

PRESS RELEASE

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## **Four winners of the Unite-IT Digital Inclusion Award**

### **The Unite-IT project and network**

Unite-IT is a European project and a professional network site that gathers professionals and organisations in the field of digital Inclusion in Europe. The main objective of this project, funded by the European Commission's Life Long Learning Programme, is to create an online community where members collect and share best practice in the fields of digital skills, adult education and ICT, work, social inclusion and social cohesion.

### **The Award**

Unite-IT network wishes is to make its Digital Inclusion Award the annual recognition to organisations and trainers who work in the field and who create, often with very small resources, innovative ways to bring digital opportunities and skills to people in their communities.

### **The selection process**

Organisations working in the field of digital inclusion and training were invited to submit their good practices and policies in the period of May to July 2014. All the submitted practices were reviewed and entered into a database that can be accessed by members and site visitors on the Unite-IT website: <http://www.unite-it.eu/database>

The Unite-IT Jury, composed of project partner representatives, evaluated the 37 entries received from all over Europe based on the criteria such as the innovative value of of the practice, its potential of replication and transferability and social impact amongst others.

### **Categories and winners**

The categories of the award correspond to the titles of the working groups of the network: Education, training, and certification, Youth employability, Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion and Gender equality. In each of these categories, four winners were selected:

Regional Telecottages Public Association of South Hungarian Plain (Hungary)  
*Education, training, and certification category*  
Consorcio Fernando De Los Ríos (Spain) *Youth employability category*

Open the Windows (Macedonia) *Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion category*

Pontus Euxinus Library Navodari (Romania) *Gender equality category*

### **The Award Ceremony**

The Unite-IT award ceremony takes place on 24<sup>th</sup> September at the Croatian Heritage Foundation, Zagreb ( Trg Stjepana Radica 3) at 19:30 h.

The ceremony is embedded in the framework of the three-day Telecentre Europe Annual Conference (TEAC14) Zagreb on digital empowerment through eSkills and media literacy.

Mara Jakobsone, the Chair of Telecentre Europe's Board, will open the ceremony and Ivan Stojilovic, member of the Board, will tell the audience how the four finalists were chosen. The awards will be handed to the winners of best practice by the following honorary guests: Dr. Christoph Kaletka from the Technical University of Dortmund will announce the winner of the Education, training and certification category; Renata Danieliene (Young Advisor for Digital Agenda) will present the winner of Youth employability; Austrian Digital champion Meral Akin-Hecke will award Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion best practice; and, finally, the Gender equality winner will be awarded by Ilona Kish from the Reading & Writing Foundation. The winners will receive statuettes and certificates. Part of the prize included the trip and accommodation at the TEAC14 Conference in Zagreb.

### **The Four Winners**

#### Education, training and certification

Hungarian organisation Regional Telecottages Public Association of South Hungarian Plain won with their project called *Telecottage Katedra - Smartphones from the Choice to the Administration*. This organisation is training adults to use smartphones, tables and applications, while helping them to choose the right device type for them and customise settings. The users significantly improve their digital competences and become more active and engaged citizens.

#### Youth employability

*INN&CIA: Social Innovation Environment* project from Consorcio Fernando De Los Ríos in Spain is supporting employability through entrepreneurship and social innovation. The Innovative Ideas Environment (I2E) platform will facilitate social innovation processes and promote spin-off projects in four

main areas: social media, funding, technology, and advanced skills in learning and creativity.

#### Vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion

The Macedonian organisation Open the Windows won with their *Project for e-Accessible Education*. It helps to mainstream the use of assistive technologies in primary schools and raise awareness about the concept of e-accessibility in education. 31 primary schools have received special devices to teach students with disabilities; over 1 000 teachers, trainers, parents and others were trained how to use these devices; four manuals were produced and 20 textbooks were converted in e-accessible format.

#### Gender equality

The winner of Gender equality category is the project *Handmade and IT for women* implemented by Pontus Euxinus Library in Navodari in Romania. It is a course given in libraries where housewives or unemployed women meet to learn or improve hand-made craft techniques while at the same time they get the opportunity to learn IT skills. This type of course will help women to promote their products, develop own business ideas or search for jobs.

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