe Annual Conference

Conference Report & Summary
24-25 September 2015



TEAC15



Digitally



Empowered



Europeans





Hosted by:



About Telecentre Europe

Telecentre Europe is a Europe-wide network and non-for-profit association that represents public centres (telecentres) providing people with training, certification and employment opportunities through the use of Information and Communication Technologies. These centres play a crucial role in the digital empowerment of individuals and communities. Our members are organisations working with telecentres, including Public Internet Access Points, Public libraries, and Third Sector organisations such as NGOs.

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Introduction and background

Telecentre Europe (TE) organises two annual events every year, one dedicated exclusively to our members (General Assembly) and another open to our wider audience of stakeholders: Telecentre Europe Annual Conference (TEAC). The objectives of the annual TE conference have always been to share knowledge, welcome new members, evaluate the challenges ahead for telecentres and promote our messages to policy makers, businesses and interested stakeholders.

In its 8th year, TEAC15 took the structure of a 1.5-day event, hosted by three European funded projects: UNITE-IT, E-uropa and I-LINC. Telecentre Europe is the leading partner in the project consortiums, composed of TE members and partnering organisations. It is a challenge but at the same time a satisfaction to organise the annual conference around our key projects' themes and priorities, making it possible for conference attendees to listen to diverse topics throughout the conference and network with a wide variety of stakeholders.

the conference: more recently Zagreb, Malta and Warsaw. The aspect of this “travelling conference” is very well accepted among the participants.

The event gathers a majority of members of TE and non-governmental organisations active in the field of digital inclusion and empowerment. However, it also attracts policy makers and company representatives who are willing to learn from our



Every year the conference is held in a different location and in 2015 the turn was given to Belgrade (Serbia), kindly hosted and co-organised by our Serbian member International Aid Network (IAN). As with previous years, the setting gave us an opportunity to tap into local knowledge and to

experiences and share their views. Altogether there were 143 participants from well over 20 countries.

The common theme for the 2015 conference was “Digitally empowered Europeans”, a tagline reflecting Telecentre Europe’s vision for European citizens. It is also a point we would like to be implemented more within the Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy published by the European Commission. As Mara Jakobsone, the Telecentre Europe Board Chair, illustrated in her welcoming presentation, telecentres will play a role in the DSM strategy as they are already empowering citizens with digital skills. Due to its focus on youth employability and digital skills for jobs, TEAC15 was also on the official calendar of the European Commission’s ongoing campaign [eSkills for Jobs](#).



involve local professionals and enthusiasts. Before Belgrade, many other European capitals hosted

Welcome session

TEAC15 was opened by a surprise dance performance. Led by their choreographer Milica Nesic, young and talented dancers from Belgrade's „Dance Factory“ introduced the topic of the conference through a dance performance, reflecting on how we have changed with technology and how important it is that all can benefit from it.

Speakers: Dr. Mara Jakobsone (TE's Board Chair) and Gabriel Rissola (TE's Managing Director)



Telecentre Europe Board Chair Dr. Mara Jakobsone welcomed all the participants in the name of Telecentre Europe. Looking back to the first TE conference in Riga in 2008, she highlighted the fact that we have advanced quickly from the 2008 event's motto of "Every European Digital". That aspect of providing

digital inclusion to all citizens is still very much our aim, but we are increasingly going beyond this aim and into the realm of digital empowerment. In addition, now we know that not only citizens, but also organisations, need to improve their digital skills base to benefit from digital technology. Telecentres can help make this happen.

The European Commission launched in March 2015 their Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy. The DSM puts a lot of emphasis on the economic factors but also places them in relation to people of all age groups who need to acquire digital skills to make the strategy work¹. If we read carefully the DSM we see that telecentres, NGOs, libraries and non-formal training providers are already contributing to the strategy. Much more can be done however, if we focus our efforts on the three following points:

1. Our members are already active in the area of training smart and protected online customers and raising awareness amongst children and young people. But telecentres can partner with private organisations to continue working on this important issue.
2. Secondly, while small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are providing most of the jobs in EU, there is a big digital skills gap between large and small companies. Telecentres can put their heads together to see how they can support SMEs.
3. In third place, we want to see more people creating, rather than only consuming, digital content. TE is already working on initiatives that go in this direction such as multimedia academies and coding projects for telecentres.

It is also widely recognised that most of the learning of digital skills is happening outside formal education and this trend is going to continue. This means that telecentres are already playing a role and have an advantage. As Mara Jakobsone puts it:

"Telecentres are good at experimenting with new ideas and projects. Our organisations are living labs that constantly put forward new training modules, pilots and projects."

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Telecentre Europe's Managing Director Gabriel Rissola continued to reflect in his speech on European Commission's Digital Market Strategy. After explaining to the audience the reasoning behind EC's vision and strategy, he said that, notwithstanding its evident strengths, it can at times be reductionist. The DSM strategy talks about citizens principally as consumers, either in the market sense, or of e-government services. What Telecentre Europe would like to put forward however, is that citizens are seen as "prosumers": not only consumers but also creators of services, products and ideas.



¹ More information can be viewed in the Infographic of the European Commission titled "Digital skills for a Digital Europe" at this [link](#).

“An e-society is much more than the sum of growth, skills, democracy and technology. Citizens need to be viewed as agents of change and not merely consumers.”

An interesting shift can be seen in the new Commission: the skills and mobility agenda has moved from the Directorate General (DG) of Education and Culture to DG Employment. The European Commission has indeed recognised that skills and adult learning (both formal or non-formal) are crucial for employment. Indeed, in telecentres

our members have seen that an increasing number of persons come to telecentres for employability skills. Our member's main purpose still remains to help people use technology for their overall personal and community empowerment. However, since the lack of work opportunities is a top concern in society, we need to pursue employability skills and training within telecentres. The EC's European Skills agenda will come out soon and will be of great interest for our community. Gabriel Rissola reminded the audience that Telecentre Europe holds the TEAC15 for them, to listen to representatives of organisations active in digital inclusion and skills, and to act as their voice towards the European institutions.

Keynote speakers: perspectives from the policy makers and the industry

Speakers: Snezana Markovic (Assistant Minister in the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development) and Elmars Gengers (CEO of “TIETO” Ltd Latvia)

Snezana Markovic, Assistant Minister in the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, greeted the participants in the name of her Ministry. She explained how they are actively integrating ICT in the educational system and see this

as a current priority. They have created a set of guidelines on advancing ICT in education and are in the process of implementing them, especially the recommendations. As examples of digitalisation of their own services, they created the first

online space for teachers to track new jobs in the formal education sector in the country. They are also advancing on the introduction of e training. She also stated that in Serbia there are a number of online communities for teachers, well organised and popular amongst teachers. Finally, she said they are ready to support telecentres in Serbia and believe that telecentres' activities are useful and beneficial.

Elmars Gengers, the CEO of “TIETO” Ltd (Latvia), the leading IT services company in the Baltics, told us about the IT service industry, how it is adapting to the consumers and what kind of skills they look for when hiring. He started by reminding us that any breakthrough and advancement in IT industry happens because of innovation. Today the IT services industry is not so much about software but about reaching out to the customers and adapting to their needs.

“People want three things from technology: that it can “do more with less”, that they can access everything quickly and on any device (especially the mobile phone) and that all services are 24/7.”

This means that ICT practitioners need to be always thinking ahead. But more importantly they need to understand concrete business needs. For this they need to be creative and capable of working with people and teams across disciplines. For his company TIETO



Latvia, the biggest challenge when it comes to hiring is that they cannot predict, even if a candidate comes with great talent and knowledge, how that candidate will solve concrete problems.

What they look for is people who are brave enough to ask questions, have analytical thinking skills and who can thrive in a complex world where things should be made very simple and intuitive.

“Opportunities for telecentres” session

Speakers: Natacha Comar (CISCO, Strategic partnerships for Corporate Social) and Mladen Koprivica (School of Electrical Engineering at University of Belgrade)

Natacha Comar spoke about Cisco’s Networking Academies around the world, present in 170 countries with 250,000 students. The CISCO Networking Academies are part of Cisco’s Corporate Social Responsibility programme and are non-profit entities. They came into existence to solve the problem of a fast changing tech environment. Teachers in the US used to complain that they could not keep up and deliver the relevant tech knowledge to their pupils. CISCO started by sending IT engineers to teach in schools and this activity evolved over time into an academy, with its own curriculum.

They now work with non-profits all over the world and train their staff to deliver the courses. Their success rate has been very high: more than 80% of students who take their courses go to find a job or pursue a new study programme. For telecentres, relevant courses include the Get Connected Course (basic), IT essentials (IT technician) and Internet of things (no prior knowledge required). Natacha Comar explained that CISCO is willing



to partner with telecentres and any interested organisation in the audience could contact her.

A local example was provided by Mladen Koprivica, who heads the Cisco Networking Academy in Belgrade. He talked about the Belgrade academy and how it started. Their priority is to bridge the digital gap through improving ICT skills of young people in Serbia. Up to 50 schools will soon join the programme and become Networking academies, with 100 teachers to become instructors for the IT Essentials course. Up to 1000 students are expected to take the training in the first year. He explained that becoming an academy is not complicated and telecentres should consider the possibility.

Unite-IT workshops on digital inclusion

After the morning keynotes, TEAC15 participants broke into five workshops they had registered for previously. The UNITE-IT workshops are a continuation of online thematic Working Groups that are hosted by the UNITE IT network. UNITE IT (www.unite-it.eu) is an online platform for professionals in the area of digital inclusion and empowerment, and is co-funded by the European Commission. It represents the Telecentre Europe’s informal and wide network of persons working in the field of digital inclusion and empowerment.

The UNITE IT network counts today with more than 700 digital inclusion professionals from all

over Europe and beyond. The Database of good practice already has 120 entries, with examples of concrete projects in digital inclusion that can be searched through and shared. At the conference, each workshop/working group had a moderator, a number of invited speakers and policy and social media reporters. Workshops were mostly oriented towards gaining collective knowledge and creating input for policy makers. Below is a summary of the main discussion points or conclusions in each group. *For more information please [contact Telecentre Europe](#) and we can send you the minutes of the workshop you are interested in.*

Workshop on vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion

Moderated by Ivan Stojilovic and Gordana Stankov Stojilovic (IAN, Serbia)

Speakers: Christy McAleese (Citizens Advice, UK) and Jean Deydier (Emmaus Connect, France)

Theme: ICT for Social Inclusion

Conclusions and recommendations:

- Barriers to digital inclusion are numerous and often complex. However they must not be simplified as being mainly about access or hardware. Attitudes, low engagement and skill levels are also responsible for digital exclusion situations.
- It is key to start with the concrete need of people who come to telecentres and citizens organisations looking for digital skills. Whether it is advice, the need to communicate with a relative, fill out forms or find information: the concrete need is usually the starting point for learning.
- For an organisation to grow, be sustainable and have good services, it is important that the government knows about its existence and value. Organisations need to show therefore that their services are effective (e.g. through a cost benefit analysis). Their impact also needs to be communicated.
- It is good for NGOs and telecentres to partner with other organisations, e.g. with juvenile justice institutions to reach towards the vulnerable. Often the staff and e-facilitators from digital inclusion

providers are welcome in the institutional setting, as they are not seen as being part of the institution.

- When an innovative approach is introduced, there may be resistance in the beginning. The only way to deal with this is to make sure to measure and show the results early on.
- There is a new challenge for telecentres, with the fact that some countries are providing exclusively all their services online (e.g. Denmark) and this can lead to exclusion of many citizens who are not prepared to follow the quick trend. Also, our organisations can provide feedback on these services to the government as telecentres can see first-hand the user experience of e-services.
- Most services in telecentres are only provided in the mainstream language of the country. This may lead to the exclusion of possible beneficiaries such as migrants or refugees who don't yet speak the language but need to acquire digital skills as well.
- Digital inclusion providers need to be well trained in terms of flexibility and a full understanding of the issues that affect vulnerable groups.
- The digital gap between seniors and young people is large and this is consistent across all EU countries. Telecentres need to continue focusing their efforts on this specific group. and telecentres should consider the possibility.

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What did people say on Twitter?



teacvulne @teacvulne · Sep 24

A primary need of migrants reaching Europe now is access to internet and information #teacvulne



teacvulne @teacvulne · Sep 24

Approach of citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-work is to go step by step and build transferable skills in a safe environment based on needs #teacvulne



Christy McAleese @ChristyMcAleese · Sep 24

#TEACvulne digital skills beneficiaries always ask "what's in it for me?" Work needs to be relevant and integrated with other services



Workshop on education and training

Moderated by Gabriela Barna (EOS, Romania)

Speakers: Anusca Ferrari (European Schoolnet, Belgium) and Dimitra Andritsakou (Hellenic Adult Education Association, Greece)

Theme: European Commission's Digital Competence Framework – DIGCOMP

Conclusions and recommendations:

- The workshop addressed the issue of how telecentres can, on one hand, validate the competencies acquired in their settings and, on the other, certifying these competences. DIGCOMP could be one possible reference framework for this but there are others as well.
- DIGCOMP is a framework of competences that a citizen needs to have to be considered digitally competent. The original idea was to provide an exhaustive view, keeping in mind that individuals will rarely be fully competent in all its areas. Very important to note that it was meant to be descriptive not prescriptive. However, not all agree that it has remained purely descriptive!
- Digital competence needs to be recognised as basic competence just like it is the case for reading and writing.
- DIGICOMP may benefit from a process of simplification, so that non-formal educators can easily use it as a reference. Already it is being used, for example by school teachers in Serbia, as a model for their own skills framework. However, for non-formal education providers it may indeed be quite academic. A more playful and hands on approach may be envisaged.
- For some participants, certification is primarily the recognition of a pool of knowledge. However, the business world needs people with a consistent ability to learn and innovate. Certification can even be counter-productive, since employers now require out-of-the-box thinkers especially for the digital economy.
- G. Rissola proposed that telecentres map the training that they are providing, with the DIGICOMP framework, so that we can have a clear picture. The question remains on how can we certify these outcomes: should we build our own certification system or use existing ones? Being "DIGCOMP-compliant" could indeed become a quality label. TE members may consider the idea of creating our own label based on DIGCOMP for training and certification provided by telecentres.



What did people say on Twitter?



Telecentre Europe @tc_europe · Sep 24
@anuscaferri explains #DIGICOMP is a theoretical framework on #DigitalCompetences. "Which competences does citizens need today?"
#TEACedu



Sara Van Damme @Van_Damme_Sara · Sep 24
Interesting discussion about different frameworks #DigitalCompetences
#TEACedu #TEAC15 @anuscaferri @EU_Strategy



Katarina Aleksic @kajceb9
Many Q around DigComp and job market - Andrea is talking about so many things that should be considered.
#teac15



Workshop on youth employability

Moderated by Ian Clifford (YouRock, UK) and Dr. Mara Jakobson (LIKTA, Latvia)

Issue: How to help youth to get their first work experience and alternative e-skills for employment

Conclusions and recommendations:

- For youth employability it is a challenge to get national and /or regional support from policy makers, in the form of funding or any other type of support. Funds are often being used inefficiently (e.g. Youth Guarantee). Civil society should be more involved in the implementation of programmes like the Youth Guarantee.
- Policy makers are not very efficient at establishing links between employers and educators. This is where telecentres and NGOs can and should



Speakers: Tariq Nazari & Gunilla Lundberg (Enter Sweden); Loreta Križinauskienė (Langas i Ateiti); Ekaterina Fedotova (YouRock.Jobs)

step in, as it happens in the FIT4jobs.eu pilot projects.

- Formal collaboration agreements are a good way to create links with the governments and create trust and accountability.
- Trainings for young people should always be employer approved so that the skills taught are updated and can be certified.
- The topics of self-employment and entrepreneurship should always be on

the policy agendas for youth employment

- If governments don't see their countries Digital Agenda as a policy priority, then youth employability and skills suffer.



Speakers: Ilona Griniute (Telecentre Europe); Esther Subias (El Teb); Zagorka Prce Veseli (Centre of Technical Culture Rijeka)

- Although government's action is often missing, some NGOs believe that more proactivity on this issue is needed from both employers and civil society. This is an alternative to "waiting" for the governments to make the difference.
- Interms of what telecentres and NGOs can do to boost youth employability, they are already providing innovative online tools, platforms with resources and even employer led training programmes.
- Innovative approaches like the pairing of young immigrant IT guides with resident seniors from the host countries (project in Sweden), are needed to provide a unique inter-generational learning experience and a pathway to employment.
- Telecentres can also get in touch with teachers and support them to be more innovative and borrow some aspects of non-formal training.
- It is important to be creative in attracting young people to ICT careers, not only by teaching the hard skills, but also things like 3D orienting or robotics, which get their attention.



What did people say on Twitter?



Adam Micklethwaite @ajm_digital · Sep 24

Discussing policy recommendations to national Govts & EC on youth digital skills for employability #TEACemploy



Manolis Labovas @manolislab · Sep 24

Imagine that EU will have an incubation of coders that will get a share of 150bn \$ generated by the ICT outsourcing in India #TEACemploy



rodrigo zardoya @rodrizar · Sep 24

Communication is one of the most important issues in education. We have to improve skills in language learning and comm #TEACemploy #TEAC15



Workshop on gender equality

Moderated by: Dr. Clem Herman (The Open University, UK)

Speakers: Dr. Clem Herman, Ana Gonzales Ramos (Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), Spain) and Vladimir Lelicanin (SAE Institute Belgrade, Serbia)

Issue: Neither the education nor the ICT sector seem sufficiently prepared adequately to recruit, retain and promote women into ICT jobs, since gender inequalities are still present.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- Already successful inclusion strategies for women in ICT careers range from introducing role models and mentors, to creating code clubs and campaigns dedicated to girls and IT. Many communities have been formed, to mention some like Women in Tech or Girl Geeks.
- Recent research shows that parents are the biggest influencers of career decision making of their children, so involving them in projects is important.
- More collaboration is needed with schools and formal education, as these are the initial places where children can learn about ICT careers.
- It is important to raise awareness on the difference between the skills needed for ICT users and skills for ICT professionals. Women are advancing well in the first set of skills, but are lagging behind in the second. We need to promote the fact that ICT professionals are needed in most sectors of the economy, and are not exclusive to the ICT sector.
- A checklist or guideline may be created on what to have in mind when organizing ICT trainings

for women (e.g. introduce role models, adapt class schedules to mothers, etc.) More training is needed to telecentres staff on the existence of «subconscious gender bias» (the preconceived ideas we share and through which we tend to classify others).

- We need to also rethink the access barriers to enter ICT trainings or professions. These are often very high and this prevents women who come from other fields to enter the profession at a later stage.



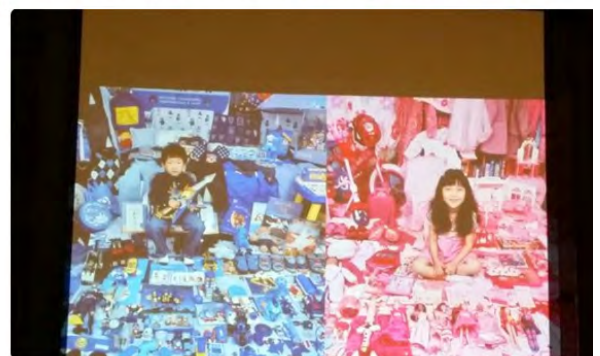
- In order to make these careers more attractive to women, we can stress their advantages, such as the flexibility they offer in terms of work organization but also the fact that these careers are creating enormous value for society, are innovative and creative.
- We need to promote success stories of women who made it in IT, for example, former training participants who set up their own business or who have developed a career in the ICT field.



What did people say on Twitter?



Clem Herman @clemherman · Sep 24
Gender stereotyping starts young #TEACgender #Teac2015



← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



Ann @ann · Sep 24
#TEACgender @ninachoco tells us even as a marketer, she needs a lot of knowledge about media, video, websites, code... in a non-IT job

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



Ann @ann · Sep 24
#TEACgender @vlelicanin "the best back-end developers in my personal experience are women"

← ↻ 1 ❤️ 1 ⋮

Workshop on social innovation

Moderated by Ognjen Andrić (Telecentar, Croatia)
Speakers: Altheo Valentini (EGINA, Italy) and Jan
Gejels (Working with Europe, Denmark)
Theme: Developing EU Social Innovation Projects

Conclusions and recommendations:

- Social innovation policies and initiatives across EU are varied and dispersed. There is no all-encompassing and inclusive social innovation programme on the EU level.
- Social inclusion is a strategy for a smart, sustainable and community-based future and social innovation is already a thread linking the official flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 strategy. The Digital Single Market strategy should however integrate better the aspect of social innovation policy.
- EU funding for social innovation, entrepreneurial and digital inclusion initiatives are still limited to traditional fields and areas. EU funding in this area is mostly not representative of the cross-topic, cross-sector and holistic European innovation policies.
- Social innovation is at the core of digital inclusion of persons with disability, just to mention one example. There are numerous other areas where social innovation is key to advance.
- Stakeholders active in the field of social innovation should increase collaboration and combine their individual areas of excellence to create new development projects.



- Unite-it.eu will be used as a platform for exchange of information and ideas among the members of this working group, and participants are encouraged to stay tuned. Formats to be further exploited to that end are: webinars, summer schools and annual conferences, among others.



What did people say on Twitter?



Telecentre Europe @tc_europe · Sep 23
#TEAC15: #TEACinno workshop speakers will talk about #socialinnovation in EU projects and what role #digitalinclusion plays in this



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Telecentar @Telecentar · Sep 24
Discussion time and work group photo! #TEACinno



Telecentar @Telecentar · Sep 24
Zarko (TC Zagreb) on e-facilitators, a new profession spreading in digital technology field. #TEACinno

First I-LINC project panel on youth employability

Theme: Empowering youth for employability

Panelists:

- **Andrea Parola** (European E-skills Association, Belgium)
- **Ave Lauringson** (Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications)
- **Manus Hanratty** (Fast Track to IT, Ireland)
- **Maria Garrido** (Information School's Technology & Social Change Group TASCHA, University of Washington)
- **Kosta Andric** (ICT Hub Belgrade, Serbia)

for either. More soft skills training is needed for young people. As Manus Hanratty from Fit Ltd Ireland put it

"From the perspective of unemployed youth, employability is like a wall that stands between young people and a good job. But breaking it down, employability is essentially about knowledge, and competition and skills - all of which can be learned."



After the lunch break, Telecentre Europe's annual conference continued, this time with an interactive panel discussion on the topic of youth employability. The session served to provide the perspective on youth employability from five different stakeholder groups: companies, entrepreneurs, policy makers, researchers and training providers/telecentres. The aim was to initiate an open discussion within the telecentre community and continue the conversation on the new platform created by the EU funded I-LINC project, a portal that organisations and individuals can join at www.i-linc.eu. After the panel discussion, I-LINC Project Manager Laurentiu Bunescu presented the newly created I-LINC platform and invited stakeholders to join.

Employability: A set of skills, with soft skills on top

Panelists agreed that soft skills are as important as hard skills for the work environment today, but formal education is not preparing young people sufficiently

Often young people are unaware of the unwritten "norms" in the world of work where designing a good CV or knowing how to dress and speak about yourself may be the deciding factor for a candidate.

This is why successful training programmes place soft skills at the same level as hard or technical skills (e.g. www.FIT4jobs.eu) and why young people need mentors or advisers who will help them throughout the journey.



Education to attract children to technology and computational thinking

Within formal education a stronger emphasis on STEM subjects or general logical and computational skills are needed. In Estonia for example, this is the

direction they are taking. After they have successfully assured that all the schools in the country are connected to the Internet, they are now focusing on making technology, ICT and mathematics interesting to pre-school and primary school children. The next challenge will be to introduce such programmes at secondary school level.

In terms of non-formal education, researchers are very interested in the blended learning that occurs in social places such as telecentres and other digital inclusion providers.

"Telecentres are a unique learning environment that bring along benefits such as socialising, soft skills and potential for innovation. All of these offer the right mix for young people to learn about skills for employment." said Maria Garrido from the University of Washington.

What about youth as entrepreneurs?

Not all agreed on whether entrepreneurs are born or made, but it seemed evident that entrepreneurship will not be the silver bullet for young people and cannot replace the importance of finding and keeping good quality jobs. Questions from the audience were raised on whether we are preparing young people well enough for being entrepreneurs. For some panelists, entrepreneurship is simply another skill, a sort of "super skill" on top of the other employability skills. What is common to all young people, whether they are looking for a job or creating jobs, is the need to develop and practice their self-confidence.

For clearly others, entrepreneurs are born and not made.

"Our task - at the ICT hub in Belgrade, but also of society in general, is to recognise entrepreneurs as such and help them learn about concrete business skills so they can turn their ideas into businesses and employ people." said Kosta Andric from ICT Hub Belgrade.



Only when the employers are on board

'Employer engagement' is now a buzzword in the world of employability but it should in fact be the reality of all training-for-employment programmes for young people. Courses are only effective when they provide skills that are in demand from the job market. Panelists agreed that there is a lack of information on skills. Young people cannot easily find out (and neither can their parents or teachers), which skills are in demand. And to make matters more complicated, the demands are changing by the day, making it difficult to predict what technical skills will be needed in the future.

A job in sight?

Employability was defined by one speaker as a process, rather than an outcome. However, another participant in the panel reminded the audience that the process should result in an actual job for it to be successful. What matters in any employability oriented training or project is that the young person finds work at the end.

We need to have a holistic approach and never lose that objective from view: a young person in the workforce.



Unite-IT Digital Inclusion Award Ceremony

(2nd edition)



The first day of TEAC 2015 ended on a high note with an award ceremony with a live music performance which prompted networking and dancing. Ms. Gordana Stankov Stojilovic (IAN, Serbia) hosted the conference, while four Board members of Telecentre Europe were invited to present and hand the awards to the winners. The winners received certificates and symbolic statues for each category.

The Unite-IT network established the *Digital Inclusion Award* in 2014 as the annual recognition to organisations and professionals who work in the field of digital inclusion and who create, often with very small resources, innovative ways to bring digital opportunities and skills to people in their communities. Organisations working in the field of digital inclusion and training were invited to submit their good practices and policies in May-August 2015. The Unite-IT network collects each year new European practices into a [comprehensive database](#) that can be used by all its registered members. The Unite-IT Project Jury evaluated 42 good practices and 18 resources from all over Europe based on criteria such as innovation of the good practice/resource, its usability and relevance.

Four organisations, in four categories, were selected and awarded in Belgrade:

1. **Education and training:** Tieto Latvia LTD, Latvia
2. **Youth employability:** YouRock Online Ltd, United Kingdom
3. **Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion:** Citizens Advice, United Kingdom
4. **Gender equality:** City of Venice, Italy

Education and training



Tieto Latvia won the award in this category with their mobile application GUDRINIEKS (Wise One). The application is a free educational tool designed for pre-school and primary schoolchildren. It helps children develop

mathematical understanding and skills while strengthening their knowledge-base acquired at school. More information: <http://goo.gl/IkkeF9>

Youth employability

YouRock.Jobs platform, established by YouRock Online Ltd (UK) in 2013, was selected as the best entry in the Youth employability category. It is a creative tool developed for young job-seekers under 30 wishing to showcase their first working skills and connect with employers. Available in 17 languages, YouRock aims to help 500,000 young people in Europe to build attractive online portfolios and find a job. More information: <http://yourock.jobs>



Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion



Citizens Advice from the United Kingdom won with their Digital Money Coaching project. This project is a community of volunteers who work with Citizens Advice clients to improve their digital skills in the context of financial capability to use online and mobile banking; price comparison sites and energy saving sites. They also teach people how to access local and national government services online such as welfare benefits.

More information: <https://goo.gl/Gll4fn>

Gender equality



The winner in the Gender equality category is a project called Spazio M@mm@ (M@mm@ space) run by the City of Venice in Italy. It is a dedicated space for mothers and children, next to the room that houses an Internet centre, opened in January 2015. The idea was to address the gender gap and attract more women to computer classes by providing a space for children with a babysitter. Children play while their mothers are learning ICT skills.

More information: <http://goo.gl/oRdnzo>

Day 2: Interactive workshops

The first day of the conference provided an introduction and welcome, especially on the broad topics relevant for the community and from different stakeholder perspectives. The second day was dedicated to interactive discussions amongst members and other professionals on two topics: e-participation, on one side and funding for telecentres, on the other. The first morning session introduced the new topic of e-participation to the telecentre community and promoted the results of the E-uropa project. The second session was about providing a space for participants to find partners and discuss concrete project ideas.

Gabriel Rissola introduced the session and defined the main concepts. He defined *e-participation* as being about citizens' participation in administration, service delivery, decision making and policy making. While e-governance consists of top-down government initiatives, e-participation is a wider concept including all stakeholders in the democratic decision-making process. *E-participation tools* are the ICT solutions that governments use to provide public services



and that citizens use to engage in the policy making process and contribute to it. These tools range from voting and polling online, campaigning through web surveys, online petitions and consultations, to civil society forums and platforms to participate and have a say in societal and political issues.

1. Learning session and discussion: e-Participation in theory and in practice

Speakers:

- **Marija Kujacic (Serbian Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government)**
- **Vukosava Crnjanski (CRTA- Serbian Centre for research, transparency and accountability)**
- **Vladimir Radunovic (DiploFoundation, Serbia)**

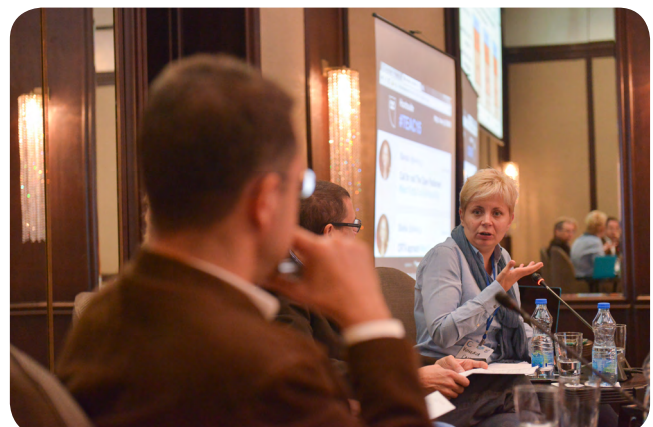
The first speaker, Marija Kujacic provided the perspective of the Serbian government and policy makers. She explained the three-level model of measuring e-participation, introducing the concepts of *e-information*, *e-consultation* and *e-decision making*. United Nations has developed an index to measure countries on their e-participation level and in the case of Serbia, in 2014 they only ranked 81st - so there is still a lot of room for improvement. They were assessed on such criteria as presence of e-consultation mechanism, social networking features on government sites and easy access to datasets amongst other criteria. Netherlands was identified as the world leading country in e-participation.

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The European e-participation session was organised by Telecentre Europe, the leading partner in the E-uropa project (euparticipation.org). TE's Managing Director Gabriel Rissola moderated the session. The purpose of the session was to get the telecentre community interested in the broad topics of e-participation and active citizenship. This was done through learning from people already active in the field (local practitioners

from Serbia) and then reflecting together on what our organisations can do in their own countries to boost e-participation, both in national and EU decision processes.



The second speaker was Vukosava Crnjanski from a civil society organisation active in e-participation in Serbia. CRTA is a group of journalists and political activists working to improve government transparency and to motivate citizens and media to hold politicians accountable. She presented some interesting tools they have introduced in society such as the *Open Parliament initiative* or the “Truthometer”, an initiative that evaluates elected officials statements for their truthfulness, consistency and whether they fulfil campaign promises or policy pledges. She talked about the main challenges in Serbia such as the fact that accountability is a new concept for many or the low level of awareness and interest in policy from the citizens. Her organisation is finding ways to re-engage citizens through ICT.

Vladimir Radunovic, director of e-Diplomacy programmes at Diplo Foundation, talked about the e-competences needed for e-participation. He explained that these main competences are: *curation, creation, communication, critique and collaboration*. He expanded on these competences, what other sub-competences they include and how they can be learned. For Vladimir e-participation is about management of information online and management of knowledge online. Since many citizens still do not know how to do these things online, telecentres could indeed fill the gap and help them acquire these competences.

Table discussions

All the E-uropa project partners from 12 different countries had an active role in the session, especially in the table discussions where they introduced their activities during the first European e-participation Day (held on May 7th, 2015). All project partners

had different approaches on organising their e-participation activities and what age groups they targeted. Some partners chose to focus on seniors, others on families and some exclusively on youth, sharing with them the tools.

Participants at almost all tables said that, apart from the newly introduced e-Participation day, their experience with e-participation activities was limited. They believe that people use e-participation tools mostly on their own devices, from home. When they do, they use rather local/national e-participation tools, primarily for e-government services, such as accessing documents.

In some telecentres, they have noticed that people find it hard to believe that these tools can change anything.

Motivation comes from the need to use participation tools. People want to participate in political issues when they are affected by the topic, as seen in the TTIP demonstrations and many petitions on local levels. Therefore, the promotion of e-participation tools would be most effective when

combined with current affairs and especially when citizens feel they are directly affected.

It is also important to promote **confidence** in the tools and their results. For this, telecentre staff needs to be trained how to use the tools and how to make them attractive to citizens. Only when staff is appropriately trained, can promotional and awareness raising activities be effective.

As a conclusion, participants of most tables were in favour of establishing the European e-Participation Day as a regular, annual campaign. Some of the participants suggested including also non-EU e-participation tools, and especially those at national and local level.



2. Funding and sustainability: world café session

The overall purpose of this session was to get participants to exchange knowledge on the funding of their organisations, and find partners for projects on concrete topics pre-defined by the Board of Telecentre Europe.



List of topics and table leaders:

- ICT training : Mariusz Boguszweski
- Intergenerational learning and general community building: Gabriel Rissola
- E-Inclusion of vulnerable groups and people with disabilities: Magdalena Dimkova
- Cyberbullying: Loreta Krizinauskiene
- Media literacy and digital storytelling: Zarko Cizmar
- Fundraising from private donors: Laurentiu Bunesco

Within the plenary we created a “special” environment, modeled after a café, i.e. round tables, block paper, post-its. Participants choose the table according to the topics their organisations were active in. Table leaders were briefed to collect concrete project ideas from each table discussion. As this session was rather intended for the benefit of the participants, its contents will not be shared here. However, participants can contact us to get a copy of the notes from the table discussions they participated in.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact us at: contact@telecentre-europe.org
Check the event website: teannualconference.info
See what participants were talking about on: [Twitter](https://twitter.com/telecentre_europe)
Check speakers' presentations on: [Slideshare](https://slideshare.net/telecentre_europe)
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Best moments of the conference





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