Interaction Seeds

Raising awareness on Artificial Intelligence in a rural area

Domain: Digital Age

Place: Kozani, Greece

Duration: Three half-a-day workshops

Target audience: CCI Professionals, women and teachers

Mission

In recent years, the Kozani municipality has established itself as a local leader in sustainability and innovation, driving progress in this historically rural area. Through this interaction, a new mission was taken over: support the local population in gaining valuable insights into AI and its far-reaching impact on their daily lives—both personally and professionally. More importantly, a large audience learned how to engage with AI, equipping themselves with the skills needed to adapt and evolve alongside this rapidly advancing technology.

Engagement activities

This interaction was structured around three dedicated workshops, each tailored to a specific audience: professionals from the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), environmental educators, and the general public, with a particular focus on women. Each workshop blended informative presentations, hands-on experimentation with AI, and artistic activities, allowing participants to contextualise their learnings and explore AI's potential through a creative and practical lens.

Artistic activities

Each workshop has been enrich with a broad array of artistic interventions, going from photography, image creation with generative AI, creative writting, creative story telling, music and creative cooking.

IMPACT

Increased AI literacy

Cultural preservation

Development of new educational tools

Connection to local climate neutral goals

Incorporation of modern technologies with cultural heritage

WHAT HAPPEND?

The "House of AI - Kozani Edition", inspired by the House of AI in NIce, France, featured three targeted workshops, each designed to enhance understanding of AI's benefits and practical applications across different sectors.

- **Part 1 (CCI employees):** By exploring AI's role in artistic and creative processes, this first workshop aimed at enabling participants to gain valuable insights and practical skills with Generative AI.

- **Part 2 (environmental educators):** Environmental educators perceive AI as overly complex or disconnected from environmental topics. They need guidance and confidence to incorporate it into their teaching. This session aimed to bridge that gap by demonstrating how AI can be a valuable tool in environmental education.

- **Part 3 (general public and women):** Aligning with the European Week for Waste Reduction, this day was designed with a special focus on women.
  By drawing inspiration from traditional food preservation and waste-minimisation practices, participants explored how historical knowledge can inform modern sustainability efforts.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

Each workshop was structured around presentations on AI and its local impact, practical demonstrations, and artistic activities that engaged participants while fostering a sense of community.

The first workshop introduced **AI's creative potential**, showcasing how GenAI tools can enhance fields such as videography, photography, creative writing, songwriting, editing, and space decoration. While highlighting AI's capacity to support artistic expression, the session also addressed **ethical considerations and potential risks**.

The second workshop focused on **AI's applications in environmental education**, exploring how educators could leverage AI to make cultural heritage more relevant for students while fostering environmental awareness. **AI-powered games** centered on sustainability demonstrated how gamification can make complex topics more engaging. Educators discussed **potential classroom applications** and strategies for customising AI-based learning tools for different age groups, equipping them with **concrete ideas to enhance their teaching**.

The final workshop blended cultural heritage with creative and educational practices. Participants used **AI-generated images to visually reconstruct local households** in Western Macedonia from 1922 to 1944, illustrating shifts in domestic life, household layouts, and community traditions over time. This activity fostered discussions on the **relationship between history, culture, and sustainability**. Local women then led **cooking demonstrations** of traditional recipes, reinterpreted with the support of Generative AI. Alongside these culinary activities, AI facilitated **knowledge-sharing on traditional food management techniques**, such as preservation, fermentation, and storage methods—timeless practices with renewed relevance in today's sustainability efforts.

Artistic activities

All three workshops incorporated artistic activities linked to the use of Generative AI, enhancing participants' engagement and creative exploration.

- **AI generated images :**

AI image generation was a key feature of all three workshops, serving as both a demonstration of the technology and a conversation starter. In the first workshop, participants created images representing their feelings about the rise of Generative AI and its impact on the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI). The second workshop focused on sustainability, generating images of a reimagined urban landscape with green infrastructure, renewable energy sources, and reduced pollution—providing educators with a tool to inspire students to visualise and illustrate their own sustainable city concepts. In the third workshop, AI-generated images of traditional households and recipes sparked discussions on local practices and their relevance to sustainability.

- **Photography exhibition:**

The first workshop was enriched by a photography exhibition curated by the Kozani municipal photography club, *Photodiodos*. Their thought-provoking exhibition, "Meta-anthropos: After-Human", visually explored the evolving relationship between humanity and technology, creating a powerful artistic bridge between AI and the creative sector.

- **Creative writting:**

Mr. Ioannis Farsaris, an advocate for digital commons and creative freedom on the Internet, contributed to all three workshops. As the creator of the Open Library, a key figure in the Fractal literary magazine, and his role in organizing the Student Festival of Digital Creation and the Due to Art and 100 Words in 24 Hours literary competitions, Mr. Farsaris collaborated with CLuBE to develop a creative article reflecting on the themes of the House of AI - Kozani Edition workshops.

- **Traditional music:**

Using ChatGPT, participants of the second workshops explored the meaning and origins of local traditional songs, merging cultural heritage with AI-driven storytelling. This activity demonstrated how AI could transform traditional lyrics and folklore into new artistic expressions—whether poetic, visual, or multimedia—offering educators an innovative way to reconnect students with their cultural roots.

- **Food creation:**

Blending art with tradition, the cooking session of the third workshop provided a hands-on opportunity to engage with culinary heritage. Participants explored time-honored techniques and food preservation methods passed down through generations. This session emphasised the sensory and visual aspects of food creation, highlighting its role as a cultural and artistic practice.

- **Story-telling:**

Finally, the third workshop also provided a space for oral storytelling, recognising spoken word and shared experiences as valuable forms of artistic expression. Participants exchanged personal stories related to food, household traditions, and sustainability, creating a rich tapestry of collective memory. These narratives helped bridge traditional knowledge with contemporary sustainability practices, inspiring new approaches to everyday life.

Impact of the interaction

The three workshops left a profound impact, highlighting the transformative potential of AI in skills and education, sustainability, and cultural preservation. Each workshop empowered participants to creatively engage with AI while connecting it to local and global challenges:

- **First step - AI for employees**:

By integrating ethical considerations—such as data privacy and algorithmic bias—into discussions, the workshops deepened participants' understanding of responsible AI practices. They also showcased how AI and IoT technologies can play a vital role in advancing Kozani's ambitious climate neutrality goals by 2030, demonstrating the power of technology to drive sustainability initiatives. It broadened participants' comprehension of AI applications, advocated for ethical AI protocols and responsible utilisation, ignited creativity, supported sustainability targets and cultivated a culture of community involvement and cooperation throughout Kozani.

- **Second step - AI for educators**:

The workshop raised awareness of AI's educational potential with hands-on experience, leaving the educators more confident in exploring AI's applications in environmental and cultural education. By combining AI with artistic methods, the workshops inspired new ways of teaching that foster creativity and critical thinking. Educators now have practical tools to introduce sustainability and cultural heritage topics to students, making learning more engaging and impactful.

- **Third step - AI for women**:

Beyond education, the workshops celebrated Western Macedonia's rich cultural traditions by incorporating modern technology into the preservation and exploration of local heritage. The activities helped participants connect with the past while addressing contemporary issues like sustainability and food waste. These experiences reinforced the value of traditional practices, offering practical insights into resourceful and environmentally responsible living.

The workshops also created a collaborative environment where professionals and amateurs exchanged ideas, strategies, and experiences. This fostered a strong sense of community, ensuring that the learnings and connections established during the workshops would extend beyond the event. In the third step in particular, empowering women to share their expertise and engaging diverse groups in cultural and educational dialogues strengthened community ties and inspired broader participation in sustainability efforts.
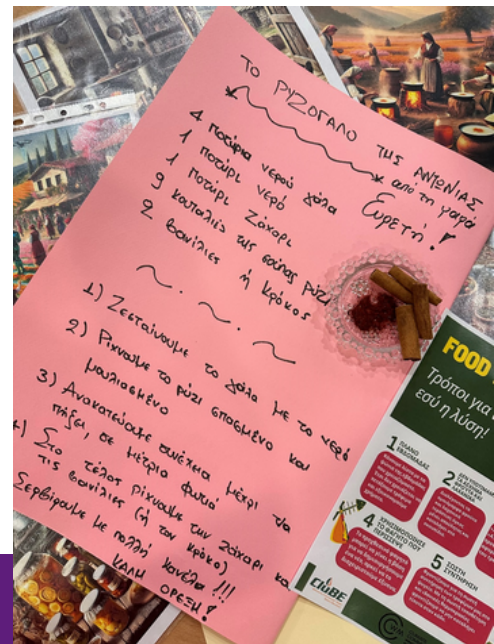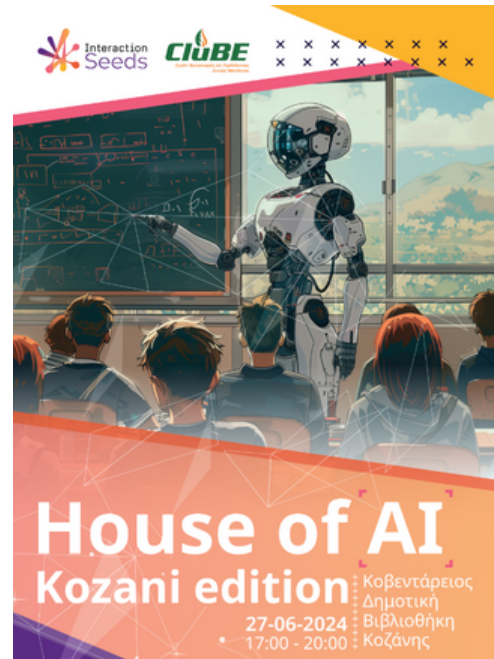
Overall, the workshops demonstrated how AI can be a bridge between disciplines, combining innovation, creativity, and tradition to address modern challenges. They left participants with a deeper understanding of AI's potential, practical tools to integrate it into their work, and a renewed commitment to advancing sustainability and cultural preservation in Kozani.

For successful replication, CluBE emphasises the importance of focusing on the following key aspects:

- **Communication**: Implement a robust local communication strategy to attract participants effectively.

- **Agenda**: Allocate sufficient time for the co-creation workshop, as observed in Kozani where participants showed significant interest in this segment.

- **Expert Involvement**: Given that topics like AI are technically and legally intricate, engaging experts is crucial to address participants' diverse inquiries.

- **Practical Examples**: Providing hands-on case studies and tangible illustrations is vital for engaging non-experts and ensuring a meaningful impact.

- **Foster Creativity**: Encourage creative thinking among participants to help them grasp the practical applications of the knowledge shared.

- **Engagement of Local Authorities**: Involving local authorities is essential, as they wield influence over policy decisions and can generate public interest in digital tools intersecting with art.

- **Adaptability**: Remain flexible to tailor the event to participants' specific needs and interests, enhancing relevance and impact.

- **Networking Opportunities**: Facilitate an environment conducive to networking and relationship-building among participants, fostering potential collaborations and a more cohesive community interested in the subject matter.

Ressources

As a member-based organisation, CluBE benefitted from the generous participation of speakers for each workshop, enabling the organisation of the interaction within a constrained budget. An amphitheater at the Koventarejos Municipal Library of Kozani was secured for each of the workshops, and catering ordered.
For each of the workshop, small costs were also needed for materials (printing, cooking etc.)

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