



# The first ESA Hackathon in 2021

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The weekend 17-18 April 2021, we decided to participate in the first Hackathon organized by the European Sociological Association (ESA). Our team, from the Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology at the University of Granada, was composed by Sociology students in the last year of the BA: María del Carmen Fresnedoso Molero, Jacinto Gutiérrez Lorca, Johaniel Llopis Gadea and Samuel Núñez González. We were monitored by Prof. Ana Burgués, from the Department of Sociology of the University of Granada.

A Hackathon refers to an event where different participants meet and share an area of knowledge, with the aim of developing and solving a suggested idea, as a competition. In this sense, as participants we could both bring our team or create it on site, through the available channels. The Hackathon format was online, a series of topics were raised to improve both the structure of ESA as well as to promote the participation of young sociologists, and ways to suggest proposals for improvement.

The #ESAHackathon was held in online format and the platform used for participants' interaction was Discord. Once the groups were created, the members could move to another platform more convenient and comfortable for them. All the activities were designed with the aim that the association can put them into practice, specifically, within the framework of the 15<sup>th</sup> conference of the ESA, virtually and in the city

of Barcelona (Spain).

The number of registered people of the Hackathon was high, coming from more than twenty countries of diverse continents, such as Europe, America and Asia. There were no restrictions on the number of registrations that a team could make, so solutions could be suggested to several of the suggested categories. Specifically, these were classified into six large groups: leisure and culture activities, junior sociologist, networking, logistics, purple point and communication.

We had never participated before in a competition of this nature, and, although we would have preferred to be able to attend in person the online format gave us a series of advantages. The main one is that, in other conditions, we would not have been able to attend (due to the trip to Barcelona) and the fact that it was telematic allowed us not only to attend, but also to meet people from other parts of the world. For example, we ended up making a group of friends from the University of Barcelona, with whom we met several times, and with whom we discussed the scope of our discipline, the knowledge and skills acquired in our respective universities, the ways in which it could encourage participation and employability of undergraduate students, and so on.

With all this, our team decided to make its proposal in the category of "Junior Sociologist" (the link to the Youtube video is available at the end of this

contribution), in which we proposed a kind of project whose main objective was the professionalization and labor orientation of recently graduated or about to graduate sociologists, beyond the academic.

We raise the problem of the need to promote the professional careers of sociologists in their training period, since we identify that most initiatives and events are usually intended for doctoral students. But what about the non-graduates?

Through a brainstorming, we managed to transform a series of weaknesses, linked to the lack of professionalization initiatives, into a diverse range of opportunities to be explored. Among the objectives and needs that we raised we identified to guide our careers early to have greater chances of success, have the opportunity to learn beyond the academic field, choose to be part of research teams and research with social impact, and know the steps to follow to do and publish research.

To do this, we consider that it is important to create spaces for interaction between students and professionals, where the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge is promoted horizontally, ensuring a space of equality without hierarchy. Thus, we propose for the future event the creation of different “roundtables” accompanied by professional sociologists from various sectors (academic, third sector, private, etc.) trained in different subject areas.

These professionals would share their own trajectory and therefore, future participating sociologists could identify the scope that a discipline such as sociology has its thousands of possible ways of expressions. In this way, what we are looking for with the student roundtables (rotating, approximately 15 minutes), and the professionals coordinating them, is that they serve to see the different paths that can be taken, and have them as a possible option to sculpt the career path.

In a way, we want these people to become the mirror in which current sociology students are reflected, since, in principle, it should be easier to reach the job of our dreams if we are guided by a person who works precisely towards them. Furthermore, we believe that the female figures in sociology must be emphasized, as they tend to be invisible. In other words, it is not

only necessary to show the different branches of the tree of options that sociology offers, but also the personalities that shape it every day.

Once this first meeting will be held, the professionals should leave the room (so that the participants do not feel uncomfortable and can express themselves with total freedom) and the students could remain debating, generating ideas and proposals. They could talk about the various rotating talks they would have.

Finally, the ideal would be that those interested in any of the topics discussed could work on it, and even with the professionals with whom they have talked. In this way, from the earliest stages of the training, they can be fully immersed in a field that they feel passionate, and gradually create networks between people from different places and universities, This would not only have positive impact on their personal life and on their trajectories, but, in some way, to everyone who is involved.

To sum up, we believe that the exchange of experiences between professionals and students, and between students themselves, can lead to the generation of realities and new forms of knowledge and channels. All will have as a common thread to providing value to the figure of the sociologist contributing to a more well-known and important role in citizens life.

The experience of the Hackathon was very enriching and fun, and it ended in a video of just 2 minutes in which we explained our initiative. What really surprised us was that in mid-June, we received an email from ESA, in which they told us that we were the winners of the Hackathon. The fact of having won the #ESAHackaton2021 has had positive consequences for our careers as sociologists and has led to possible projects that we would like to carry out. An important part is aimed at improving professionalization, and the employability of future sociologists. On the other hand, we consider relevant that companies and other organizations have knowledge about the figure of the sociologist, their functions, possibilities and the benefits of the work they perform, as sometimes the tasks of the sociologists are carried out carried out by other disciplines in social sciences.

For the future, we would like to have contributed

as much to sociology, as sociology has contributed to us. With this aim, we continue working on ideas that we hope will materialize in research projects, dissemination sessions and meeting spaces. Thus, the idea proposed in the Hackathon is only the beginning to promote sociology.

For all this, we believe that this award has not been the end of something, but rather the beginning of a new path: to give greater visibility to sociology, showing the potential it has in improving society through social impact. Right now, our conversations are an emerging box of ideas that we would like to launch, like the one we have described for ESA or our University.

Finally, we want this message to reach the widest possible audience, and that it really becomes aware of the relevance to participate in this kind of initiatives. If someone who reads this feels motivated by what we say, and thinks we can help with something, do not hesitate to contact us! We believe that in cooperation and teamwork we can generate social impact, and who knows if, from these talks with you, new initiatives could emerge to show the world how much sociology is relevant.

### **Link to video proposal:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ywjf8xcIBs&ab\\_channel=Jacin](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ywjf8xcIBs&ab_channel=Jacin)

### **Publications in social networks:**

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CQRcrZIF-FK/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CQOyvpIgMEU/>  
[https://twitter.com/ESA\\_Sociology/status/1405590878291480576](https://twitter.com/ESA_Sociology/status/1405590878291480576)

### **Webpage of #ESAHACKATHON**

<https://www.europeansociology.org/about-esa-2021-barcelona/esahackathon>

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