

# MANAGING DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

InterCity Youth Conference, Thessaloniki 8-10 October 2018

Lasse Siurala, Adjunct Professor, Aalto University  
Lasse.siurala@welho.com

## 1. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Estonian EU –presidency (latter half of 2017) launched the digital youth work concept of ”Smart Youth Work”, which focused at 1) activities aimed at youths, 2) development needs of youth workers for implementing smart youth work and 3) developing quality of youth work and a better knowledge of youths using digital means (Estonian Youth Work Centre). Later in 2017 the Council of the European Union adopted ”Council conclusions on Smart Youth Work”, which strongly emphasized the importance of digital youth work (Council conclusions 2017, 2)<sup>1</sup> It further ”recognized” the role of technologies and the digital media to promote young people’s future job market and career perspectives, the digital gap and, in general, the ”management of risks of the digital era”. The European Union overall youth policy objectives of labor market integration and concern of young people with fewer opportunities also apply to digital youth work. It is important to understand this basic underlying motivation of EU (the economic agenda) in its policies and programs.

However, when the Council conclusions move on to things which it finally wanted to ”underline”, a youth policy thinking closer to the Council of Europe youth policy agenda (the active citizenship agenda) becomes more visible. The Council emphasizes that smart youth work should ”enrich the opportunities of all young people for information, for access to youth work, for participation, for non-formal and informal learning” and ”support the motivation, capacity and competence building of youth workers and youth leaders to be able to develop and implement smart youth work (Council conclusions 2017, 4). The Council conclusions are essentially based on the EU Expert Group report ”Developing digital youth work” (2017) which further elaborates the key elements of Smart Youth work or Digital Youth Work. The difference between these two concepts is not significant.

The (Commission’s proposal for a) new EU Youth Strategy (2021-2027) titled ”Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people” starts by saying ”... young people enrich the EU’s ambitions: this generation is the best educated ever and among the most creative in using Information and Communication Technologies and social media.” (COM(2018) 269 final, 1). It is because ”... the virtual world: digital technologies have revolutionised young people’s lives in many ways and policies need to consider both opportunities and challenges, by tapping the potential of social media, equipping youth with digital skills and fostering critical thinking and media literacy

---

<sup>1</sup>”Digital media and technologies are increasingly part of everyday life and one of the supporting pillars for innovation and development in society. It is evident that young people are one of the catalyst for societal change, and this is due, inter alia, to their active embracing of digital media and technologies. Technological developments open great potential for empowerment of youth by providing access to information and by enriching opportunities for enhancing one’s personal capabilities and competences; providing opportunities for connectivity and interaction with others but also for voicing one’s opinions, for creativity, for self-realisation of one’s rights and active citizenship.”

(idem, 3). Thus "Youth workers themselves, on the other hand, need to adapt to changing needs and habits of young people and technological change. Youth workers have to upgrade their skills to understand the issues youth face online and exploit new opportunities offered by digital learning" (idem, 7), including for example "...online activism, media literacy and virtual youth exchanges". Finally, the strategy wants also to focus on (1) Supporting mutual learning and evidence building on digital youth work and on (2) Adapting to digital opportunities: the structure, methods and communication channels of youth work should adapt to the digital world: it should use technology and pedagogical practices to increase access and help young people cope with digital means. Digital youth work should be incorporated into youth workers' training and – where they exist – youth work occupational and competence standards (idem, 7).

During quite a short period of time the Intergovernmental European organizations have moved from almost complete silence to become an active and determinate proponent and driver of digital youth work – at least in the official statements and recommendations. The political support is very strong. It is reasonable to expect that digital youth work will also be visible in the financial and activity support instruments of the two organizations.

## 2. WHAT IS DIGITAL YOUTH WORK AND WHY DO WE NEED TO MANAGE IT?

*"Innovation is not just about 'light bulb' moments of creativity, but requires strategic leadership"*

Bessan et al 2010 Leading and Nurturing Innovation in the Public Sector

The EU Expert Group on digital youth work defined digital youth work (2018)<sup>2</sup> as follows:

- Digital youth work means **proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work**.
- Digital youth work is not a youth work method – digital youth work **can be included in any youth work setting** (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work...).
- Digital youth work has the **same goals as youth work in general**, and using digital media and technology in youth work should always support these goals.
- Digital youth work can happen **in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments** – or in a mixture of these two. Digital media and technology can be used either as a tool, an activity or a content in youth work.
- Digital youth work is underpinned by the same ethics, values and principles as youth work.
- Youth workers in this context refer to both paid and volunteer youth workers.

The world is becoming digitalized and young people are at the heart of this development. Youth work cannot stay outside. Depending on how we adapt to digitalization we will either lag behind or create a better way of reaching young people. If we "proactively use or address digital media and

---

<sup>2</sup> **Developing digital youth work. Policy recommendations and training needs.** Expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018, Luxembourg 2018

technology in youth work”, as the Expert Group suggests, digital youth work will be sooner an integral part of developing youth work. To arrive there we need leadership and management.

Digital youth work is a complex phenomena linked with a global trend of *digitalization* and the *digital cultures* of young people - the ways that young people use, modify and are used by digital media. Most probably all this has a crucial effect on youth work as we know it. The definition above argues that digital youth work is not separate from youth work, but an essential element of it. It is, however, something new and quickly developing and thus proper management is needed to overcome resistance and to facilitate smooth transition. The report calls for a 'proactive attitude' to use and develop digital media and technology – an *agile* organizational mindset<sup>3</sup>. At its best digital youth work can renew youth work to reach new young people and to better respond to their expectations. This renovation process, as any change, is a challenge to transition management, or a challenge to leadership to create an agile organizational mindset.

Doing digital youth work is not only about young people and youth workers having an access to the most modern mobile phones, efficient computers, networks, computer games, 3D printers, robotics etc. It is primarily about two other things: having a digital strategy and an organizational culture which supports digital youth work. As Abhimanyu Verma (2018) has said: "(What we should do is) setting the right strategy and creating the culture to execute. It's about the people, not the technology."

To summarize the key reasons for the need of management of digital youth work are:

- Proactive use of the new media needs support from the management
- Innovation requires leadership
- Empowering sceptical youth workers to see digital youth work as an opportunity – managing resistance to change
- Complexity of the phenomena – building a common framework
- Ensuring that a strategy based on a common framework will be implemented
- Agile organizational culture is a leadership challenge
- Bringing different actors together – managing collaboration

The Thessaloniki Working Groups will discuss and prepare guidelines for (1) a *management strategy for youth work organizations to drive forward digital youth work* and (2) a *working culture which supports digital youth work*.

### 3. PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF 'DIGITALIZATION'.

The term digitization is used when diverse forms of information, such as an object, text, sound, image or voice, are converted into a single binary code. Digital information has had a drastic effect on private business and economy, gradually also public services and the Third Sector, but there is also a fierce debate about its broader societal impact. How is it affecting, positively and negatively, issues such as jobs, wage, inequality, sustainable development, security and, more recently, democracy. On a global scale digitalization effects labour markets. It provides new jobs and makes people unemployed. The main solutions to these issues go beyond youth work, but there is space for

---

<sup>3</sup> Agility is the ability of an organization to renew itself, adapt, change quickly, and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment – a youth work organization.

youth work to prepare young people to the digitalization of working life. Another societal issue mentioned above is sustainable development and climate change.

Another large scale global issue is sustainable development and climate change. ICT as such has a significant carbon footprint, but also has potential to reduce it (Hilty & Bieser 2017). Young people, as natural ICT users, can add to this potential; they can be significant players in supporting and innovating sustainable development through digital participation and activism. New opportunities like the UNICEF Climate Change Map can boost young people's awareness and agency of climate change (see [climatesummit.unicef-gis.org/](https://climatesummit.unicef-gis.org/)). Furthermore, young people must critically understand the public debate and rhetoric of climate change; how for example the Trump administration censors climate change webpages and affects the public image and imagery of it. Young people's active use of the digital media (social media, art, video and visualizations) offers an opportunity for alternative climate imagery; raising awareness of the effects of climate change and suggesting ways for counteraction (Wang, S et al. 2018).

A third global issue of digitalization concerns social trust and democracy; unethical use of data, digital literacy to understand privacy rules, ethical use of information, critical attitude at global media business, political misuse of data and advanced digital surveillance<sup>4</sup>. Economist, Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz has recently warned about the negative effects of the global monopoly of the big technology corporations: They cut down wages, raise prices, obstruct competition by buying out smaller companies, use unethically big data, create inequality etc (Stiglitz 2012, 2018).

The Expert Group on digital youth work lists following challenges for the youth field:

- To understand how digitalization is shaping the societies, including its impact on youth work and on young people
- To be able to take young people's digital cultures into account in youth work practices
- To be able to encourage young people to shape the process of digitalization themselves

#### 4. KEY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FOR TRANSFORMATION TO DIGITAL YOUTH WORK

According to recent literature on the management of digital change in private and public organizations (Anderson et al. 2018, Soule et al. 2016, Gupta 2018, Galunic 2017) the key challenges can be summarized as follows. There is no reason to doubt that these challenges can be applied to the management of digital youth work in its various 3rd Sector organizational contexts, as well. There are two groups of things:

- (1) Visible leadership, clear objectives, their implementation and measures to combat resistance
- (2) A working culture which supports digitalization (networking capability, digital skills and focus on continuous development).

##### 4.1. A VISIBLE LEADER

**The manager(s) must give the face to digital youth work.** As Anderson et al. (2018) conclude:

---

<sup>4</sup> Freedom House organization estimates that only about 20% of world's citizens are free and safe from surveillance by mostly authoritarian regimes, like China, Russia, Iran, Syria and Turkey: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2017>.

” The presence of a dedicated CEO and a central team to propel the new digital development is central in achieving successful transformation.” A common mistake is that the directors nominate the IT unit of the organization, an external expert or a group of digitally minded employees to promote the digital development of the organization. However, these actors lack either credibility or power in the eyes of the employees to make the necessary changes. As the directors fade in the background it is easily understood as a message that ” it is not that important” . To be successful the manager(s) must publicly and clearly make the digital change *their* priority.

#### 4.2. THE NORTH STAR AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

**A North Star to show the direction.** Digital change in youth work requires clear objectives, whether it be ” digital literacy” , ” safe place for finding and meeting friends” , ” digital creativity” , ” active e-citizenship” , ” increasing access to youth services through digital media” or the like. It can be a North Star which shines brightly indicating the direction, it can be a Roadmap and a GPS to indicate the journey to be taken and to find out where you have proceeded at a given moment, a Strategic Plan with aims, expected results, time horizon, means and criteria for evaluation or a Priority Plan indicating what is at the moment most important for your organization to achieve. A plan of any sort also requires its implementation - strategic management, which can be anything from strict top-down management to horizontal teamwork and networking.

**Establishing a common framework and objectives for local digital youth work.** The Finnish study on digital youth work (Verke 2017) showed that the main obstacles for youth workers to do and develop digital youth work were experienced as follows:

Lacking clear objectives for digital youth work	61%
Too little time allocated for digital youth work	51%
Personal technical competency is not sufficient	49%
Does not know well enough the digital cultures of young people	46%

The single most important obstacle (61%) was that the youth work organization, despite it’s overall positive attitude to digital youth work and despite the existence of *national* objectives, did not have clear enough objectives for their local digital youth work. Only 11% of the youth work managers said that a specific digital youth work strategy or plan was part of their annual organizational plan, while 34% said that their digital youth work strategy was included in the general annual plan. Consequently, setting clear guidelines for digital youth work should be a starting point.

Following 10 steps are needed to establish the objectives and to manage their implementation:

1. **Gathering knowledge** on (1) local digital youth work, (2) young people’s use of digital media and technology<sup>5</sup> and (3) digital youth work competences of youth workers

---

<sup>5</sup> According to a recent survey on youth in Finland (Youth Barometre 2018, 155) the majority of young people responded that *IT and digital skills* are ”important” of ”very important” ”in order to manage in their lives” (80%). Almost as many (73%) believed in the importance of *media skills*. At the same time as the conclusion is that young people appreciate such skills, it is interesting, and perhaps surprising, to note that among a list of 18 skills, media and digital skills did not rank on the top. *IT and digital skills* was only the 12th important skill and *media skills* the 15th. The most important was ’social skills’ followed by ”language skills” and ”decision making skills”. The least important skills, just after *media skills*, were *creativity* followed by *participating* at the very bottom. As to the efforts of youth

2. **Elaborating objectives** for digital youth work and putting them within the framework of existing objectives and values of local youth work (a Roadmap, Strategic Plan, Priority Plan, a North Star).
3. **Communicating and discussing** the objectives within the organization.
4. **Establishing a training plan for all youth workers** (see EU Expert Group report)
5. **Providing encouragement, space (working hours) and resources for on-the-job development of digital youth work.**
6. **Mapping cooperation partners** within the City and other service providers, research, training, companies, organizations to establish collaborative relationships, networks or Platforms
7. **Using digital youth work competences in recruitment.** Using digital youth work competences as a recruitment criteria all through the process; in job advertisement, during interviews and in making recruitment decisions.
8. **Linking objectives to budget heads.** A long history of municipal youth policy plans all over Europe indicates that the main reason for their relatively high failure has not been lack of good will, but lack of proper allocation of budgets (Siurala 2005, Dumollard & Loncle 2017, 110).
9. **Setting evaluation criteria.** The Finnish survey (2017) on digital youth work showed that many (42%) do not evaluate at all digital youth work and only a small minority (16%) had set evaluation criteria for digital work. The report concluded that "evaluation of digital youth work is rare" (idem, 37). One should evaluate both the processes and outcomes of digital youth work. There are numerous evaluation methods of quality youth work available and most of them are applicable to on-line contexts (see for example ICY material on quality youth work: [www.intercityyouth.eu](http://www.intercityyouth.eu)).
10. **Nurturing an agile mindset and critical thinking.** "Agile Mindset" has become a tag-word in recent organizational discussions<sup>6</sup>. The emerging network-type organizations amidst constant change and invasion of digital and technological opportunities has highlighted the importance of the employees, the organizations and the managers to become 'agile', flexible and quick to respond to changes. Within the youth field another mindset or attitude might be equally important: a "critical media attitude", or "media literacy"<sup>7</sup>.

---

work to mobilise young people into digital youth work activities, the results clearly indicate that, even if young people find *IT, digital and media skills* important, they are not at the top of their learning preferences. Furthermore, according to the report, the biggest challenge appears to be digital participation.

<sup>6</sup> See for example; Rigby, Sutherland & Noble: "Agile Scale", Harvard Business Review, May – June 2018, 88-96

<sup>7</sup> As the EU Council recommendation (referred above) recognized, digitalization is also linked with a variety of risks which should be managed. Recent problems are about the links of social media to privacy questions, intellectual property rights, security and safety, manipulating elections, distorting democratic processes, appearance of drug markets in the Internet, nurturing terrorism, adverse effects on health and social relations, bullying and harassment not to mention increasingly aggressive marketing.

A corollary to agile mindset - proactive use of media and technology and critical attitude - is an overall 'developmental attitude' or "focus on continuous development". Development requires innovation, which is not primarily an individual characteristic but an organizational character (Bessan et al, 2010). Innovation can and should be managed. Innovation in organizations typically proceed in steps, which which should take place under the supervision of the leadership of the organization.

### 4.3. OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

*" Traditional mindsets, practices, and resources can be difficult to adapt to the digital challenge. "*

Anderson et al. 2018, Managing Digital Transformation

Digital youth work is a relatively new form of youth work and it easily raises suspicions and doubts. It can contradict the established mode of youth work – face to face encounter in the physical reality. Managers need to create opportunities for the staff to learn about the meaning of new media to young people, the ways that youth use the media and their digital cultures. Furthermore, the staff should reflect how the use of digital media could improve, not only the work with the young people, but also their other daily work.

There are many options to support and promote a curious, critical and positive orientation – an agile mindset - to the digital media and technology. These approaches include:

- using strategic management tools (making digital youth work a priority, integrating it into the Balanced Score Card, Quality assessment tools, efficiency indicators and the like)
- having a proper dialogue on digital youth work with the staff (led by the director)
- doing study visits
- utilizing peer learning (like *Digital Fairs* where youth workers introduce their colleagues their digital projects and experiences)
- providing a reading list
- always engage the entire staff
- acknowledge problems and threats, but frame digital youth work as an opportunity

Bigger youth service organizations have middle managers, who often perceive digital change as a threat. First, because they might experience that digital change creates a direct link between youth/youth workers and the directors which is a direct assault on middle managers' sense of control and expertise. They lose their gate-keeper function. Second, middle managers are the most busy ones overloaded with administrative tasks and they often don't have the time for new projects and activities.

Charles Galunic (2017) has studied organization which have managed a digital change strategy. He suggest three steps to facilitate the change. First, *Creating a sense of opportunity, not threat*, which is targeted at staff and at the middle-managers. Digital change is sometimes a jump into the unknown and there is a lot of ambiguity, uncertainty and un-answered questions. This is why the reason and objectives of the changes must be clearly articulated and discussed. Why, for example, do we need to improve young people' s ' digital literacy' and what kind of measures do we need to develop to reach that. Second, we need to *create a narrative to educate*. It is not enough that the directors give their face to the change, but we also need to use in our organization those who are

more experienced in digital youth work ”to get into the corridors, lunch rooms, meeting areas, virtual chatrooms and engage people” (Galunic 2017). Third, we need to *allocate power and resources to the process*. Youth workers should have the training, the mandate, the working hours and the instruments to go digital with the young people. And the middle-managers should strongly support this.

## 5. CULTURAL CHANGE

*”Culture eats strategy for breakfast”*

Harvard Business Review, Nov -Dec 2017, 46

Our perception of management is often linked with efficiency motivated top-down authoritarian strategic management with strategic plans and priorities utilizing private sector based methodologies like management by results, quality management, EFQM, CAF, other quality assessment schemes, Balanced Score Cards, performance indicators, results or priority –based pay schemes etc. In many countries youth workers find these measures “administrative harassment”, “hostile” or not applicable to youth work (Ord 2012). However, in some other countries the same methods have been used successfully to manage changes in youth work (Siurala 2018). Not going into this debate any further, it is perhaps useful to make a distinction between *strategic planning* and the *cultural capability* of an organization to run through changes. The former – strategic management – has its place and role as was indicated above, but the latter refers to a broader approach which put more emphasis on how the employees work and on how the work is organized. We need both, and perhaps, more so, the latter: ”The right strategy *and* creating the culture to execute. It’s about the people, not the technology.” In private companies the emphasis has traditionally been on managers and management, but in the public sector and the third sector it is often more about ‘culture’. Interestingly, recent trend in private sector management and particularly so in connection with networking and digitalization, there has been an increase interest in ‘culture’ over ‘strategic management’. A vivid example is the quote of this chapter picked up from a recent Harvard Business Review (Dec 2017): ”Culture eats strategy for breakfast”

So why is it that ”digital transformation rests on a cultural transformation”? It is because digitalisation can have an effect on almost everything that the organization does. It means ”Starting with understanding the impact digital has on each sphere of an organization”. It does not mean that the ethos, values and the core of the organization changes, but digitalization can have a deep effect on how things are done: ”how to create this cultural transformation without tearing the current fabric which makes our essential business so successful”. In the business world the cultural changes can be far-ranging: ”...without actively fostering digital cultural characteristics, such as customer centricity, constant experimentation, continuous strategy adaptation, responsiveness or breaking down the silos (cross collaborative teams), that traditionally exist between business and IT, digital transformation efforts flounder.”

What can the expected cultural changes in digital youth work be?

### 5.1. Digital youth work – does it change the youth work as we know it?

As noted above, some authors argue that digitalisation is not only a technological, but also a cultural turn: ”If you want to change the game (of digitalization), you need a change management plan that addresses culture as much as technology.”

Transformation into digital youth work means changing the existing culture of work to better fit with digitalization challenges – a new cultural understanding of what digitalization means to young people and youth work.

Youth work seems to be divided into two (sometimes even opposing) cultures: the proponents and the opponents of digital youth work. Culturally Finland is an example of the former, even if the cultural divide is visible: A recent Finnish survey study (2017, [www.verke.org](http://www.verke.org), 567 respondents) on youth workers and their managers on digital youth work shows that there is an overall interest in the digital contexts of growth of young people, and an unanimous understanding that youth work must operate in these digital settings:

Statement	totally/partly agree	totally/partly disagree
” I want to be updated on the most recent digital contexts of young people”	96%	4%
” Municipal youth work must work in digital contexts”	96%	3%

However, youth workers are divided in how to engage in digital youth work. Roughly (see below),  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the respondents orient very positively at using and developing digital youth work, while  $\frac{1}{4}$  is sceptical or negative:

Statement	totally/partly agree	totally/partly disagree
” Digital media and technology must be used more in face to face youth work”	70%	26%
” The atmosphere in our work community is supportive and encouraging to digital youth work”	73%	27%
” Our work community is ready to experiment with new methods and services using digital media and technology”	76%	24%

In Finland there is still work to align the thinking and attitudes of youth workers (and managers) in digital youth work and to continue to discuss its limits and problems. The debate should be a two-way traffic: The proponents should carefully listen to the criticism of those who have reservations about the digital world. In countries or cities where scepticism to digital youth work is more widespread, the challenge for management is to introduce information exchange on digital youth work and create constructive communication between the 'technomaniacs' and the 'modern-day luddites' (machine breakers).

The key drivers of cultural change in digital youth work are (1) Emphasis on people: The digital skills of Youth workers, (2) Emphasis on the culture of organizations: The digital capabilities of youth work organizations and (3) Less focus on long-term planning, more on continuous development.

## 5.2. Emphasis on people: The digital skills of Youth workers.

The Report of the EU Expert Group (2017) provides an excellent outline of digital 'competences' or 'training needs' of youth workers, roughly a list of 7 training needs for youth workers:

1. Digitalisation of society
2. Planning, designing and evaluating digital youth work
3. Information and data literacy
4. Communication
5. Digital creativity
6. Safety
7. Reflection and evaluation

The report further breaks them down to more concrete training needs and links them to a large number of useful current documents and literature in the member countries. Many of the references are unfortunately in the national mother languages. However, there is an extensive annex on many of the training material in English and other official EU languages.

The list is very extensive and has its focus on *individual* training needs, but we also need skills and competences for a *collective* engagement in the 'new' organizational culture outlined below: networking capacity, teamwork, working with other professional (interprofessional collaboration), collaborative learning, adapting to collaborative governance<sup>8</sup>?

## 5.3. Emphasis on the culture of organizations: The digital capabilities of youth work organizations.

**Networking capability:** Some argue that digitalization leads to moving away from hierarchical autocratic top-down approaches and looking instead to create more open collaborative environments, networking, teamwork and operating through platforms (where different partners can collaborate). We need digital collaborative tools to support communication, collaboration, and rapid feedback within and between the organisation(s). As an example of Platforms, The Helsinki City Youth Services had a "Game House" for young people to play computer games under the supervision of youth workers for free. The Game House quickly developed into a versatile platform for various actors to meet; the young gamers, youth workers, the game industry, University and researchers, employment projects, The Finnish E-sports Federation (NGO) and VERKE (The Finnish Development Centre for Digital Youth Work).

**Digitalizing organisations are becoming more and more user centric:** The success of digital solutions depend on their ability to meet the individual needs of the consumers or customers (Facebook, Tripadvisor, Uber). This is also why organizations develop means of communicating and working directly with the citizens. At the same time user-centrism also increases complexity and the necessity to quick changes as increasingly varied interests should be met and as they tend to

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Collaborative Governance' involves the government, community and private sectors, or some combination of them, communicating with each other and working together to achieve more than any one sector could achieve on its own. Collaborative Governance requires three things, namely: a mandate; leadership; and a forum. The mandate is based on a mutual agreement of the participants. The leadership gathers and manages the sectors through a forum, network or a platform. Then, the members collaborate to develop policies, solutions and answers.

change overnight. This has led the organizations to become increasingly flexible – or agile, if you want.

Youth work, even the Public Sector youth work, has profiled itself as working directly with the young people, giving the voice to them and being flexible in the overall. To the extent all this is factual, youth work should be particularly well equipped to face the challenge of digitalization.

#### 5.4. Less focus on long-term planning, more on continuous development.

Long-term planning is necessary, but due to constant changes and new innovations it is equally important to keep the process open. There is a need for continuous experimentation and innovation, which leads to the necessity of being flexible and being ready to modify the original strategy. This constant adaptation to changes becomes an *internal cultural challenge* – a test of our organizational agility.

A historical note: Youth work has been and still is essentially unsure about its identity. There is a historical and still ongoing discussion on 'what is youth work?' Consequently youth workers sometimes expect *clarity* (of why we are here for? What should we do?) and *continuity*. They would prefer to base their work on an unchangeable, permanent and ahistorical core concept of youth work. Are youth workers ready for increasing ambiguity and readiness for constant change of youth work and its digital forms?

## 6. TO CONCLUDE

We cannot keep digitalization out of youth work. Instead, we should – with a critical mind – elaborate a conscious way to integrate digitalization in our practices, a way which is based on the ethos, values, objectives and competences of youth work, as well as its constantly changing challenges and forms. The main reason must be that we cannot keep young people out of the digital world. To reach and work with young people, we need a strategy and a way of working in all kinds of realities, in virtual and traditional ones. Youth work cannot be like the father who is having a serious talk with his child and says: "We have heard with your Mom that you have been vlogging. We don't know what that is, but we want you to stop it!"

### References

Abhimanyu Verma, Digital Transformation: It's about Strategy and Culture, <https://digital-transformation.cioreviewindia.com/cxoinsight/digital-transformation-driving-modern-infrastructure-nid-3480-cid-1.html>

Andersson, Per, Staffan Movin, Magnus Mähring, Robin Teigland, and Karl Wennberg (eds.) 2018, *Managing Digital Transformation*

Bessant, John & Tim Hughes & Sue Richards (2010): *Beyond Light Bulbs and Pipelines: Leading and Nurturing Innovation in the Public Sector, A report prepared by the Sunningdale Institute for the Cabinet Office*

COM(2018) 269 final: Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy

Council conclusions on smart youth work, Council of the European Union Brussels, 3 November 2017 (OR. En) 13593/17

Developing digital youth work. Policy recommendations and training needs. Expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018, Luxembourg 2018

Dumollard, Marie & Patricia Loncle (2017) Local integrated youth policies in France – What benefits at community level? in Magda Nico & Marti Taru (eds) Needles in haystacks - Finding a way forward for cross sectoral youth policies. Youth Partnership, Youth Knowledge #21, Strasbourg

Estonian Youth Work Centre, The Concept of Smart Youth Work, no printing date, available from entk.ee – webpages

Galunic, Charles (2017) Overcoming Resistance to Digital Change, INSEAD, October 20, 2017

Gupta, Sunil (2018) Understanding Digital Strategy AUGUST 28, 2018

Harvard Business Review; March-April 2018, November-December 2017

Hilty & Bieser 20

Ord, Jon (ed) (2012) Critical Issues in Youth Work Management, Routledge

Rigby, Darrel, Sutherland, Jeff & Noble, Andy: "Agile Scale", Harvard Business Review, May – June 2018, 88-96

Siurala, Lasse (2018) Country context: Finland, in Ord, Jon et al. (eds.): 'The Impact of Youth Work in Europe: A Study of Five European Countries', Humak University of Applied Sciences, Publications 56, Helsinki

Soule, Deborah L. and Puram, Akshita and Westerman, George F. and Bonnet, Didier, Becoming a Digital Organization: The Journey to Digital Dexterity (January 5, 2016). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2697688>

Stiglitz, Joseph (2012) The Price of Inequality

Stiglitz, Joseph (2018) Helsingin Sanomat 19.9.2018, p. 26 (in Finnish)

Wang, Susie, Adam Corner, Daniel Chapman & Ezra Markowitz (2018) Public engagement with climate imagery in a changing digital landscape, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.509>

World Economic Forum (2018?) <http://reports.weforum.org/digital-transformation/understanding-the-impact-of-digitalization-on-society>

Youth Barometre 2017, Byman, R & Korhonen, T & Sintonen, S & Vesterinen, O & Kynäslähti, H; Young people's perception of the importance of digitalisation, Finnish Youth research Society 2018