

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



Research on digitalisation, artificial intelligence (AI) and young people

Concept note

Rationale

In 2018, the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership organised the Symposium ‘Young people, social inclusion and digitalisation’, which produced a set of conclusions indicating, among others, the need to better understand the reality of digitalisation in young people’s lives, levels of digital literacy, the implications for the youth sector, the adaptations required from youth work and youth policy.

In 2019 and 2020, the Youth Partnership further analysed the impact of digitalisation on young people’s lives, mapping current policy frameworks in the field, and existing digital tools and platforms for young people and youth workers, aimed at enhancing social inclusion of young people. In 2020 and 2021, the implications of the findings of the [study](#) were further explored in the context of Covid-19 pandemic and increasing use of digital tools.

Concerning AI, the Youth Partnership supported the seminar “AI and young people” of the Council of Europe Youth Department in December 2019 and, throughout 2020, the results of the research to date were communicated in adapted formats to various audiences (notably through the contribution to a webinar for the European Youth Event, webinars and papers through the [Perspectives on Youth](#) and a Youth Knowledge Book on the topic). In 2021, the [Youth Knowledge Book](#) on digitalisation and social inclusion of young people was widely communicated and disseminated, notably through visuals and [podcast episodes](#).

With digital transitions dominating societal and youth transitions, in 2021, initiatives are underway in the partner institutions to understand, create standards and make better use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) developments. AI is already defining the way information is accessed and understood, the way support systems and services operate (or apply algorithm discrimination). To help the youth sector understand the role of AI in the future, the Youth Partnership aims to launch a study on AI relevance and impact on young people, involving relevant Council of Europe (CCJ) and EU (Salto) partners. This study will contribute to developing knowledge and a better understanding of the perspectives and

opportunities offered by digital transitions in a broad sense, which is one of the objectives of the European Year of Youth.

Purpose and expected outcomes

In line with our work on the topic of digitalisation and social inclusion of young people, the overall aim of this study is to better understand how AI impacts the lives of young people, taking into account their current and foreseeable needs. This will build on the work on digitalisation and social inclusion and access to rights and will also examine the impact of AI on young people's financial autonomy, the economy and future of work.

The project will further explore the potential and limits of AI and the relevance of this topic in the context of Covid-19 pandemic and the increasing reliance on digital tools. It will also promote ways to positively use digital technologies for youth, to mitigate the risk of increasing the digital divide and alienation in virtual reality, as well as to encourage policies and practice enabling social inclusion through digitalisation and AI-powered tools. The findings of the study are to be promoted among wide, non-specialised public in an accessible manner.

The potential of the youth sector in furthering these reflections will be highlighted. This research will also contribute to the seminar on AI of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and to the Council of Europe's Youth Campaign, which is expected to be launched in March 2022 and whose focus will be revitalising democracy, youth participation and digitalisation.

Expected outcomes:

- study on AI and young people;
- knowledge translation and development of related materials presenting conclusions of the research on AI and young people (policy briefs, infographics), and inspiring examples of policy measures, risks and opportunities, tools for youth practitioners and suggestions for further research agenda to be implemented at different levels, in view of the ongoing and upcoming developments within the two partner institutions, and in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the potential and limits of digitalisation and artificial intelligence, as well as implications for the individual, society and the labour market;
- development of communication materials and promotion of the outputs of the study at relevant events, including the seminar on AI and young people of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

Target group, timeline and place

Policy makers, youth work practitioners, experts from other relevant fields, researchers, bloggers, youtubers, etc. and young people.

2022:

- Establishing the Steering Group for the research on AI and setting up the research team
- Preliminary research and analysis of materials, preparation of the study
- Presentation of preliminary findings
- Development of promotional and communication materials, presenting the findings of the study in different formats

2023:

- Finalising the research based on feedback from the Steering Group and other relevant experts
- Development of promotional and communication materials, presenting the findings of the study in different formats