

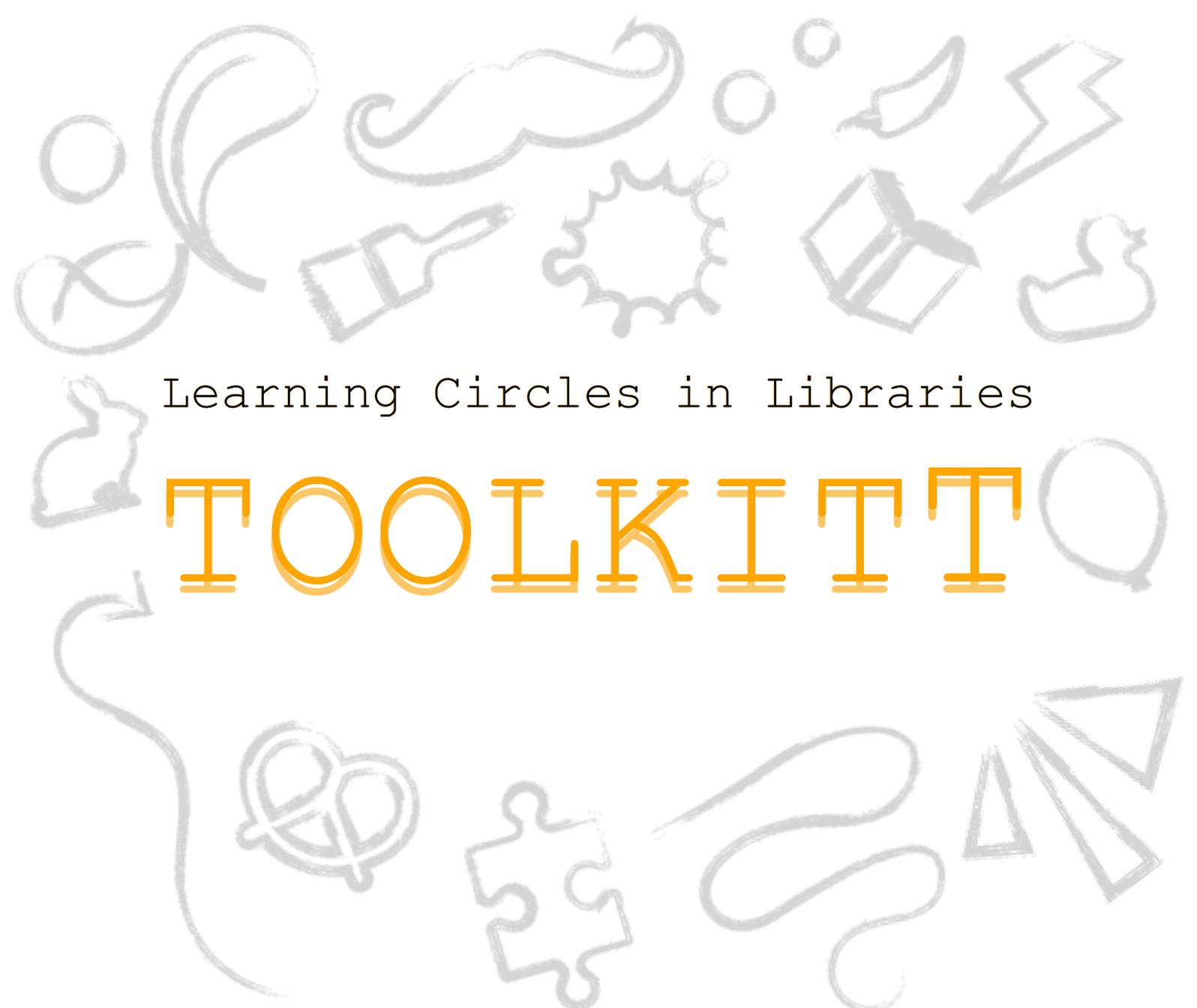
Learning Circles in Libraries

TOOLKIT



2021





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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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#1

Lifelong
learning as
a strategic dimension
for library services in
the following decade



Real Opportunities for Adult Online Education The White Paper

In 2004 a report produced by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) stated that lifelong learning is strongly connected to public libraries across the world. Acknowledging that, IFLA defined life-long learning as: „an all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. It contains various forms of education and training,

formal, non-formal and informal, e.g. the traditional school system from primary to tertiary level, free adult education, informal search and training, individually, in **a group setting** or within the framework of social movements“ (Häggström, 2004)¹. As emphasized by us, a group setting - regardless of its form - could lead or facilitate education, even if it is organized in an informal manner. In the face of COVID-19 pandemic, this emphasis seems more important with the necessity for a shift: from face-to-face / classroom education to online learning. This may be a habit which, once acquired, may not as easily be dismissed in the future, due to access, availability of resources, and costs. As the vaccination campaign is rolling out, we understand that it is hard to overlook the perks of online education; however the advantages of face-to-face interaction are still present. This leads us to the conclusion that from now on, a form of hybrid adult education - involving both online and in person, is the most probable and feasible way forward.

In this context, libraries who have been severely hit by the closure due to the pandemic need to stay true to their mission of serving the community while, at the same time, identifying options to adapt to social distancing and safe minimum interaction. As a result, library services will need to be set out taking into account the new limitations. Each such challenge in services design may also trigger new competencies or up-skilling for the library staff. It is in this context that we would like to present the intellectual products of the project Learning Circles in Public Libraries.

First and foremost, we have put together for the librarians interested in up-skilling or looking for new opportunities in terms of personal development within the context of new library services a

CHAPTER II | SPECIFICS OF ADULT ONLINE LEARNING

Responses	%
Interest in the topic	97,1%
Curiosity	88,1%
Need for some information	73,8%
Choice or freedom to select the topic or resources	67,9%
Goals for self-improvement	61,9%
I just want to learn something new	60,7%
Professional growth (job related)	57,1%
Feeling of personal control over my own learning	56%
Hobbies	38,1%
The website or activity looks exciting	36,9%

¹ Häggström, B.M. (ed) (2004) The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning Final report of the IFLA project under the Section for Public Libraries, available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED510133.pdf>, viewed on March 2nd, 2021

White Paper on adult education comprising challenges and transformations, based on the newest research available. The White Paper provides at least 3 perspectives from which one can assess the adult learning: an individual one (where we focus on types of motivation people have, what barriers they encounter and the aspects of the learning design and experience that could improve the effectiveness of the learning acts), an institutional one (where we look at the specific data and the national approach in five EU countries related to the formal, non-formal and informal learning) thus suggesting corrective measures and indicating where libraries can play a role. The third dimension is a political one and it indicates advocacy type of measures, so the adult education enters the political agenda of member states. Here libraries can play a pivotal role and together with other stakeholders they can provide both lessons learned, examples and stories to advance such an agenda. Our White Paper sets the stage for the solution that we are proposing, have tested and understood how it can work in a European context. It was inspired by the idea of setting out a learning circle in public libraries, a methodology created and implemented by P2PU - Peer to Peer University from the United States. We will refer more to it in the next chapters of

We elaborate on the role of online education in existing systems and programmes. We also analyse the activities of institutions and organisations that are involved in the implementation of above mentioned systems, standards, or policies. We elaborate on the role of non-governmental sector in the field of non-formal learning as well as other initiatives that may be relevant from the point of view of future organisers, or facilitators of Learning Circles. We try to find out how the above mentioned institutions, organisations, programmes and initiatives are reaching out to the underprivileged groups existing in the society, in order to ensure that they will benefit from the adult learning opportunities.

We do the above with the intention of identifying good practices and valuable experiences of established projects, programmes and initiatives in order to use them – as hints, tips and guidance – in the Learning Circles communities.

ADULT LEARNING IN THE PROJECT'S PARTNER COUNTRIES – A BRIEF OVERVIEW

FINLAND

In 2017, 1.6 million Finns participated in adult education, women being generally more active participants than men. The average amount spent in adult education is 8 days per person per year. The number of education

days varies between 10 (in women) and 7 (in men) (Niemi & Ruuskanen, 2018, pp. 5-8). Most adults participate in work or profession related education (almost every other participant, approx 1.2 million people), and most of these

educational opportunities are provided by employers. About 400,000 Finns participated in a common knowledge or hobby, or interest related educational offer (informal education). Common topics included business and legal studies, services, hobbies or safety. Almost 2 million Finns participated in informal, self-directed studies in 2017. Most of these studies are internet-based. Generally, adult education

increases work motivation and enhances career prospects (Niemi & Ruuskanen, 2018, pp. 5-8). About 22 percent of Finns aged 65-69 participated in adult education and about half of them studied in a self-directed way. Popular topics included arts, general knowledge, foreign languages and hobbies (Niemi & Ruuskanen, 2018, pp. 5-8).

GERMANY

The most important (EU-wide) survey in the context of the status of adult education in Germany is the *Adult Education Survey (AES)*. The German report on the results of the AES which was conducted in Germany in 2016 was published in print and online in 2017. The focus of the *Adult Education Survey* was on adults

An overview of internet statistics on continuing education in Germany is given by the German Institute for Adult Education (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung). A very useful annotated compilation of internet resources on adult education by Doris Hirschmann can be found in Tippelt, Hippel, eds., 2018, vol. 2, pp. 1571-1588.

ROMANIA

According to the country analysis produced by the EU (*Education and Training - Monitor 2018 - Country analysis*, 2018, pp 245) the participation and access to adult learning in Romania remains very low despite the need for up-skilling and re-skilling of the workforce. Participation in adult learning was 1.1% in 2017, significantly below the EU average of 10.9%. The population's digital skills are improving but still remain among the lowest in the EU: in 2017, only 29% of the population possessed at least basic digital skills (compared to the EU average of 57%). The skills of the workforce

are inadequate for the needs of a modern economy (World Bank, 2018, CEDEFOP, 2017). The respondents in the survey conducted by the Romanian Learning Circles in Libraries project's team were asked to evaluate – through their experience – the interest of Romanians for online education. One interviewee (female, aged 47) said that the situation in Romania could be described with one word: 'evolution'. She declared: "I believe that these courses should be better promoted. The Millennials should view them equally as important as the formal ones and attend them

participation rate in education and training which refer to the last four weeks prior to the interview. Include data from the labour force survey and focus on adults aged 25 to 64. It is important to keep in mind that the percentages given for Germany vary depending on which survey, which age group and which period of time they are based on (see for example also in

courses. The meta-search engine (InfoWeb Weiterbildung, 2019) provides such a service; it makes accessible information on courses offered in other data bases. 'Weiterbildung' (continuing education and training, adult education) is considered to be the fourth sector of the education system, complementing primary, secondary and tertiary education.

POLAND

Taking into consideration that Learning Circles (LCs) are planned to be set up in the libraries while searching for data, we put special emphasis on non-formal education. The whole idea of LC is to offer adults non-formal education opportunities organised by libraries (or NGOs, other public institutions e.g. cultural centers) in order to develop their skills as learners and prepare them for effective informal education through online tools including e-learning courses.

numbers are slowly growing, respectively: 44%, 30% and 20.9%. This tendency is confirmed by another report published in 2018 (*Rozwój kompetencji – uczenie się osób dorosłych i podmioty oferujące usługi rozwojowe*, 2018) focused on slightly different age groups and referring mainly to labour market. According to this report in 2017 in informal education participated 38% (7.8 mln) people aged 25-64. Assuming that the Learning Circles goal is

PORTUGAL

Our analysis of adult learning situation in Portugal is based upon the results of the *Adult Education and Training Survey (IEFA)*, 2016) that was conducted in the population aged 18-64.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN PORTUGAL: WHAT HAPPENED IN 10 YEARS?

- In the decade 2007-2016, the participation rate in lifelong learning activities (LLL) increased by around 20 percentage points (pp), particularly as a result of increased participation in non-formal education, which doubled between 2007 and 2016;
- Participation in formal education, after an increase between 2007 and 2011 registered a decrease in 2016.

with the exception of higher education:

- By comparison with non-participation, participation in non-formal education activities also contributes to wage salary increases;
- The results also show an association between the educational level of parents and children – intergenerational transmission of education – particularly strong in the case of mothers.

LIFELONG LEARNING (LLL): FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

- Participation in lifelong learning activities increased by around 20 p.p. in a decade, particularly as a result of increased participation in non-formal education

PEER 2 PEER UNIVERSITY (THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

- Define non-formal learning in our own terms. Early in this paper we quote Eurostat reporting that only 10.9% of adults in the EU took part in either formal or non-formal learning activities in 2017. Undoubtedly, this is a small number. But this also raises a very important question: "what counts as non-formal learning?" We should work to ensure we are taking a wide view of non-formal learning and not seeking to reinvent communities of practice which are active but for whatever reason are not currently "counted". There very well may be some advocacy work to be done to expand our understanding of what constitutes learning.
- Chart a vision for learning in libraries. Related to the point above, we must be clear about the vision we have for this work (and it's ok if it is different in each

education. Otherwise, learning circles risk being cast either as a bad alternative to school (because there are no experts) or as an inconvenient alternative to online learning (because you need to leave your house). Fortunately, there seem to be compelling value propositions for learning circles in each country. For example, in Finland, there is a strong culture of online workforce development, but there has not yet been a concerted effort to ensure that access to ICT skills is not a barrier for all Finns. In Germany, where there is a culture of non-formal learning, learning circles might provide opportunities for participation for people who do not have ongoing professional development through their work. In Poland, where improving learner-centered pedagogy is a focus, it

this Toolkit. In the meantime, below you can browse through some samples from the White Paper and should you want more information, you can download the whole material.

A view from Finland

In Finland, the library has an essential role in lifelong learning. It secures an equal access to information and knowledge for everyone. Library services are free of charge in Finland and the services are open and free to everyone. Finland has a law, *library act*, that defines tasks and official guidelines to public libraries' work. The first Public Libraries Act was published in 1928. The newest version is from 2017. The act's goal is to promote - among other things - citizens' equal possibilities to education and culture, possibilities to lifelong learning, as well as active citizenship and democracy. Libraries promote reading culture and versatile literacy skills. Libraries also provide an open public space for residents and communities. Library premises can be used as venues for cultural events, meetings, work and learning. Libraries are open learning environments - thus supporting peoples' voluntary lifelong learning. Since Finns use their libraries very actively, the role of the Finnish library is a very important one, also in lifelong education.





#2

Learning
circles
between lifelong
learning and community
development

It is worth starting this chapter with paraphrasing a text written by Jennifer Howard (2019)² „There aren't many truly public places left in America. Most of our shared spaces require money or a certain social status to access. Malls exist to sell people things. Museums discourage loiterers. Coffee shops expect patrons to purchase a drink or snack if they want to enjoy the premises. One place, though, remains open to everybody. The public library requires nothing of its visitors: no purchases, no membership fees, no dress code.“ We feel that the same is true for the European space. In fact, in a recent project which has been implemented in 14 county libraries across Romania, Progress Foundation has called public libraries „third spaces“ or citizenship sanctuaries, where people come to exercise their role as active members in society. In the same spirit, a report from the Aspen Institute from US is calling public libraries „America's Civic Squares“³. It is thus only natural that activities like lifelong learning are taking place in public libraries. It is also true that the services one can now find in a public library are going largely beyond education or civic engagement. European libraries are also providing great examples in this re-shaping process of libraries' role. They adopted the design thinking method to understand and respond to community needs in a more flexible and efficient manner, or developed clean cut interventions like a „clinic - where individuals can approach an instructor or peer tutor with a specific problem“⁴. It all has to do with a more proactive role of libraries, with better means of collecting data related to how the public perceives libraries and the social value of their services vis-a-vis the operating costs.⁵ In fact, the report of EBLIDA on types of impacts generated by public libraries confirm that in France at least, their help is notable in: empowering people, creating network and partnerships, supporting employability, increasing public security. A great role libraries played even during the pandemic is related to providing reliable information and thus contributing to combating the fake news phenomenon.

As part of the Learning Circle project, we have mapped the types of courses libraries can offer to their community for personal and professional development. In this way, libraries

² <https://www.neh.gov/article/complicated-role-modern-public-library>

³ https://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/Libraries_Exponential_Age.pdf

⁴ <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/lifelong-learning-environments-libraries-and-adult-education-centres-21st-century-approach>

⁵ <http://www.eblida.org/Documents/ELSA-WG-implementation-SDG-Indicators-in-EU-Libraries.pdf>

show they can contribute directly not only to a better way to spend time, but to allow members of the community live a productive life

Das politische System der BRD
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Einführung in die Institutionen und politischen Prozesse des politischen Systems der BRD, sowie die Gründung, Entwicklung, Staatsverfassung, Wahlsystem, Parteien und föderale Struktur. 9 Wochen
Topics Politik, Bundesrepublik, Politisches System
Provider Technische Hochschule Lübeck
Platform oncampus
Access Always available

Diabetes - the Essential Facts
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Die neuesten Forschungsergebnisse zur Prävention und Behandlung von Diabetes. Wie bedroht Diabetes die öffentliche Gesundheit in verschiedenen Gemeinden? Auf Englisch mit deutschen Untertiteln.
Topics Diabetes
Provider University of Copenhagen
Platform coursera
Access Check availability

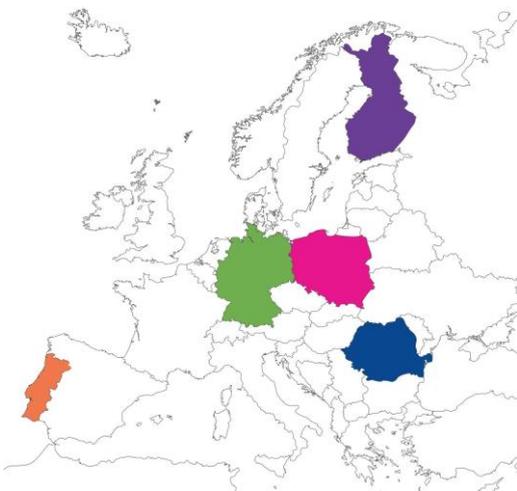
Deutsch-dänische Kunstgeschichte
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Einführung in die transnationale Geschichte deutsch-dänischer Kunst und die Auswirkungen der Politik im „Goldenen Zeitalter“. 3 Wochen
Topics Kunstgeschichte, Dänemark
Provider Nordmus
Platform oncampus
Access Always available

Elements of AI, Tekoälyn perusteet
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Kursi vastaa kysymyksiin: Haluatko tietää, mitä tekoäly oikeastaan on? Haluatko tietää, mitä tekoäly oikeastaan on? Mietitkö, millainen vaikutus tekoälyllä on työhösi tai elämäsi? Haluatko tietää, miten tekoäly tulee kehittyvän ja miten se vaikuttaa meihin tulevaisuudessa?
Topics tekoäly
Provider Reactor Oy Ministry of Education
Platform Reactor Oy
Access Always available

Haluatko pelialalle
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Perustietoja pelialasta Suomessa ja peliala työkentystä
Topics peliala, pelaaminen
Provider Amiedu
Access Always available

Excel-perustaitokurssi
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Excel-ohjelmiston perustaidot
Topics excel, taulukkolaskenta,
Provider Officekoulutus.fi
Access Always available

and increase their welfare. In the subsequent page, we offer a sample of such courses, anyone interested



Podstawy marketingu internetowego
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Możliwość otrzymania certyfikatu
Topics marketing, społecznośćowy
Provider Google
Access Always available

Pokonaj swoje długi
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
5-tygodniowy bezpłatny kurs internetowy, którego celem jest realna pomoc w naprawie finansów osobistych i w efekcie -
Topics pieniądze, dług, budżet

Prowadzenie działań marketingowych
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES

can take in the five European languages of the

Monumentos Naturais de Portugal - Pistas de Dinossáurios
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Portugal tem cinco Monumentos Naturais, assim classificados devido à presença de pistas de dinossáurios. Entre estas encontram-se algumas das pistas de dinossáurios saurópodes mais longas do mundo, com comprimentos superiores a 120 m.
Topics Natureza, Ambiente, Monumentos Naturais, Dinossáurios, Fósseis
Provider Universidade Aberta; Professor Pedro Pereira

Plataforma de português online
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
e
Topics Língua portuguesa, Português (língua)
Provider Alto comissariado para as migrações
Platform Plataforma de português online
Access Always available

Paisagem da Cultura da Vinha do Pico
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Conheça a Paisagem da Cultura da Vinha do Pico que integra a lista do Património Mundial da UNESCO, bem como as características do património sociocultural e natural que se desenvolveu com esta cultura.
Topics Natureza, Ambiente, Património natural - Portugal, Vinha - Ilha do Pico (Portugal)
Provider Universidade Aberta;

Antreprenariat: Primii Pași
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Acest curs online de antreprenariat te va invita cum sa gandesti daca vrei sa-ti incepi propria afacere de la zero. Am facut asta de cand am terminat facultatea, si chiar in facultate faceam mici afaceri pentru a face bani in plus. Cursul are aproximativ 2 ore, si este minunat din toate punctele de vedere. Fara teorii cludate din carti- doar ce am invatat eu practic.
Topics
Provider Udemy
Access Always available

Autocad
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 0 LEARNING CIRCLES
Cursul autocad în română este făcut special pentru cei care sunt la început de drum. Cu acest curs vei învăța comenzile de bază care acoperă 80% din comenzile principale care ai nevoie pentru realizarea unui desen.
Topics
Provider Udemy
Access Always available

Bazele marketingului digital
☆☆☆☆
0 RATINGS | USED IN 1 LEARNING CIRCLE
Stapaneste notiunile de baza ale marketingului digital cu ajutorul cursului acreditat de Interactive Advertising Bureau. Sunt oferite 26 de module pe care le poti explora, create de experti Google, cu exercitii practice si exemple din lumea reala, care sa te ajute sa iti dezvolti cariera sau afacerea.
Topics
Provider Google- Atelierul digital
Access Always available

project.

A view from Portugal

Apart from the benefits of having access to the book-collection, many people visit the library several times a week to read the newspapers and to have a cup of coffee at the cafeteria. Our activities are other attraction to users; Lúcio Craveiro da Silva Library has an extensive monthly programme, which includes, beside activities for all ages, free learning trainings and also paid trainings.

Our work with patrons has evolved in a very positive way throughout the process. We created new relationships with them and had a very active return in all phases. A multi-disciplinary team of patrons, consisting of mixed specialization, were also an important contribution to the journey.

The library attends the growth of many of its users. Families, who are regular visitors, spend much of their free time in the different areas of the library. Parents and children participate in activities, use the rooms to read or study and borrow books for all members. The spacious study rooms where students can sit and work are also very popular.



Community development
needs reflected in the



3

themes
covered by
online learning
opportunities - A study
case from Germany

The way in which courses offered by learning circles can best reflect and meet the needs of the community will be shown using the example of the Cologne Public Library in Cologne, Germany. The Library's role in the civic structure is that of an educational and cultural institution that promotes lifelong learning, as well as a place of digital and social participation.

There is a vital need in communities for “third places,” the term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenberg for non-commercial spaces that are neither work nor home, and public libraries are one of the few remaining spaces that fulfill this role. The Cologne Public Library actively promotes itself as such a third place, providing a vital meeting space for people to connect. The learning circles uniquely align with this mission. They not only meet an educational need, but also provide a venue for social participation, as learning circle participants are able to meet others with similar interests, exchange ideas, share their experiences, and learn from one another.

The Library considered how the learning circles would enhance existing programming. In the area of adult education and programming, the Library already had a strong palette of programs and workshops in place, focused primarily on literature, research and digital education. In many libraries, particularly in the USA, the learning circles offer courses on resume writing and job search skills. In Germany these types of social services are largely provided by other government entities, therefore the Library did not need to focus on these areas. In setting up its learning circle program, one of the initial steps taken by the Library was determining which online courses to offer. A small staff team was formed to ascertain which appropriate online courses were available. The Library’s own digital offerings were taken into consideration as well. The online courses had to meet the criteria of being free, in German, of interest to the general public and able to be completed in a maximum six weeks. Once appropriate courses were found, the next step was gauging community’s interest. This was done by using the Q-Method, a term coined by Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU) to describe a simple survey tool used to discover which subjects library visitors were most interested in. A list of 21 courses from the areas of personal development, computing, art and culture, business and finance, history and the environment were listed on posters that were displayed for several weeks at the Central Library. Library visitors were asked to place a heart sticker next to the courses that most interested them, resulting in a total of 446 votes. Among the top courses were drawing, time management, photography, art history and personal finance. Learning circles took place on all of these. Based on the results of the initial visitor survey, learning circle attendance statistics, and user feedback, the Library was, over time, able to see what kinds of learning circles the people in the community were most interested in. In Cologne the visitors prefer courses focused on recreational interests, the arts, and personal

development. As these interests can change over time, the participants of each learning circle are asked what types of learning circles they would be interested in participating in the future. A new visitor survey will also be conducted to see if there is a change in interests. Additionally, new online courses regularly become available. Therefore the Library's learning circle offerings will change and evolve over time, adapting to meet the current information, educational and recreational needs of the local community.

What do employers want?	Needed skills / areas of activity / competencies
Finland	In the service sector, customer oriented skills, service design and automation. In the industrial sector: sustainable development, finding digital solutions to problems, ability to learn, management of remote and virtual services, information evaluation skills, digital operations, mobile applications, expertise related to smart system and internet of things.
Germany	Digitisation and adaptability are key to future employment needs. These are essential for Work 4.0—the future of work in the digital age in the country. Job seekers will need to navigate this shift toward digitisation and will need increasing experience and expertise in soft skills, such as adaptability and creativity, that will allow them to adapt to rapidly changing workplaces.
Poland	Soft skills will matter in the industry 4.0, like: problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, collaboration, emotional intelligence, the ability to make informed decisions, orientation on services, negotiation skills, flexibility and the ability to adapt.
Portugal	A study from 2019 reveals that in the next years will be the areas where there will be the greatest demand for professionals are: commercial (30%), information technology (30%), engineering (22%), marketing and communication (14%) and logistics and <i>supply chain</i> (13%).
Romania	In particular in rural areas, employers will look for the following soft skills: adaptability, mobility, ability to learn, good manners. As regards hard skills connected to the field of work they will need technical skills ranging from basic mathematics to mechanics (having a good understanding on how machines work) also animal growing and business management.



4

Phases of
implementing
support for online
learning service - as
seen by the creators of
Learning Circle
methodology P2PU

Running successful online learning services require a constellation of support measures beyond the facilitation/delivery of the program. We've identified four roles to support peer learning: the facilitator, coordinator, organizer, and host. Together, these roles provide the framework for successful programs that both allow for consistent and responsive programming while continuing to position patrons and their experiences at the center of the learning. For some libraries, these roles may be split across different people and departments. At other libraries, one person might do it all. These roles are further outlined in the P2PU handbook.

Set Your Intent

Whether in-person or online, learning circles are rooted in P2PU's [three core values](#): community, peer learning, and equity. As you work through this handbook, it's useful to keep these values in mind and refer back to them when you hit a roadblock.

Learning circles work best when learners can identify what motivates their participation, and the same is true for the facilitator. The questions we've been asking new facilitators for five years are still relevant for virtual programs:

- What are you personally hoping to achieve by facilitating a learning circle?
- What need are you trying to address in your community?
- Who do you expect to reach?
- How will you know if your experiment was a success?

Check in with your people

Once you've established your personal goals for a learning circle, you'll want to start sharing your ideas and gathering buy-in from people who will help you along the way. This may include reaching out to people who you think might want to participate, organizations that might help you promote your learning circle, or a group that you are part of that can give you feedback on your idea. You are also, of course, welcome to reach out to P2PU at any time if you want our input!

Check in with the wider community

If you want to solicit feedback from a wider audience, such as your library's mailing

The **facilitator** is the person leading the learning program and interacting with the patrons. As defined elsewhere, there are a variety of resources available to facilitators which allow them to participate in a number of communities of practice: the learning circle itself, their community of facilitators at their library, and a global community of facilitators across P2PU.

The **coordinator** recruits, trains, and maintains relationships with facilitators outside of the learning services. This person is responsible for ensuring whatever sort of stamp of approval is required for somebody to lead a library program and will likely coordinate with

P2PU to offer training. After onboarding is complete, this person may continue to directly supervise the world of facilitators or they may hand off responsibility to a host.

The **organizer** is responsible for establishing, evaluating, and marketing of the overall peer learning program for the library. This is an outward facing role, interacting with various stakeholders in the library and outside to develop a compelling call to action and pathway for participation.

The **host** is a frontline staff person who works directly with the community to provide day-to-day logistical support of facilitators and assisting with library technology.

In April and May 2020, more than sixty P2PU community members from around the world

came together to consider how these roles are impacted by the switch to a virtual format. These emerging practices and effective strategies were compiled into the [P2PU virtual handbook](#).

Find Your Course

Learning circle participants come together around a common interest, supported by freely accessible learning materials. As the facilitator, it is your job to identify these materials before the learning circle begins. Most facilitators use free online courses as their subject material because they are widely accessible, developed by subject matter experts, and often designed in a linear format that is easily adaptable to group study.

P2PU Online Course Library



A scrolling preview of courses in the P2PU library
click image to see course library

Our community collects great online courses in the library linked above. Use any of these courses from this database or use any course or resource that you find online that suits you.

includes both data on how to organize the content but also ready made handouts so the job of a librarian or any facilitator to be an easy one. Apart from that, we have included a series of video materials that librarians or facilitators can point to prior to enrolling participants in a learning circle. They support and inform future attendees on their preferred learning style, vocational interest or technology readiness. In this way, participants in the circle will make a better decision related to the event.



#5

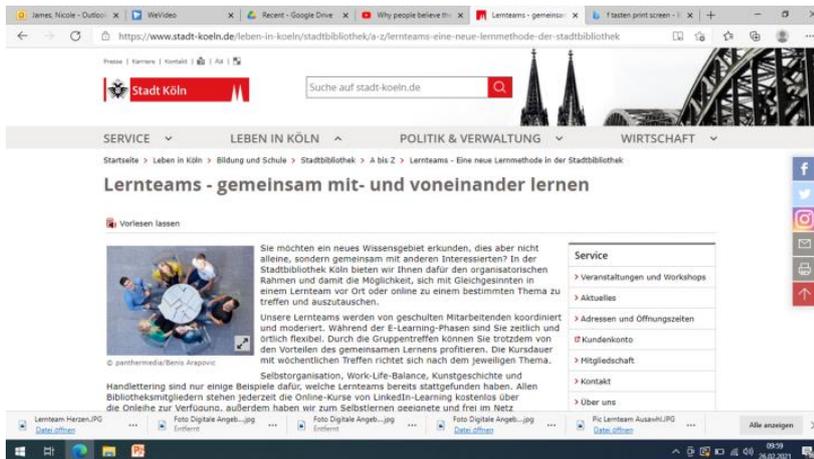
Marketing online -
providing library
services in the
community

As part of our project, we have done our own learning circles and that has helped us understand the way in which one may experience it as an organizer, facilitator or participant. Sharing stories of success, providing testimonials and maybe following up with some of the participants is crucial in establishing the learning circles as a library service.

A view from Germany

Among the top ten online courses that visitors to the Cologne Public Library said they were interested in was an online art history course, offered by the Städel Museum in Frankfurt. The learning circle benefited greatly from the excellent quality of the online course and the various interest and knowledge backgrounds of the participants. The online course was professionally made, in German, and divided into five sections, ideal for a five-week learning circle. Eight participants signed up, all women, from their twenties to their fifties. Most just liked art or had a rudimentary knowledge of art history, one had a degree in art history and one woman took the course to refresh her knowledge as she completed her doctorate in art history. Everyone watched the course video together on the big screen, did the quizzes and questionnaires that were built into the course together, and spent much time discussing various artists and artworks.

Due to the shared interest in art and enthusiasm for the subject, an affinity for others in the learning circle was quickly established, allowing for free and easy discussions. Everyone benefited from the different insights and knowledge of the others. After completing the course, it was decided to go on an excursion and visit the museum in Frankfurt.



In their feedback, the participants emphasized how much they enjoyed the group discussions, how much they liked the course format and how they appreciated the reminder emails they received each week. One participant summed up the general response nicely: “I think it's a really great learning method that, if I hadn't done it myself, I probably would have said that it could not possibly be effective. But it was a really good educational experience and it worked so well.”

A view from Romania

New library professionals in Romania who participated in the Online Summer School for young Librarians in 2020 asked for further support in project management and grants writing. The online course we used for this learning circle, designed by Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDf), covered the basics of proposals writing, in a practical and simplified manner which was suitable for learners who had no or very little experience

CERCUL DE ÎNVĂȚARE
 SCRIEREA UNEI PROPUNERI DE FINANȚARE

Bună dimineața!

Vreau să vă văd fața!!
în toate aceste zile!!!!

Nov 13, 2020 10:30
 Nov 20, 2020 10:30
 Nov 27, 2020 10:30
 Dec 4, 2020 10:30
 Dec 11, 2020 10:30
 Dec 18, 2020 10:30
 Dec 25, 2020 10:30

in this field. 22 young librarians signed up, and the participation remained over 13 people throughout the 6 learning circle meetings. Though the group was quite large, the information exchange went smoothly, with no incidents, as all learners were very motivated to learn from and to share with their peers. Also, as it was not their first online-group learning experience (they were colleagues in a week-long online training a few months before), the group dynamics were already harmonized for efficient learning.



The practical group sessions were a good opportunity for these young professionals to get familiarized with new potential library programs for diverse community groups, as all project ideas were (and still are) available to the group on etherpad. The feedback was positive, as the participants

acknowledged the advantages of the online-learning circle format: it's comfortable, easy to follow and the covered notions were well explained. Most participants said they want to take the next step and write project-proposals for their libraries, and become part of project implementing teams.

Once these events are ready, what librarians can and must do, is to either gather video testimonials from the participants, write articles with a few pictures as above, or if they are really brave, they can document the whole event in a series of digital stories. A series of such stories can be retrieved in the channel of this project. These can be used as both motivators, triggers for community members but also as strong advocacy tools for libraries themselves in their attempt to secure public funding and prove their importance for community life, its wellbeing and prosperity.

