WOMEN4IT

PRESS RELEASE

12th December 2018

YOUNG-ICT WOMEN, the first project signed under the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment, officially launched on 12 December 2018 in Brussels.

The "YOUNG-ICT WOMEN – Innovative Solutions to Increase the Numbers of EU Vulnerable Girls and Young Women into the Digital Agenda" project (Project Nr. 2017-1-094 under the leadership of the Latvian Information and Communication Technologies Association), **Women4IT** in short, is implemented by nine partners from nine European countries:

- Latvian Information and Communication Technologies Association (LIKTA);
- Baltic Education Technology Institute (BETI, Lithuania);
- Creative Thinking Development (CRETHIDEV, Greece);
- DIGITALEUROPE (Belgium);
- ECDL Ireland (ICS, Ireland);
- Educating for an Open Society (EOS, Romania);
- European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT, Norway);
- Fundacion Plan International (PLAN, Spain);
- Malta Communications Authority (MCA, Malta).

Women4IT´s aim is to develop digital competences and thereby the employability of young women (15 - 29 years of age) at risk of exclusion from the labour market as well as to provide innovative solutions to increase the number of young women with ICT careers and women participating in the digital economy. The project, funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment, benefits from a 2.714.304€ grant and runs from September 2018 until August 2021.

Project partners will assess the digital skills of 1.000 women and, in collaboration with employers, train 700 of them. The initiative will pursue its goals through awareness raising, skills assessment, innovative partnerships with employers, through the development of a new on-line employability profiling tool, and through training and guidance towards employment in digital jobs.

Today's "Releasing Women's Potential for the Digital Economy - Women4IT" launch event was hosted by DIGITALEUROPE. Policy makers, leading representatives of the digital economy ecosystem represented in Brussels, the funders of the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment, and representatives of the media all had a chance to discuss the issue of diversity and gender equality in the tech sector.

On behalf of the Commission, Vessela Karloukovska, Policy Officer, Digital Economy and Skills, DG CNECT, addressed over 70 participants at the event.

The project Nr.2017-1-094 "YOUNG-ICT WOMEN: Innovative Solutions to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda" benefits from a 2.714.304 € grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. The aim of the project is to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda.

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Mara Jakobsone, Project Manager of **Women4IT**, presented the project's objectives, timeline and first findings. Summarising the importance and expected impact of the project, Ms. Jakobsone stressed:

> *"Based on an assessment of 150 effective and innovative ICT training programmes we have seen that only one in three graduates in STEM and one in six ICT specialists is a woman, tech entrepreneurs are five times more likely to be men than women.*
>
> *At the same time, according to the World Economic Forum reports, by 2020, for every digital job created, four traditional jobs will be displaced for a man – but 20 will be displaced for a woman.*
>
> *The **Women4IT** project partnership will address these challenges and develop and test innovative training tools with 700 women and will build new partnerships (European and national) for supporting the access to the labour market for young women, and for the diverse population in general, in 7 countries."*

Several project partners (ECWT, PLAN, MCA and ICS) contributed to two panel discussions, which highlighted the European state of the art with regard to women´s employment in ICT and STEM careers, together with examples of increasing the number of women in digital careers with the involvement of leading representatives from Microsoft, CISCO Iberia, Fujitsu, Oracle Academy, CEPIS, ALL DIGITAL, STEM Alliance and Women@EIT Community.

For more information:

Visit: https://eeagrants.org/ and consult the **Women4IT** brochure

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