WBC-RRI.NET
Responsible Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans

Winter Academy Hackathon

Website: https://www.ssst.edu.ba/news-single/625/winter-academy-hackaton-2020
Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina
Geographical focus: Bosnia and Herzegovina
Scientific field/Thematic focus: Cross-thematic/Interdisciplinary, Engineering and Technology

What is the good practice about?

Within the Winter Academy of University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, SSST (under the coordination of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jasminka Hasic Telalovic) is organising a Hackathon for high school students. The idea is to popularise computing and innovation skills (within STEM education). The event is organised using gender mainstreaming principles in order to boost female participation in these fields as they are currently under-represented. Its duration is one week and it takes place in January during the winter school break.

The initiative leads to better understanding of opportunities that can be gained by youth if they have computing skills and use their innovation potential. Greater engagement of females in computing and innovation fields.

Why is this initiative needed?

Lack of support for youth in STEM innovation and lack of female participation in computing innovation.

What are the main objectives and activities?

To increase youth's engagement in computing innovation with participation of all genders.

Who is involved?

Youth (high school students that participate in hackathon), Youth (university students that act as mentors).

Can this good practice be replicated?

Hackathon organisation needs to cover appropriate topics of each day. The participants need to be taught but also inspired and given freedom of self-expression. These events have been organised in the English language and youth very much welcomes that. For a lot of them, this is the first event they attend that is organised in English and they find it refreshing and challenging. The quality of English spoken amongst

Western Balkans youth is very high. Gender mainstreaming makes both females and males more accustomed to mixed teams and environments.

The event needs to be advertised and applications collected. The selections of applicants need to be done using gender mainstreaming principles. The daily program that needs to be augmented with the participation of inspiring guests needs to be fixed. The student mentors need to be chosen and properly trained and directed. The activity needs space for holding the hackathon as well as mentoring sessions for the teams during the Hackathon itself. Foods and refreshments need to be served to participants. Three months are needed for the preparation of the event while the event itself will last one week. The approximate cost for about 50 participants which includes financing of all those activities is 15.000EUR.

Further links:

⇒ https://www.ssst.edu.ba/news-single/625/winter-academy-hackaton-2020
⇒ https://www.facebook.com/UniverzitetSSST/posts/4794290317303007
⇒ https://www.facebook.com/UniverzitetSSST/posts/4790749047657134

Relevant RRI keys: Gender Equality in Research and Innovation (R&I), Science Education

Type of practice: Organisation of training, webinars

Target groups: research and innovation funding organisations, youth (children, pupils), students (up to Master level)