

Atlantic Social Lab

Cooperation for the promotion of Social Innovation

Atlantic Social Lab Final Conference will take place at the Social Innovation Fair host by Glasgow Caledonian University in May

The final event of the Atlantic Social Lab project will be integrated in the Social Innovation Fair – an event held by the Glasgow Caledonian University on 18-19 May. In general, this event will showcase a variety of social innovation projects taking place across Europe. On the first day, participants can visit stands set up by partner organisations to learn more about each project and its impact. In addition, a number of projects will be hosting one-hour sessions to give attendees a deeper understanding of the work being done. One of these sessions will be dedicated to the presentation of the main findings of the Atlantic Social Lab.



On the second day of the conference, roundtable discussions will be held to deepen the meaning of social innovation in the networks and communities to which participants belong. Attendees will explore different ways of collaboration to further increase the impact of social innovation.

The Social Innovation Fair is an annual event that aims to showcase innovative social projects and initiatives that address various societal challenges. Anyone interested in social innovation and entrepreneurship can attend the fair free of charge.

You can find further information [here!](#)

Atlantic Social Lab Partnership Meets in Guimarães

The Atlantic Social Lab (ASL) partners met last 16-17 March 2023 in Guimarães (Portugal) for the third coordination meeting of the extension phase of the project. This meeting was organised by the municipal Community of Ave and aimed to outline the project's accomplishments at each work package.

The implemented pilot actions, one of the main focuses of the Atlantic Social Lab, are already being evaluated by the partner Centre for Social Studies (Portugal). This evaluation will provide a solid view of the pilot actions, including the main barriers and facilitators of the implementation, the activities developed and the achieved results. The main objective of these pilot actions is the digitalisation of social services in a post-Covid-19 scenario.

In order to identify good practices that can benefit the project's interventions, the project's partnership meetings often include visits to local social innovation initiatives. Therefore, on the first day, partners visited the Museu da Palha - Centro de Etnologia e

Design de Golães (Straw Museum - Centre for Ethnology and Design of Golães) and the Oficina Criativa da Trança da Palha (Creative Workshop for Wickerwork) in Casa do Povo in Fafe, facilitated by the CLDS do Sol do Ave team. This visit aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the art of straw weaving, combining tradition and innovation.

The second day was largely devoted to a study visit to the Centro de Acolhimento de Emergência Social de Guimarães (Social Emergency Shelter Centre) in the municipality of Atães and to the Comunidade Criativa de Inclusão Digital (Creative Community of Digital Inclusion). The latter is an itinerant project developed by the Delegação da Cruz Vermelha de Guimarães (Red Cross Delegation of Guimarães) aimed to promote youth volunteering to involve the most vulnerable population groups at risk of digital exclusion in the development of their digital skills.



Atlantic Social Lab Partnership at Guimarães

The next partnership meeting is planned for May in Glasgow (Scotland).

The main goal of this initiative is to provide young people with information on how to have fun safely and responsibly, especially during the holiday season.



Info Jeunes Toulouse Podcast, Episode 1

You can listen to the podcast [here!](#)

Column "Our Partners' Perspectives"

Atlantic Social Lab is being developed by a multiactor and multidisciplinary partnership that includes government bodies, social services, private non-profit associations, social enterprises and universities. This partnership encompasses a variety of perspectives around a common goal: the use of digitalisation as a driver for social innovation in the Atlantic Area.

Francisco Javier, the representative of the Municipality of Avilés, the lead partner, shares his thoughts from a governance perspective on the importance of social innovation and digitalisation in a post-covid world. For about 10 years, he has been working for the Social Services Department of the City of Avilés. Recently, he has been actively involved in the development of short-term policies and has taken responsibility for the management of the social services budget. During our interview, we discussed both the advantages and disadvantages of digitalisation.

Info Jeunes Toulouse presents its first podcast "I'm celebrating, don't mess with my head!"

Info Jeunes Toulouse has recently launched its first podcast called "I'm celebrating, don't mess with my head!". This podcast was produced by young people aged 15-30 and their team as part of the #AAP Toulouse - Mairie et Métropole: "Young people get involved in the fight against sexist and sexual violence experienced in the party environment".



Francisco Javier – ASL's main leader
and representative of Avilés municipality

Interviewer: Covid-19 ended up underlining the importance of digitalisation in contemporary societies and being a catalyst for accelerating this process. In your opinion, what social advantages can the digital transition bring?

Francisco Javier: Digitalisation, particularly in the context of our community work, offers a viable means of improving outreach and engagement with people. But we are facing significant challenges with some of our users because we have a real problem with the digitalisation of these people. So, sometimes we have to adapt our policies to these people because they don't have internet access or don't use social media. This means we are concerned about adapting our campaigns or advertising to these people. So, I think it's a real challenge to improve digitalisation or access to digitalisation for people with difficulties or who are users of social services. And also, from my point of view, it will be cheaper, because if you have general access to the internet or social networks, it will be easier to get information, because you have to invest time and sometimes money to get some information that is sometimes free on the web or the social network of the municipality. For our organisation, however, this represents a significant challenge that we are actively addressing. In particular, there are certain segments of our population where the process of digitalisation has not yet been fully completed. So, we have to work on that.

Interviewer: The digital divide also became very clear with the pandemic because people with less access to technology ended up having difficulties. From your experience, what other disadvantages do you think the digital transition can bring and what strategies can help to overcome them?

Francisco Javier: I think most people are used to receiving certain services through face-to-face interaction. In Spain, for example, we have started experiments with some health services to develop consultations with the doctor via apps. And it will not be easy. People are not used to it, and in some regions of Spain there are even strikes on the streets. So, I think we have to change the perception of digitalisation. While it can serve as a valuable supplement in certain services, such as social services, it cannot entirely replace the face-to-face context.

Interviewer: In your organisation, has the topic of digitalisation been central, or has it going centrality in recent years? How was or has been the process of transition to digitalisation in your organisation?

Francisco Javier: At the moment, digitisation is not a central focus of our organisation. We are developing a new web in the municipality to filter all the information that people can access. But it's not ready yet and I think we have a long way to go to get people there. As I said, people are used to personal interaction with the municipality. And it's not just social services, so it's difficult to change people to get some papers or some documents or something. They have access and they can do it, yes, with a certificate, you know, but we have some experience with that and people who use our service, less than 10% have the necessary knowledge to interact with our municipality. So, getting people used to it is a big barrier. So, for me the first barrier is access to technology. Not to the mobile phone or to the computer, but they don't know how to use it in a proper way to interact with the municipality, because as a municipality we are very formal. Connecting with individuals within our organisation is not as straightforward as it might be with other entities due to the abundance of strict regulations surrounding the handling of personal information. Essentially, we have to prioritise the protection of this sensitive data above all else when establishing connections. And we also have a lot of deadlines to comply with. So, I don't think it's easy.



Recent Events Participated by Atlantic Social Lab

XII Portuguese Congress of Sociology in Coimbra (Portugal)

On the 5th of April, under the title "Social Innovation and Digital Transition in the Atlantic Area: Pilot experiences to respond to new social needs with the Covid-19 pandemic", the research team of the Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra presented the Atlantic Social Lab project.

Open Masterclass on Social Innovation and Territorial Dynamics in Algarve (Portugal)

An open masterclass on social innovation and territorial dynamics was held on 26th April at the University of the Algarve's Faculty of Economics by Hugo Pinto, Professor at the Faculty of Economics and CinTurs researcher and Principal Investigator of the Atlantic Social Lab at CES-University of Coimbra.



Open Masterclass on Social Innovation and Territorial Dynamics



Professor Hugo Pinto presenting the Open Masterclass

The Atlantic Social Lab, led by Avilés City Council (Spain) is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through the INTERREG Cooperation Program Atlantic Area, with the reference EAPA_246/2016

Partners

