


WHAT THE HACK?!

Supported by regional stakeholders Learning Hub Friesland and the Foundation for Cybersafety in Northern Netherlands, Friesland College school D'Drive has the ambition of creating joint projects between public and private stakeholders around cybersafety, cybersecurity and ethical hacking to strengthen VET students in the digital era.

To realize this ambition, Friesland College applied for funding under the Erasmus+ KA2 'Strategic Partnerships' programme. Strategic Partnerships are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences in the fields of education, training, and youth.



cybersecurity: an EU top priority

Cybercrime in SMEs is a growing concern. SMEs' dependency on IT and Internet has made them vulnerable to cybercrime. This vulnerability is making information security a critical issue for all SMEs. Tackling cybersecurity threats and attacks is becoming more and more important in the European Union and worldwide.

Closely related to the need to make cybersecurity a top priority in Europe, a growing challenge is the shortage of cyber security professionals. According to the latest reports, Europe will face a shortage of 350,000 cyber security professionals by 2022.

Increasing cybersecurity talent is an atypical area of activity. It comprises a strong autodidactic and rebellious (hackers) community. This community is often not served by formal education providers and does not want to be.

our vision: making the cyberworld a place of safety and opportunity for youth

Objectives of the *WHAT THE HACK?!* project are:

- To improve young people's level of key ICT competences and skills and thus their relevance for the labour market (by developing new educational content on Cybersecurity, Ethical Hacking and Cybersafety).
- To develop inclusive ICT learning environments for youngsters inside and outside of VET education (by setting up/further developing 'Hack labs', i.e. sheltered ICT learning places).
- Include NEETS in non-formal learning, and as a result guide them to education or employment.
- To empower SMEs and individuals to secure their online life through cybersafety education and awareness raising.
- To promote synergies, cooperation and cross-fertilisation between the different stakeholders active in the ICT sector within education, industry and (semi-) government.
- To ensure that VET (including VET teachers) is at the forefront of technological developments in the ICT sector allowing the rapid update of these developments in training curricula and qualifications in VET (by letting VET education providers actively participate in the triple helix partnerships).
- To promote lifelong learning for ICT professionals by developing their pedagogical competences and skills and prepare them to become 'Hack-lab coaches'.
- To increase the opportunities for international peer-learning and learning mobility for VET youngsters by facilitating joint international student projects and training weeks;
- To foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation of VET institutions through enhanced transnational cooperation between EU VET institutions and ICT (public and private) stakeholders.

t a r g e t g r o u p

The *WHAT THE HACK?!* project is primarily aimed at youngsters both within VET education and outside it (NEETs). The project is open to digitally aware youngsters, gamers, school leavers, the autism spectrum and young people who miss a challenge in their current education. NEETS, VET students from different sectors with affinity to ICT will be targeted by the project allowing students from different backgrounds to learn from each other. In addition, the project targets VET teachers, staff and ICT professionals as it actively involves ICT professionals in education. During the lifespan of the project, 180 youngsters, 24 teachers and 80 ICT stakeholders will actively participate in the project activities.

r e s u l t s

Now that the project has been approved, *WHAT THE HACK?!* activities will kick-off in September 2019 in Leeuwarden and continue until August 2022. Upon completion of the project the following Open Educational Resources will be available:

- *WHAT THE HACK?!* Blended training programme for VET youngsters.
- *WHAT THE HACK?!* Hack Lab set-up guide.
- *WHAT THE HACK?!* Blended training programme for Hack-Lab coaches.
- *WHAT THE HACK?!* Online Community.

In addition, *WHAT THE HACK?!* will organise several promotional events and 3 learning activities for youth: in Pärnu EE in April 2020, in Leeuwarden NL in December 2020 and in San Sebastian ES in September 2021.

i m p a c t & l o n g - t e r m b e n e f i t s

The fundamental change the project desires to make is to strengthen young people's relevance for the labour market. This effects the local and regional economy as ICT companies will have access to competent vocational cyber security professionals contributing to the growth of companies (providing employment opportunities and economic welfare in Europe). Future professionals will be well-equipped and appropriately educated to meet the demand of the market (thus increasing their employability and competitive edge in the global market and increasing their socio-economic prospects). Youth not in employment or education will find their way back to education and/or employment and increase their long-term job and socio-economic prospects (equal opportunities for all).

The project impacts Europe as it contributes to making SMEs and individuals less vulnerable to cybercrime and tackling cybersecurity threats and attacks by educating competent vocational cyber security professionals.

partners

Four regions will participate in the *WHAT THE HACK?* project. What binds these regions is their ambition to make the cyber world a place of safety and opportunity for youngsters inside and outside VET. In all regions, a VET institution will join the consortium, together with a regional stakeholder in ICT. Project partners are:

P1, Friesland College - D'Drive - NL

P2, Learning Hub Friesland Foundation - NL

P3, Foundation for Cybersafety Northern Netherlands - NL

P4, GO! Technisch Atheneum Zavelenberg - BE

P5, Cebanc - ES

P6, Pärnumaa Vocational Education Centre - EE

P7, Information Technology Foundation for Education (HITSA) - EE

