

The Importance of Being a **Lifelong Learner**

The Foundation for Lifelong Learning, PERITIA, is a non-profit organisation based in Poznan, Poland, with the aim of carrying out comprehensive activity towards the concept of lifelong learning through conducting training, educational activities and more. CEO **Monika Łagodzińska** shares her passion of encouraging lifelong learning, and about their recent event in Brussels.



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HQ: What are some of the biggest insights from your recent event, ‘Fundamental Rights Vs. Artificial Intelligence, Together or Separate?’

ML: The round table revealed the need to continue on with next events, meetings, workshops, and round tables with regards to fundamental rights and artificial intelligence, as well as ethics and values. We need to build a broad understanding and raise awareness that we are now shaping the future of humans; we need everybody on board, the higher diversity and multidisciplinary teams, the better.

The majority of events on AI having 70-80% of male speakers, and 80-90% of the industry are young 20+ males who are behind the algorithms. Robots and machines programmed by more diversified and multidisciplinary teams would serve humans best, and increase the chance on equality and inclusion.

In our case the majority were female speakers. It was, in my opinion, very encouraging for female participants to speak freely and actively participate in the discussions. The event dedicated 60% time for speakers and 40% for participants, devoting time for everybody to share.

At the starting point of the event, we gathered from the audience that the general consensus of this event was interesting, timely, needed yet scary, and strange. At the end of the meeting, the audience still finds it interesting, but also motivating, inspiring and uplifting.



For a Polish association, why was Brussels chosen to host the event?

Brussels is a natural choice when you consider Fundamental Rights and Artificial Intelligence, as well as ethics, values, inclusion and equality. Not only because of the European institutions but also due to activities undertaken by the NGO/CSO world, and building European and global awareness.

The event took place on 17th September at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. We began looking for interesting and inspiring speakers in Brussels (*as well as for partners*) much earlier in 2018. We had great help and support from Mr Jan Lichota from the Association Bureau Services at the visit.brussels, and EESC member Mr Pavel Trantina. It was our first event in Brussels and their help was essential.

We would not be able to have such an interesting event without the great speakers: Ann Nowé, VUB; Israel Butler, Civil Liberties Union for Europe; Ellas Papadopoulou, European Commission; Madi Sharma, Entrepreneur; Inese Podgaiska, Association of Nordic Engineers; Maarit Palovirta, Internet Society, and Ray Pinto, DIGITALEUROPE. I am very grateful they agreed to be a part of our event.

What is the role of AI in education, in the near foreseeable future?

I believe that Artificial Intelligence will be able to make the educational experience more efficient and interesting as well as engaging. We already have a high number of webinars, different online courses, education via the Internet. While a vast knowledge is easily accessible online, you need to know how to find what interest you most and practice to find the proper data and information. The main issues are content and quality.

If online education can be more dedicated to individual needs due to AI, we can lower the drop-out rate. Moreover, more customized books, learning materials will most probably positively influence the students' approach towards learning in general.

Should associations invest more budgets to implement new technology in their educational sessions? (Traditional educational programmes vs. webinars, seminars and educational sessions)

We can learn from the data coming from the event industry, that people want to meet other people – the human nature will most probably stay with us for a while. Yet due to time and costs, and arising opportunities with AI, machine learning, 5G network etc., we may expect some behavioural shifts in activities, including educational sessions.

AI allows customisation of the methods, time frames, and steps of learning to the individual needs. NGO/CSO and associations should implement new technology in their educational processes and events, to make them more engaging and beneficial to the participants.

How do you encourage association members to adopt life-long learning?

Life-long learning is a mind-set.

When you consider the data (*from World Economic Forum*) that 75 million jobs may be lost by 2022, yet over 120 million new jobs will be created due to Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, robotics etc., then every day education should be as natural as breathing. There are no lifelong jobs nor lifelong employers anymore.

The trend is that there will be more people working as freelancers, and working hours will decrease as machines take over more tasks as they work better and faster than humans. We live in a world where change is the only constant, therefore we need to keep up with learning and trying new things, and thinking about AI as a tool that can help us have a better and more satisfying life.

On the other hand, it is now time to start with education in schools or even in kindergartens on the soft skills, communications skills, cooperation and the role of inclusion, equality and fundamental rights. And I believe that the role for NGO/CSO and associations is crucial in building and shaping the growth mind-set.

