

Window to the Future: project “Computer literacy basics for a Lithuanian E-Citizen”



Lithuanian business companies, such as leading banks, telecommunication and IT companies, came together in 2002 to form an alliance named “Langas į Ateitį”(LIA; window to the future – eng.) to support the development of the information society in Lithuania.

Today, LIA embraces 13 private companies and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. The mission of LIA is to participate in the development of the information society, increase the accessibility of the Internet and e-services in Lithuania by providing information, computer literacy and Internet training to Lithuanian adults, establishing Public Internet Access Points/PIAPs and stimulating the growth of e-services countrywide.

The main activities are intended for digitally excluded and geographically separated residents, particularly those who live in rural regions and are socially vulnerable, elderly or disabled people.

LIA is the most successful social welfare development initiative in Lithuania. The results of one of its projects, Computer Literacy Basics for a Lithuanian e–Citizen, clearly show the effect it has had on the citizens of Lithuania. This project could be described as having the largest target group in Lithuania ever, directly reaching 50,400 residents who have attended the organized courses of computer literacy and Internet use basics and received course graduation certificates, as well as their environment – countless families, co-workers and friends, who seem to be in the grip of IT fever (in the positive sense).

This national-scale project has reached all 60 Lithuanian districts. When selecting places for courses, a particular attention was paid to rural residents and elderly persons. The courses lasted 5 days (40 working hours). All participants received special textbooks. At the end of the courses, upon evaluating the knowledge they had acquired, participants received course graduation certificates. The syllabus and methodology of digital literacy training has been prepared according to the Computer Literacy Standard approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, which also corresponds to the latest version of the ECDL e-Citizen syllabus. The training content is orientated towards both commercial and free software, so participants are able to use the most suitable one. LIA conducted



the largest-ever training programme in Lithuania: the courses were conducted by over 400 lecturers in 2,938 classrooms and 181 Public Internet Access Points.

Among all training participants 400 disabled persons from 16 municipalities of Lithuania have also taken courses in computer literacy and Internet basics. The content and methodology of training were adapted for the disabled.

The use of the Internet enables people to enhance their qualification, expand their horizon, find new employment or communicate more widely not only in Lithuania but also abroad. Computer literacy is one of the most important factors reducing digital exclusion which is relevant in Lithuania. Digital exclusion in Lithuania determines uneven development of regions and disunites society, limiting the possibilities of some social groups. The ability to use the Internet has a positive effect on the state's economic growth, private sector development, the quality of public services and the ability to tackle social problems.

The acquired knowledge has enabled all project participants, including elderly, disabled and unemployed persons, to receive services they needed, participate and communicate in the most convenient way. It should be noted that the project also contributed to the improvement of integration into the labour market and development of initial skills for lifelong learning.