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FOREWORD



GABRIELA FORD,
DIRECTOR FUNDATIA EOS

Gabriela Ford

Over the past year, our commitment to fostering education, promoting digital literacy, and supporting social inclusion has been more vital than ever. As the world continues to evolve rapidly, so too must our efforts to ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has access to the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in an open and inclusive society.

2023 was a year of significant milestones and achievements for Foundation EOS. We expanded our reach, launched innovative programs, and strengthened our partnerships with educational institutions, governmental bodies, and international organizations. Our initiatives, ranging from digital skills training to inclusive education projects, have touched the lives of thousands across Romania, empowering them to embrace the opportunities of the digital age.

One of the standout achievements of this year was the work with the teachers and students from university and pre-university education, which positioned EOS as one of the most relevant providers of digital competence training across Romania. Our services reached over 5000 students and 2000 teachers in innovative projects that are presented in the following pages of this report.

Our work would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and donors. Their collective effort and shared vision for a more equitable society have been the cornerstone of our success. We are immensely grateful for their contributions and look forward to continuing this journey together.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on the successes of 2023 and addressing the emerging challenges in our society. We will continue to innovate, advocate, and collaborate to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to participate fully in the digital world and contribute to an open and inclusive society.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are making a difference.

2023 IN NUMBERS

12,000+

participants in national campaign
Together in Digital Romania

550+

digital competence centres

1300

digital education events at local level

2,000

students trained and certified

8,000+

citizens trained

3,500+

Teachers in K12 sector

0,8 million euros

annual budget

12

Digital education projects

160

Microsoft partner schools

1700+

learners with improved employability

500,000 +

people reached on social media



250+

students involved in Microsoft competitions
(MOS World Championship and Minecraft
National Competition)

ABOUT FOUNDATION EOS

Fundația EOS is a private, non-profit organization set up in 1999. Its main goal is to bridge the digital divide in Romania by helping people realize their full potential through the use of technology. The organization operates projects in two main areas: pre-university education system (training teachers in the use of ICT) and the wider community (working with IT and knowledge disadvantaged communities to bring them on board of the digital economy).

EOS has had a very strong focus on supporting the digital skilling and re-skilling of disadvantaged groups in Romania – its digital education activities started back in 1996 when mono-industrial mining areas were ravaged by mass redundancies and with very high unemployment. Over the past 20 years, EOS has implemented specific digital skills and employment projects funded by national government or EU funding schemes. EOS has also taken a more strategic approach towards leveraging resources to support digitally disadvantaged communities across Romania – EOS is a founding member of the National Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs and the Digital Alliance for Romania.

Being a founding member of the European digital inclusion network All Digital (<https://all-digital.org>) and part of the wider European e-inclusion strategy, EOS is an active member of the National Coalition for Digital jobs, a local response to the European Commission Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

EOS has participated in two of the biggest digital literacy projects in Romania. The Biblionet Program, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by IREX in Romania, EOS trained over 2000 librarians in digital skills so that they can help on their turn members of their communities with getting on board of the digital society. EOS has also partnered with the Ministry of Communications and Information Society to offer support and consultancy to the World Bank funded Knowledge Economy Project through which over 1000 public institutions set up Public Internet Access Points focusing on bringing people from rural and small urban communities closer to the technology era.

More recently, EOS has been involved in EU-wide projects which focused on mapping and identifying key players in the digital inclusion sector. Research has been carried out in partnership with All Digital and the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies of the European Commission. Projects in the past years focused on supporting people who are affected by automation, unemployed, seniors, young people and women.

During 2018 – 2021 EOS is a key partner in an EU-wide pilot project (www.women4IT.eu) focused on developing the digital competences of young women who are at risk of exclusion from the labour market, thereby improving their employability and supporting their insertion in the digital industry. This project enabled EOS to develop key partnerships with the national network of Offices for Unemployment (under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection) and to deliver a full skilling pathway starting from the profiling stage (where people check the pre-requisites for starting the journey towards a join in the digital economy), the learning programme with individual learning pathways, the certification of the acquired skills and of course the connection with the employers. EOS has developed a two faceted Innovative Employment Toolkit addressed on one side

to those who are stepping towards a career in the digital sector and on the other side providing creative ideas to employers regarding the re-skilling of their staff but also reaching out to non-conventional communities to find the right employees.

During 2020 EOS has been implementing the Microsoft Philanthropies funded project – The Cloud Employability Accelerator program. This project is being implemented in Romania in partnership with 5 universities who are shifting non-IT students' interest towards the IT industry. The project offers an intense 4 module course which takes students through training about Azure Cloud, Office 365, PowerPlatform and Dynamics followed by Microsoft Technical Certifications. This project has already been recognised by the European Commission [Digital Coalition for Digital Jobs](#) as direct contribution to reducing the digital skills gap facing Europe today.

Other digital inclusion programs operated by EOS in Romania are also supported by technology companies like Microsoft, Apple, EC-Council, Autodesk, Adobe or Certiport and resources are often channelled towards programs supporting people who most need this support. Employability, namely supporting people affected by automation (and more recently by COVID related redundancies) to get the IT training they need to find job in the tech sector has been one of the most important activities at EOS.



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Vision and mission

The vision of Foundation EOS is that every Romanian should be able to exploit the benefits and opportunities created by the digital transformation of our society.



EOS Digital Academy & EOS Digital Career Connector

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Testimonialele absolvenților DevOps Intensive Training 

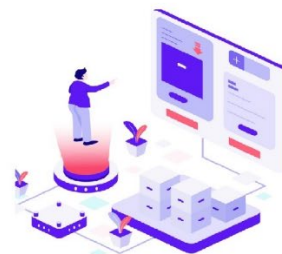


Image: Success stories of beneficiaries from EOS Digital Career Connector project, supported by Microsoft

Our mission is to bridge the digital divide in Romania by helping people realize their full potential through the use of technology.

This will enable them to understand and benefit from digital transformation, as well as to realize how to keep up to date with the latest technology developments and how digital competences can enhance their personal and professional development.

Strategic goals and achievements in 2023

1

Support the development of a national digital inclusion and education strategy

- We have continued to **raise awareness** with politicians and policy makers on the need for a national strategy.
- The list of key measures is now part of a nation-wide workplan for the **Romanian Digital Decade**, part of the EU's digitalization strategy.

2

Encourage the adoption of EU digital competence frameworks in Romania

- DigCompEdu, translated into Romanian by EOS, is now adopted by the Ministry of Education, and implemented as part of the national recovery and resilience plan in schools and universities.
- We have continued to promote DigComp in various contexts with policy makers and attended World Bank and Government consultations to **adopt DigComp 2.2 for citizens in Romania**.

3

Develop our network of local partners

- Our network of **Microsoft Partner Schools** increased to over **170** schools.
- Our network of digital competence centres involves now over **400** libraries, groups of local action, schools and NGOs.
- Over **500** local organisations were active during the 2023 **Together in Digital Romania** campaign.

4

Design and implement digital education all-inclusive solutions – assessment, training and certification

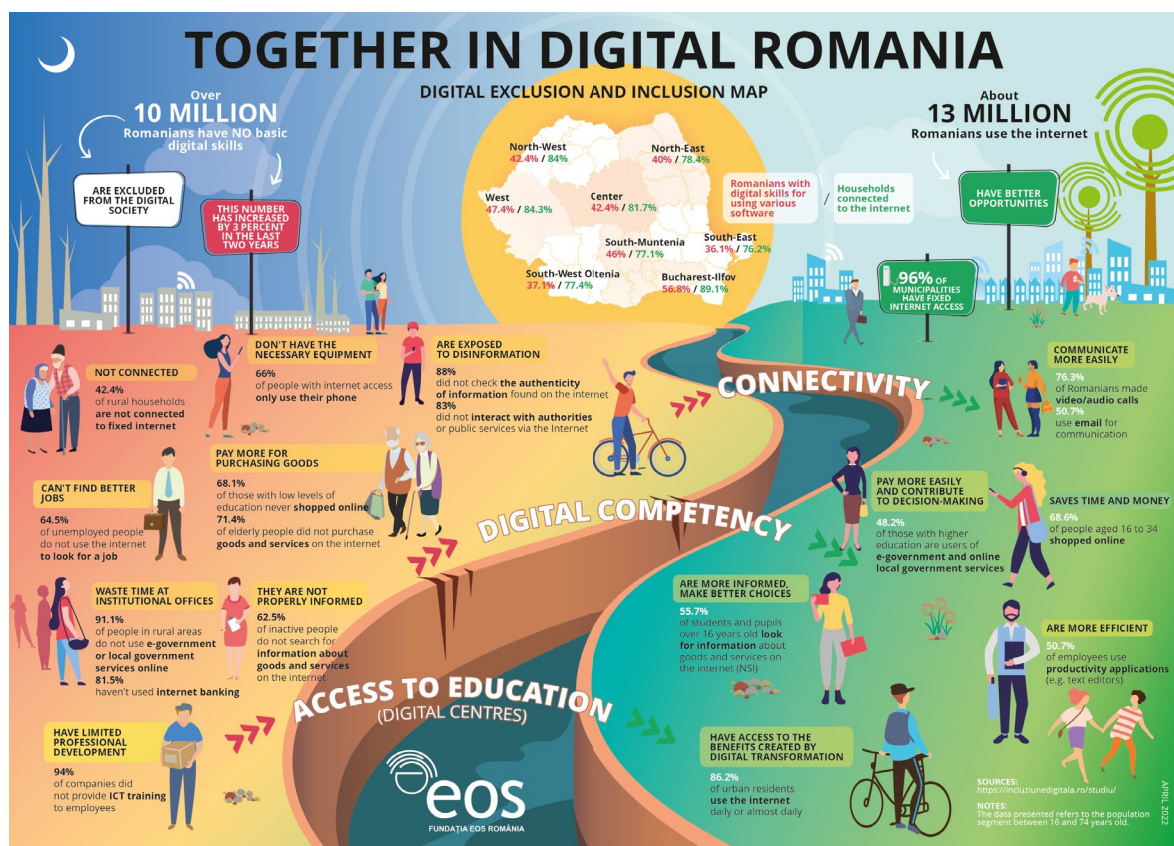
- **Four projects** have developed all-inclusive digital education solutions, and even further – had an employability dimension embedded.
- The number of **certified learners** continued the growth after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Cybersecurity and AI** became **key thematic priorities** for services developed and provided by Foundation EOS

5

Improve the outreach and communication strategy towards the beneficiaries of our services and projects

- Our social media campaigns reached over **500,000 people** in 2023.
- We have had over 50 media appearances at local and national level, reaching over **200,000 people**.

TOGETHER IN DIGITAL ROMANIA - Towards a national strategy on digital competences



70% of Romanians lack basic digital skills. Romania is consistently at the bottom of the EU in digital performance, as shown by the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), as early as 2016. In this context, the EOS Foundation Romania carried out a national project for digital education and inclusion **“TOGETHER IN A DIGITAL ROMANIA”**.

EOS continued to advocate in 2023 on the importance of a national plan for digital education of the Romanian society.

We have worked with politicians (MPs) as well as with governmental agencies, relevant companies and various partners to promote the digital inclusion map and to advance digital education in the formal and non-formal sector.

The Romanian Digital Decade plan had been drafted in 2023 by the Romanian Digitalisation Agency, as a response to the EU's strategy on digitalisation, in the context of implementing the Recovery and Resilience Plan. EOS's proposal including a set of measures to boost the digital inclusion in Romania has been presented and discussed with a number of partners and decision makers.

PROJECTS

Foundation EOS was part of a wide range of digital education projects in 2023. Here are some of the key topics and aims:

- Promoting inclusive education for all
- Facilitating digital transition through education and social inclusion
- Enhancing skills development, reskilling, and upskilling of key competences (generative AI, cybersecurity, IT support, etc)
- Supporting educators, teachers, trainers and the staff within the formal education organisations and institutions
- Promoting excellence and innovation
- Raising awareness on key challenges within society such as gender equality, digital health literacy and prevention to cybercrimes.



Photo: Romanian participation at the 2023 Microsoft Office World Championship (Orlando, USA)

The key projects are presented in the next pages of the report.



GenAIEdu

Period: 01/11/2023— 30/09/2024

Funding: ALL DIGITAL

Coordinator: EOS

Website: <https://eos.ro/genaiedu/>



The main aim of the project is to empower and support digital education and transformation stakeholders across Europe, in the provision of basic digital skills and competences, specifically the knowledge and understanding of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and integrating GenAI in their education and training services. The project will be primarily, but not exclusively, targeted at ALL DIGITAL's member organizations.

The project offers a series of online training courses aimed at teachers, trainers and facilitators as well as staff members of ALL DIGITAL member organisations who are providing skilling resources and training at all levels to mainly adult learners in local communities, and who are interested in integrating GenAI into their practices while taking ethical considerations into account. A basic familiarity with digital technologies and understanding of educational practices is recommended.



GenAIEdu training program, the related resources and additional services will be offered through ALL DIGITAL Academy, which ensures tracking all learning activities and verifying the completion of courses, by successfully completing the assessment tests and earning badges.

EOS is the Romanian partner, reaching for 300 trainers and teachers to join the training program. EOS localised course content in Romanian and is preparing its promotion strategy, tapping in existing partnerships, and using its longstanding collaboration with Microsoft Romania.

Cyber4all

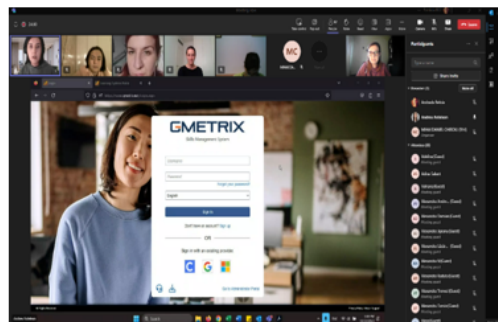
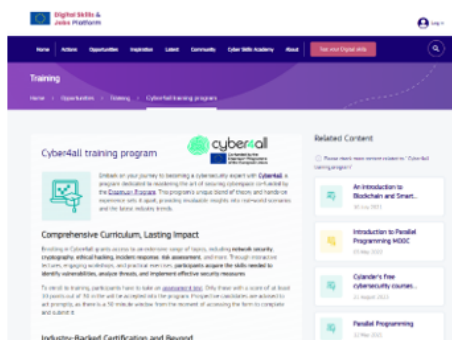
Period: September 2023— March 2024
Funding: EU Commission Erasmus +
Coordinator: LEXICON Sweden
Website: www.cyber4all.eu



cyber4all



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



As part of the **Cyber4All** project, the EOS Foundation offers an educational program created together with cybersecurity experts and professionals. Target beneficiaries have the opportunity to get certified as an IT Specialist in Cybersecurity.

CYBER4All is a initiative with a cutting-edge cybersecurity training program, designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the dynamic field of cybersecurity.

Main objectives of the project include:

- Increased access to cybersecurity education
- Development of a comprehensive cybersecurity curriculum
- Fostering industry partnerships and other internship opportunities
- Monitorization and evaluation pf program success

The training program promises success in learning how to secure cyberspace, how to become a specialist in cybersecurity and how to implement it in future roles in cybersec careers.

The beneficiaries enrolled to the program had the chance to self-assess their basic digital competences, as a prior step to the recruitment process. After passing the assessment stage, they were instructed to use the CISCO NetAcad learning modules in Introduction to Cybersecurity training, and then the Gmetrix platform, before they had the chance to take the examination on the Certiport platform and finally obtain the certificate.

The consortium of the project is led by LEXICON from Sweden, with the participation of OpenCertif from France and EOS Foundation in Romania.

The Cyber4All program is accepted on the Digital Skills and Jobs platform of the European Commission, as an initiative guaranteeing the training of employees or future employees for entry-level skills.

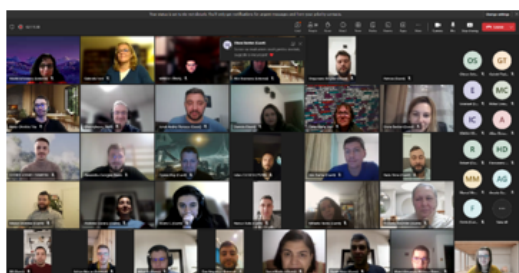
CyberStart.02

Period: September 2023— December 2023

Funding: Microsoft

Coordinator: Fundatia EOS Romania

Website: <https://www.cyberstart.eu>



As part of the **CyberStart** project, the EOS Foundation offers an educational program created together with cybersecurity experts and employers.

The program includes already established online courses (**Cisco NetAcad, Microsoft Certified Fundamentals, LinkedIn Learning**) and an intensive course composed of live online sessions with an instructor as well as sessions with physical participation.

The educational path also includes the part of validating skills through internationally recognized certifications and employment opportunities for participants.

In 2023, as a hybrid and intensive training program, CyberStart offers you two modular training programs, with learning resources that can be adapted according to the needs and expectations of beneficiaries and employers:

CyberStarter for beginners and **Career CyberStarter**.

The project is dedicated to all those interested in pursuing a career in cybersecurity, whether they are students, career changers or IT professionals that need access to quality training content aligned with the industry

requirements so that they can prepare as best as possible for these essential roles.

The beneficiaries also have the opportunity to participate to live sessions with instructors and experts in the field of cyber security, as well as Mentorship sessions to help them create a better profile for employment opportunities. The educational path also includes the part of validating skills through internationally recognized certifications and employment opportunities for participants.

The CyberStart professional qualification program awarded its first graduates on 31st March 2023, during the **CyberStarter Challenge** event, organized at the Microsoft headquarters in Bucharest.

In 2023, the project is in full development stage once again, preparing for the second cohort of cyberstarters.

The CyberStart program is accepted on the Digital Skills and Jobs platform of the European Commission, as an initiative guaranteeing the training of employees or future employees for entry-level skills.

EOS Digital Career Connector

Period: September 2022 - present

Funding: Microsoft

Coordinator: Fundatia EOS

Romania

Website:

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The **EOS Digital Career Connector** is a development of the **EOS Digital Academy** platform, enabling role-based learning approaches that enhance the focus on employability.

The first phase of the EOS Digital Career Connector consists of a series of updates and upgrades to the already successful EOS Digital Academy platform. EOS, together with representatives of the IT industry and employers (e.g., IT School or Banat IT community) have analyzed and developed learning pathways for two career areas: one more technical (DevOps with Azure), and one aiming at a more versatile set of skills that can be applied in various careers (project management, sales, office management).

From the beginning of the project the platform continued to offer Microsoft Office and Azure courses and certifications to 239 learners, while



the new learning pathways (role based) will be piloted from early March.

The DevOps with Azure course curriculum is already finalized, and the recruitment campaign has started. The second course is currently being developed and will be finalized during the month of March 2023.

The DevOps Azure learning pathway includes eight modules: **Fundamentals, Cost Control, Monitor, Web App, Serverless, Kubernetes, Java on Azure.**

The Course has a duration of 100 hours, and the curriculum has been developed in partnership with a training company called IT School.

The second career pathway includes Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) courses. Depending on the needs of the beneficiaries, a combination of the three courses can be chosen.

During the project period, a number of 75 beneficiaries are taking the DevOps pathway, while 98 are enrolled in Microsoft Office courses. Moreover, the EDA platform continues to offer other Azure courses, as well as digital literacy learning pathways.

To date, over 450 beneficiaries have taken at least one course and over 200 have taken Microsoft Azure and Office certification exams.

The promotion of our courses on social media reached had over 25,000 impressions, with more than 3,000 clicks on the platform link.

EOS Digital Academy

Period: 01/09/2020— 28/02/2023

Funding: Microsoft

Coordinator: Fundația EOS Romania

Website: <https://eosdigitalacademy.ro/>



This program builds on the success of **EOS Digital Academy (EDA)** ran in 2021, by introducing new training opportunities and improved employability services for the beneficiaries of the program.

Up to this point, the project team conducted the following major activities:

- full redesign of the online platform, based on feedback previously received from the learners
- improving the training offer, by adding additional technical courses: **Microsoft Azure Data Fundamentals, Microsoft Power Platform Fundamentals, and Microsoft Certified: Security, Compliance, and Identity Fundamentals**
- planning of live training sessions to complement the online courses, thus, supporting EDA beneficiaries to be better prepared for passing the certification exams. Live sessions were organized in May 2022 for the technical courses.

- organizing monthly information sessions for those interested in enrolling in EDA courses.

- supporting the insertion of people at risk of exclusion from the job market into digital jobs through the provision of awareness raising, training and exposure to digital jobs opportunities. The project team organized 4 coaching sessions on employability for EDA learners.

These included topics such as Writing a CV, Preparing for a job interview, or Using LinkedIn for job search.

So far, EDA has seen over 5,000 beneficiaries, while over 1,300 have joined since the start of the new grant. From assessment of competences to taking online courses, to validation and certification of skills, and to employability services, EDA became a one-stop-shop for everyone interested in pursuing a digital job, or to improve and certify their digital competences.

Women4IT

Period: September 2018— January 2023

Funding: EEA & Norway Grants

Coordinator: LIKTA

Website: <https://www.women4it.eu>

WOMEN4IT

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants



Norway grants



Women4IT is a multi-stakeholder partnership funded by the **EEA Grants and the Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment**. The project, supported by 9 Partners from across Europe and various sectors, was implemented in 7 countries: Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Spain and was supported by two expert partners: The European Centre for Women and Technology in Norway and DIGITALEUROPE in Belgium.

In the context of the structural transformation towards a digital economy, there still are significantly fewer women than men on the European market. Left unaddressed, this digital gap will lead to losing out on the female talent, innovation, and entrepreneurship and further widen the gender gap.

The ambition of the project partners is to develop the digital competences of young women who are at risk of exclusion from the labor market, by improving their employability.

Women4IT aimed at raising awareness about digital skills and the gender gap, and at promoting concrete, innovative partnerships and solutions to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda.

The tools and resources developed throughout 2022 were very much appreciated: job shadowing sessions led by specialists working in the field, experts, or employer representatives, and the empowerment seminars delivered by soft skills coaches and specialists that really brought added value to the knowledge the beneficiaries accumulated.

Main key outcome indicators are:

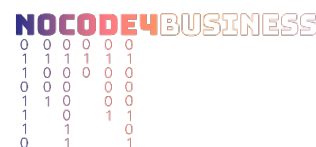
- 10.000 persons in the youth sector reached by digital career awareness activities,
- 1000 young girls and women assessed by the profiling tool developed within the project,
- 900 persons from the target group enrolled in education and training, including work and
- 350 employers introduced to innovative solutions.

NoCode4BUSINESS - Fostering knowledge and adoption of no-code practices among European entrepreneurs

Period: 01/03/2022— 31/08/2023

Funding: KA210-ADU - Small-scale partnerships in adult education

Coordinator: CINK Venturing SL



NoCode4BUSINESS aims to raise awareness on no-code opportunities and advance so far non-existing research and training on the subject.

The project approach is to explore the potential of low code / no-code resources by promoting mutual learning in the project countries (Spain, Italy and Romania), which still show limited digital capacities among the adult population and in the business sector.

NoCode4BUSINESS implements a “small-scale” training action for the entrepreneurs. The partnership tackle:

- no-code tools for prototyping (e.g., BudiBase to launch SaaS-based software businesses);
- no-code for efficient project, HR & time management and automatization (e.g, Notion, Zapier, Airtable, Coda); and
- no-code to build highly creative apps, websites, and marketing actions without programming, to better showcase the business and connect with customers and the community (e.g, Bubble, Webflow).

Main activity implemented by EOS Foundation within the NoCode4BUSINESS project in 2022 was to conduct a desk research on the state of the art of no-code and to collect a range of best practices this area.

The main output of the desk research was the development of a project Handbook that covers the following topics:

- state of the art of no-code in the EU and in the project countries;
- selection and description of best practices across the EU and in the project countries;
- identification of the potential and the opportunities of no-code for the EU entrepreneurs;
- how no-code can be exploited to support the ongoing EU digital and green transitions, in line with recent EU policies such as Shaping Europe’s Digital Future, EU Skills Agenda;
- recommendations on increased funding, actions, and education actions for no-code.

CybARverse: Digital literate in VET by cybersecurity training with immersive technologies



Period: 01/11/2022— 31/10/2024

Funding: KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

Coordinator: Langas į ateitį Lithuania



CybARverse project supports the development of digital skills for the IT and non-IT teachers and trainers, through the use of immersive technologies.

The focus of this project is to train VET teachers and trainers on how to recognise and react correctly to cyberattacks.

The project promotes cyber security awareness, the implementation of the Digital Education Action Plan (Actions 5 and 7) as well as national agendas, and contributes to a more digital, greener and more inclusive teaching and learning.

By the end of this programme, at least 80 trainers and teachers, from the four partner countries (Lithuania, Cyprus, Malta and Romania), will be qualified.

During 2022, EOS Foundation started to design the outline for the development of a qualification concept model for VET teachers and trainers, for capturing and describing required competences for using immersive technologies (AR, VR/WEBVR) in cybersecurity training for a classroom environment.

The CybARverse qualification model for immersive training, bases on existing training materials & forms and ensures a tailor-made and a pedagogical-sound use of teaching and training scenarios.



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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