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BOSILEGRAD IN COLOR

A CASE STUDY
THE CREATIVITY CROWD PROJECT



Expert Pool.

CASE STUDY BRIEF



Meet Alexander Dimitrov, the President of Association GLAS, and also the Chief editor of glaspress, an online media. Their association mainly deals with young people from Bosilegrad – a small almost 5000 citizen town. They are the organizers of the International Children's Easter Festival, which is hosted in Bosilegrad and gathers together over 400 children and young people from various countries each year. The International Children's Easter Festival has lined up next to the best European festivals and received the EFFE quality label for 2015 and 2016.

For several years now they successfully host a lot of international creatives from different countries, who are invited to their hometown for “Bosilegrad in Color” - *en plein air* - painting outdoors.

KEY INFO

- Name of the organization: Association GLAS
- Country: Bulgaria/Serbia, Bosilegrad
- Type: NGO
- Creative sector: Online media, art, festivals
- Web: <https://glaspress.rs>

*"THE DIGITAL
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How did the pandemic affect your activities?

As I mentioned the pandemic was one of the biggest challenges that we faced during the last years, mostly because of the difficulties it presented to the organisation of our annual International Children's Easter Festival. This festival has a lot of history. Now it would be its year #30. Never it has been organised in any other way than in public and in person. So, for us when the pandemic started and when we were faced with all the governmental restrictions, etc.,

we tried to figure out how we can conduct this event using online and digital tools.

I was thinking and consulting our festival board, and we decided that we can try and organise an online Easter festival. With the assistance of one of my colleagues, who is an IT guy we tried to announce an online programme dedicated to the activities which are held within the festival, revolving around the the pictures of the children, how they create their Easter eggs, etc. Initially, we did not know exactly what digital tools and what skills we will need for the organisation of such an event. So, it was a great challenge for us and thanks only to the help of some of our more digitally competent colleagues we managed finally to have an online Festival.

The same goes also for the art planners (en plein air). The pandemic affected all these initiatives very negatively, because it was very difficult for us to host online such activities. We tried to engage all the young artists in an online way, but there were serious setbacks. However, in the following year 2021, we already knew how to hold these online events, what digital infrastructure we needed for such a new experience and how we should organise it. In the end, it was a great lesson.

Did you manage to find appropriate digital solutions to help your work?

In general, yes - as I told you, in the end, we actually managed to find a proper digital solution which to help us achieve our goals and help us organise and hold the planners and the Easter festival. However, now I'm thinking that we need to invest more time and more diligence in preparing and researching new ways, and new possibilities to organise and implement such online events. It would be very, very useful for us, especially to understand how to utilise better the capabilities of our online media.

What digital skills were most useful to you?

Again, I would like to stress on that glaspress is actually an online media, so practically in terms of the most appropriate and useful skills that we used, these were the digital skills and competences related to online media and information dissemination. Definitely, we already improved a lot since the pandemic, but absolutely we need to focus and develop also new skills and new competences in order to be sustainable, productive and efficient in the future.

What skills do you need to further develop your digital literacy?

What is really important for us is our online media portal. We are quite sure that it is currently underutilised, and it presents a lot of opportunities for our youngsters, for the target groups that we work with, and also for us in organisational terms. Our ability to disseminate news, to reach out to wider audiences, is very dependent on the online portal. Currently, because of the pandemic, for all the digital needs that we faced during it, now we are trying to find even more practical digital solutions. I'm very, very confident that we need to invest a lot of time, a lot of resources in training and upskilling in that direction, because this could mean a lot for us. The digital domains, the digital skills could provide a lot of opportunities for us.



Are you familiar with self-assessment tools and different learning platforms for increasing your skills/competence?

Honestly speaking, I'm not quite well-aware of such self-assessment tools for evaluating your own skills. Also, before the pandemic, we didn't pay quite much attention to any online learning resources or training providers. Now, most definitely, we are very interested in such things, in such tools that your project provides and will be very happy to take part in any training or any activities related to this topic.



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