

## **Case study: Best practice examples how to boost eLiteracy of private persons**

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European Community  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of globalization entailed the emergence of the new type of society- information society, where knowledge or information has replaced the capital as the main driving force of economic growth. This, naturally, impacts everyday economic and social processes and structures. Knowledge-based economy relies on innovation and scientific research, which could not take place without highly qualified and sufficiently educated human resources.

It has been determined by various surveys that establishment of new information technologies (ITs), investments in training, research and enhancing of individuals' access to information tools, have a positive influence on the national economic growth, development of the private sector, quality of all public services and suggests solutions to many social problems.

For instance, the European Commission has established that investments into the human mind pay off by 300 times. Knowledge based economy sets the foundations and allows for a long-term competitive advantage, which is essential for successful economic development in the future. Therefore, the strategic planning both for Lithuania and the European Union distinguish the development of the information society as one of priority areas.

One of the main problems related with the development of the information society is the emergence of the digital divide. The digital divide refers to the gap in society between those individuals, households and enterprises who use the information technologies and those who do not. This results in the divide between the individuals who have access to information and those who do not. As information is becoming more indispensable, the gap is becoming even wider between those who use the IT and those who do not, and results in limited opportunities of the latter. As to Lithuania, it is important to analyze and compare the situation in the wider context of other countries as well as the situation within the country alone.

Computer literacy is one of the key elements of the information society and one of the most important factors in reducing the *digital divide*, which is further described in the survey below including problem peculiarities and volumes.



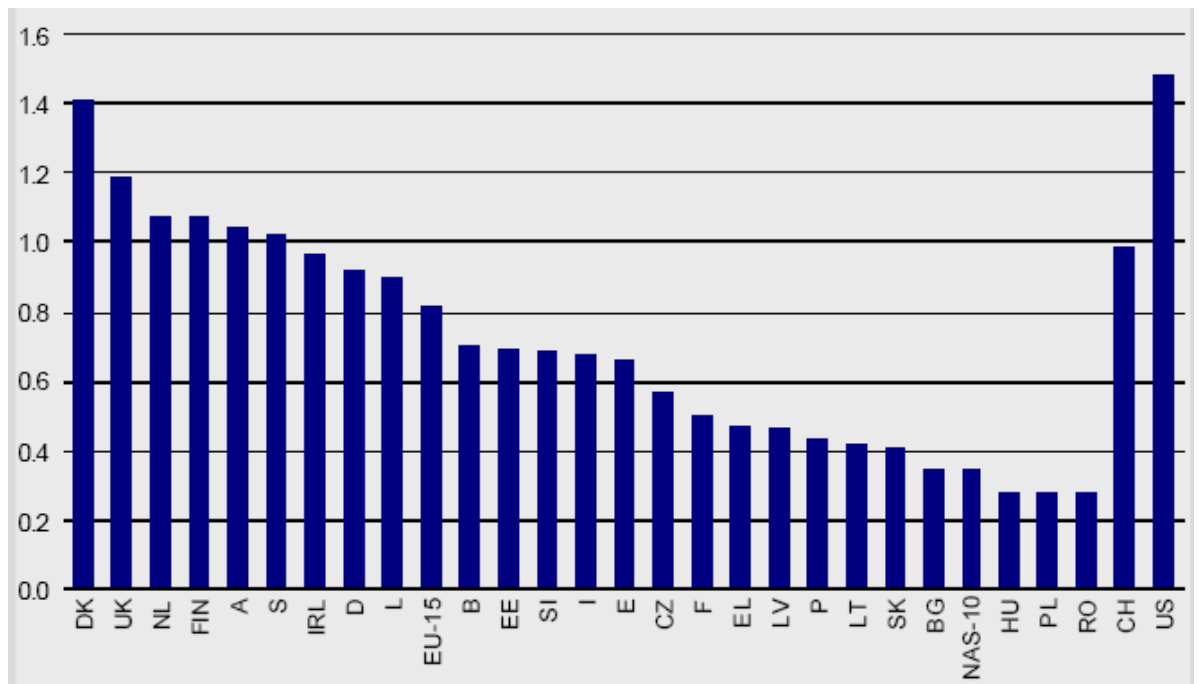
## 2. Lithuania's situation in developing individual's computer literacy before the EU structural funds' availability in 2006 for implementation of projects aimed to improve computer literacy

### 2.1. Surveys and statistical data

General computer literacy will be understood as the proper knowledge of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), ability and capability to use computer-based hardware and software applications at the user level.

Within the framework of SIBIS project, a computer literacy survey was carried out in 2003, and it evaluated the development of information society in different European countries with Lithuania among them.

Figure 1. Computer literacy in Europe



Source: SIBIS

SIBIS computer literacy index is based on the survey question: How confident are you in: (a) searching for information on the Internet; (b) identifying the sources of information on the Internet; (c) using email as a tool of communication with other people; (d) using Internet chat rooms/instant messaging as a tool of communication with other people; (e) creating a personal website; (f) downloading and installing software from the Internet? " It was established by the survey, that the Lithuanian index of computer literacy at the time was 0.5- almost twice lower than the same index in the old EU member states and three times lower than the index in the USA - world IT leader's. Even though the computer literacy index in

Lithuania was higher than the average index of the new member states of the EU, however, Lithuania was behind Estonia (0.7), the Czech Republic (0.6) and Slovenia (0.7).

The computer literacy index in SIBIS report assesses 4 main areas of computer knowledge:

- Ability to communicate in the digital format;
- Ability to use information search engines to find information;
- Ability to search for information and select reliable sources of information on web pages;
- Ability to use digital information tools (downloading software programs and storing them on personal computers).

SIBIS computer literacy index can range between 0 and 3; where 3 is the maximum and the highest evaluation of knowledge in computer literacy.

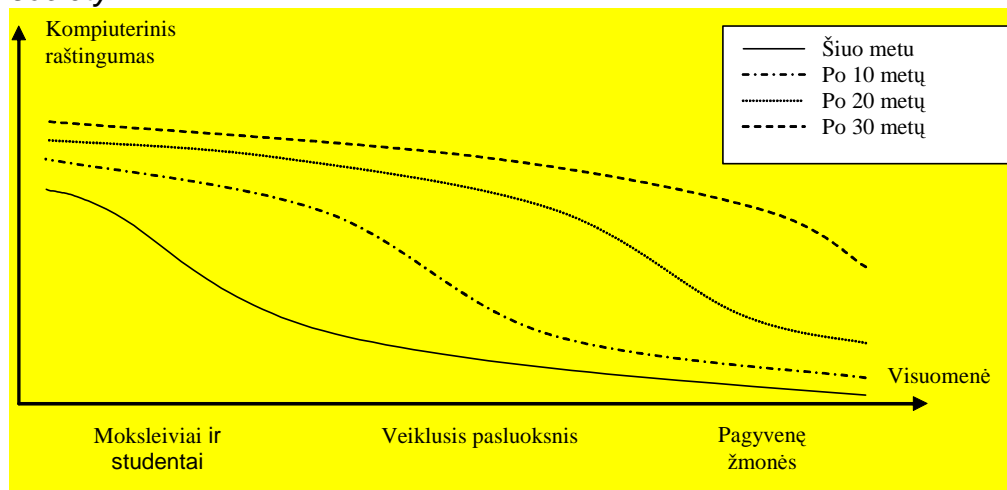
As it was mentioned before, the uneven access to information results in further fluctuations in development of countries. Consequently, the digital divide and the disparities between the counties are getting more noticeable and the situation of the less advanced countries with Lithuania among them is getting even less favorable.

Similar problems exist in Lithuania internally as well, as the differences in development are becoming more evident between cities and rural areas, the young and the elderly. The level of computer literacy of individuals in the Lithuanian Republic depends on their location (urban or rural area), age and income.

The individuals with better educational background and higher income, the younger and located in cities or towns and holding higher social status have better computer literacy skills and are more willing to use it. Indeed, every year more and more schoolchildren and students have a possibility to acquire knowledge in computer literacy in educational institutions of the country. Still, population of rural areas comprise a considerable part of the population of Lithuania who do not study in educational institutions and are far off the main IT centers; they have less possibilities and lower requirements to acquire IT knowledge. It is illustrated by the computer literacy graph, which was made by Organizations' Computer Systems Laboratory of the Faculty of Informatics of Kaunas University of Technology.



Figure 2. Presumable increase of computer literacy level in the Lithuanian society



Source: Kaunas University of Technology

In 2001 Marius Povilas Šaulauskas carried out a survey named "Digital Lithuania 2001", which was funded by the Open Society Foundation of Lithuania. The results of the survey emphasize that practical computer skills are usually acquired on the job and in educational institutions, whereas Internet usage skills are usually acquired individually. Besides, the survey revealed that:

- Almost one third of 15 year-old and older Lithuanian people know how to use the computer and almost one fifth know how to use the Internet. Two thirds of the respondents can define the Internet, but only one out of three or less know how to use it. More than half (55 percent) of those who do not know how to use it are willing to learn. A bit more than one out of two lacking the skills in digital literacy think that they do not need to learn how to use the computer or that it is too expensive for them. One out of three think that they are too old to learn.
- The higher respondents' education and income, the younger they are and the more of them live in cities and hold higher social status, the higher is their level of digital literacy and willingness to use it.

In the previously mentioned SIBIS survey in 2003 it was also discovered that there is a disparity in computer literacy of people who are 24 years or younger and the rest of the population. In Lithuania this difference is twice higher than the average in the EU and roughly equal with the average of the new EU member countries. This tendency is also true as seen from the results of Internet users' survey in various age groups, which reveal that young individuals are more active users of the Internet. (see table1):

Table 1. Internet usage in various age groups

Age group	%
15-24 years old	43.2%
25-34 years old	25%
35-49 years old	24%
50-74 years old	7.8%

Source: Information Society Development Committee

The digital divide in Lithuania results in uneven regional development, divides the society and limits the opportunities of certain social groups.

Computer illiteracy creates certain psychological barriers that hinder certain people from using the Internet and other information technologies. Those who do not use them often claim that using the Internet requires profound IT knowledge or they simply claim “the Internet is not for me”. An opinion poll<sup>1</sup> showed that almost 90 percent of respondents in the group of those who do not use the internet in Lithuania (Lithuania has the highest percentage in the EU) noted that the biggest obstacle for them to use the Internet is lack of profound knowledge of computer literacy which is necessary to use the Internet. TNS Gallup survey results present that Lithuanian residents listed IT equipment in the eighth place of the planned purchases they are saving for. They do not list the IT equipment as their top priority in planning their personal or household budget, and there are several reasons to that, among which is their ineptitude to recognize the importance of the IT equipment and its necessity.

Increase in computer literacy will positively result in the growth of number of internet and other information technologies users, of course with one pre-condition of that there is enough accessibility to the main IT technologies such as the personal computer.

As the SPD (Single Programming Document) rightly disclosed in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, the main weaknesses in the country are lack of information about the IT and low volumes of IT usage. Other problems that are related with the above mentioned are vast structural and youth unemployment, lack of competencies and gaps in the existing competencies, especially among young people, a big number of dropouts. SPD also lists a number of threats such as rapidly growing disparity between urban and rural areas, different counties and districts and the growth of unemployment, which can be completely or at least partially prevented only by creating an integrated information society.

#### *Other indicators pertinent to information society*

TNS Gallup survey revealed that in the beginning of 2004 only 30.1 percent of Lithuania’s residents used the Internet and e-mail, whereas in the

<sup>1</sup> SIBIS, 2003;

old member states of the EU back in 2003 the number of Internet and e-mail users was more than half of the population (54,4 percent).

The same survey also shows the disproportion between the Internet users living in cities and in rural areas. The percentage of the users living in rural areas among all users is almost 2.5 times smaller than that of the city residents. (See table 2):

Table 2. Do you use the Internet and e-mail? (January 5,2004)

	Yes	No
<b>Total</b>	30.1%	69.9%
<b>City (more than 2 thousand residents)</b>	37.7%	62.3%
<b>Villages (up to 2 thousand residents)</b>	13.6%	86.4%

Source: TNS Gallup

This shows significant imbalance of Internet usage volumes due to the area of residence. According to the statistical data announced by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics in August 2004, in 2004 I quarter 10.6 percent of households used the Internet. One out of 7 city households had Internet connection, and the respective number in rural households was 2 out of 100.

Table 3. Dynamics of Internet users

	Winter 2004	Spring 2004
<b>Achievement of 1 week</b>	22.2%	23.3%
<b>Achievement of 1 month</b>	26.5%	27.2%
<b>Achievement of 6 months</b>	28.1%	29.5%

Source: TNS Gallup

The survey on Internet users' dynamics carried out by TNS Gallup, revealed the tendencies of increasing number of users of the Internet:

Table4. Households using the internet

	2003 I quarter	2003 III quarter
<b>All households</b>	6,2%	7,7%
<b>City households</b>	8,7%	11,7%
<b>Rural households</b>	1,1%	0,8%

Source: Lithuanian Department of Statistics

On the other hand, according to the Department of Statistics, in 2003 the number of households using the Internet increased, but the increase resulted from the growth of household users in the cities, whereas the number of rural households using the Internet in half a year went down from 1,1 percent to 0,8 percent.

It is a matter of concern that the population of Lithuania is not inclined to use e-government services through the Internet and they prefer other services available on the Internet:



By the way, the inclination of the Lithuanian population to use e-

Table 5. Usage of Internet services among Internet users

Internet service	
E-mail	66.4%
Advertising on the Internet	34.5%
Instant messaging/ forums	30.3%
Sending text messaging from Internet websites	29.9%
Internet banking services	23.6%
Subscribing to the news via e-mail	17.9%
Browsing through Internet web pages	14.3%
Creating and editing personal web pages	8.8%
Other	6.9%

Source: TNS Gallup

government services is lower compared to other new member states of the European Union. Therefore, in order to develop information society it is important to publicize information about e-government and its benefits.

## 2.2. "Window to the Future" society teaching project in 2003

In the beginning of 2003 one of the first computer literacy training to society projects took place in Lithuania. The initiator and implementer of the project was the alliance "Window to the Future".

Leading Lithuanian businesses- two largest Lithuanian banks, two largest telecommunication companies and two IT companies came together in 2002 and formed „Window to the Future“ alliance, which started a unique project aimed at businesses supporting the development of the information society.

The organization has been launched to enhance mutual collaboration between business and government institutions, encourage the Internet usage and decrease the digital divide in Lithuania.

The mission of the „Window to the Future“ alliance is to promote the use of Internet in Lithuania and hereby stimulate the growth of living standard as well as Lithuania's competitiveness among European and other countries of the world.

President of the Lithuanian Republic Valdas Adamkus, approvingly welcomed the business-initiated alliance: "My warmest congratulations to the newly established alliance "Window to the Future". The business representatives have undertaken huge responsibility for the future of the nation and the state. Today, the development of the information society needs some joint efforts of the business, education and government. Their close collaboration is essential for further development of our nation and for progress of our country"



“Window to the Future” has determined to undertake three main fields of activities:

1. Internet access– establishment of public Internet access points, where people can use the Internet free of charge. In cooperation with local governmental institutions, 175 public Internet access points have been established by the „Window to the Future“. This initiative was continued by using PHARE assistance and establishing 300 new access sites. In 2007, 400 new access sites will be established in rural areas by the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior using EU structural funds support.
2. Training the society in computer literacy and Internet use are the society teaching projects aiming to provide the citizens with basic skills of computer literacy. Below, a more detailed description of the project in 2003 is provided.
3. In the field of e-services to the citizens alliance “Window to the Future” implements projects that aim to introduce the citizens to the existing electronic services.

#### *Teaching the society*

In March-December 2003, the „Window to the Future“ alliance launched a training project to enhance the increase of the internet use. TNS Gallup Media public survey results disclosed that in the beginning of 2003 about 2 million adult respondents in Lithuania confessed they had never used the Internet. The aim of the alliance “Window to the Future” teaching project was to reduce this number. The project was sponsored by alliance “Window to the Future” founders’ funds and presented some interesting and optimistic results:

*The aim of the project-* to provide an opportunity for 20 thousand citizens of Lithuania to acquire basic skills of computer and Internet use free of charge and to:

- a) Emphasize the benefits and positive outcomes of Internet use;
- b) Encourage the use of computers and electronic services in households;
- c) Encourage further practice of the newly acquired computer skills in public Internet access points made available by alliance “Window to the Future”
- d) Widely disseminate the information about the opportunity to learn the basic computer skills free of charge.

#### *Target groups of the project:*

- a) Citizens over 16 who do not have the skills of Internet use;
- b) The representatives of public internet centers, who are provided with relevant information and knowledge and become the promoters of e-information and e-services to citizens.



*Teaching program* was designed, taking into consideration the program of Fundamental computer literacy skills, which was being considered at the time, and the recommendations of the IT Center under the Ministry of Education and Science. The length of the course- 9 academic hours ( 2 days/ 4.5 hours a day). During the course the participants could:

- Get acquainted with key Internet concepts and services;
- Learn how to use the Internet browser;
- Get acquainted with most popular search engines;
- Acquire the skills of using search engines;
- Get acquainted with data storage tools;
- learn to store data in temporary storage devices;
- learn about e-mail services;
- learn the basic skills in using the e-mail;
- learn to create WebMail on a website of the choice;
- learn about the main functionalities of e-mail and understand the main principles of operation
- learn about the capabilities of the Internet and its applications and services relevant to every day life.

*Teaching materials.* Each participant of the course gets a prepared and published course book “Window to the Future” Elementary Internet Knowledge”. Teachers use the methodological material, which provides them with a full guidance on course teaching and methodology on e-services.

*Stages of project implementation.* Project was implemented in two stages:

1. Pilot stage: 2000 people were trained in Molėtai, Kaunas, Šiauliai, and Naujoji Vilnia districts.
2. Main stage: 18000 people were trained in different regions of Lithuania.

Active dissemination took place throughout both stages of the project implementation.

*Project publicity.* Aims of the publicity campaign:

1. Attract the attention and stimulate interest in all potential participants of the training program and encourage them to take part in the program;
2. To inform the Lithuanian society about the training program in order to enhance the publicity of the program in the society.

Publicity tools:

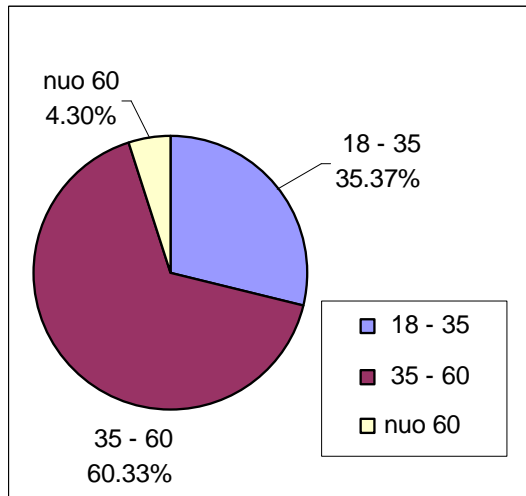
1. Regional printed press;
2. Regional TV and radio stations;
3. Information posters on county centers’ notice boards.

Two training companies were hired to organize the training campaigns.

*Results*

Society training program launched in the spring of 2003 was a tremendous success. By mid-December in 2003, 20 thousand citizens completed the course of fundamental internet skills for beginners. Due to

increasing interest in the course among citizens and their willingness to gain new skills, this stage of the course, which was initially planned for the period of 12 months, was completed in 9.5 months. The training took place in the territory of 12 different municipalities across the country.



Below are some of the project outcomes which were derived from the participants' consolidated feedback returns:

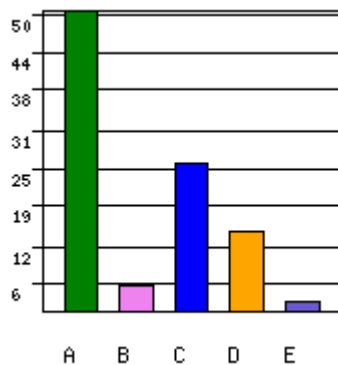
### 1. Project participants:

80 percent of the course participants were women. The number of city residents in the training was five time bigger that the number residents from rural areas.

Course participants' distribution with regard to age:

The average age the course participants – 40.

### 2. Educational background of participants – more than half of the course participants had higher education degree.



A: higher education 50,97 %  
B: incomplete higher education 5,67 %  
C: college/vocational 25,83 %  
D: secondary education 14,53 %  
E: incomplete secondary education 3,03 %.

### 3. Professional background of project participants.

The prevailing profession among the participants was teachers (28 percent). 1 out of 10 participants (11,5 percent) were unemployed. The least among the participants were pensioners (2.45 percent) and housewives (3.83 percent).

Most of the course participants evaluated the course very positively. 99,41 percent claimed they would recommend it to others. 9 out of 10 said that the course motivated them to further improve their computer literacy skills. 43 year-old course participant's Ona Grabauskienė's from Garliava comment illustrates the overall impressions of the participants:

“Thank you for the given opportunity! The ability to find the information I need allowed me to feel more independent”.

The feedback above and many more similar comments proved that computer literacy courses for beginners are much demanded among citizens.

Standard public and free-of-charge computer literacy courses in computer classrooms facilitate the solution to existing problems related with computer non-literacy and provide equal opportunities to all the population of Lithuania to acquire computer literacy skills, irrespective of their background, profession, place of residence (urban or rural areas), age, gender, special needs and social standing. It allows people with no computer and Internet skills to acquire computer literacy corresponding to their everyday needs in personal and professional spheres.

Improved computer literacy increases the competitiveness of educated person in labor market and improves their professional productivity and provides more opportunities in their social life in general. Moreover, direct free of charge computer literacy training gives the necessary fundamentals to the participants and enables them to continue improving their skills independently through distance or e-learning. So the benefit of such direct training courses is unquestionable. But organization of such courses inevitably involves significant costs, which require sponsorship from public financial funds, because the social groups, who this program is aimed for, are not able to pay the market price for the program.

Before 2006, when the programs sponsored from the EU structural funds started to be launched in Lithuania, there were no initiatives nation-wide to teach computer literacy to the society. In contrast to the association “Window to the Future”, which has already been mentioned, other computer skills trainings were provided only on commercial basis. At the time, scarce distance e-teaching initiatives started to appear, but they were few and information about them was not easily accessible to the general public.



### 3. Current situation of citizens' computer literacy in Lithuania

In order to educate Lithuania's population and provide them with adequate skills of using information technologies and provide everyone with equal opportunities to seek universal computer literacy relevant to their educational and professional activity, Lithuania's Program for Universal Computer Literacy came into action under the resolution No. 1176 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, dated September 15, 2004. Also, the Minister of Education and Science issued a resolution of Universal Computer Literacy Standard No ISAK-2016 on December 14, 2004, which set equal requirements and recommendations for citizen's computer literacy qualifications, established the principles of the approved computer literacy standards in accordance with Europe's computer users' qualification certificate European Computer Driving License (ECDL) program.

Residents' knowledge, qualification and ICT usage capacities have gained major importance in the information society. According to the Ministry of Education and Science data in 2006, only roughly 0.7% of Lithuania's population have certified their computer knowledge by ECDL certificates. However, the major part of Lithuania's population claims to have good computer literacy skills (nearly half of the population, 49.92%, evaluate their computer competence as good, one third, 34.48 %, – as poor, and 15,6% state they do not have any computer skills). The level of residents' capacities of using information technologies greatly depends on their location (much less rural residents compared to the urban ones state to have good computer literacy skills), age (a smaller number of Lithuania's elderly people evaluate their computer literacy as good, and young people in Lithuania tend to have the best computer skills). In order to avoid the risks of digital divide, it is necessary to enhance the interest of the rural residents and elderly age groups in information technologies as well as their wish to learn using information technologies.

In the report in 2006, Information Society Development Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania noted that seeking to develop population's computer literacy, the issue of school computerization should not be disregarded. In recent years, the computerization of schools has received increasing attention in Lithuania. Through the employment of adequate training aids at schools, attempts are made to create conditions for every schoolchild to acquire necessary IT-based knowledge. The Program on the Implementation of Information and Communications Technologies in the Lithuanian Education System for 2005-2007, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, has set further aims of IT implementation at schools: to achieve a breakthrough in pupils' learning and teaching through the use of modern information technologies, to establish a computer network of the education system at the same time creating conditions for the modernization of the education management. More than LTL 36 million, partially from European Union Structural Funds, were allotted for IT implementation in the education system under this program in 2006.



With the aim to equip schools with effective and compatible hardware and software tools relevant to educational and teaching needs and standards, the Ministry of Education and Science purchased hardware and software equipment for schools in 2006. Seeking to improve computer and information technology qualifications of school teachers and management, a number of training programs and seminars took place as well as some methodology-related work.

Along with development of distance learning in Lithuania in 2006, introduction of Information system was continued in Lithuanian education and studies sphere, a network of distance learning in Lithuania underwent some further developments.

While developing information society major attention is devoted to ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disability to use ITs. While implementing the National Program of Social Integration of the Disabled for 2003-2012, approved by the Government resolution on June 7, 2002, a set of program measures for training and tests in computer literacy and use of e-services for the disabled was prepared according to the standards “designed for all” and placed on the website of Information Society Development Committee under the Government of Lithuania and hereby accessible for unrestricted use.

Computer training on commercial basis is rather popular, there is a variety of institutions that provide computer literacy training and teach according to variety of programs. Currently, different age and social groups and groups of the unemployed in Labor exchange are trained in computer literacy.

In order to develop knowledge society it is very important to create favorable conditions for citizen’s learning, attaining qualifications, gain experience in using the information technologies, reaching various sources of information by using information technologies.

The use of information technologies has been increasing recently and it has become more accessible, however, more than half of Lithuania’s population do not know how to use or cannot take full advantage of the opportunities offered by information technologies. Government of the Republic of Lithuania seeks to ensure everyone’s participation in the knowledge society. In this context, it is very important to develop electronic infrastructure, create new electronic services, improve citizens’ competencies, create favorable conditions for the development of electronic commerce, so that citizens of the country have better opportunities by using the information technologies to receive better quality, faster and more convenient services from the public and private sectors and use other sources of information. In order to accelerate the implementation of the above mentioned processes, support from the EU structural funds is employed as well, and it contributes to the development of the information society and has positive influence on other social and economic processes as well.

## 4. EU support for Lithuania– computer literacy projects sponsored by structural funds

In the recent years, many novelties have reached Lithuania and EU funding is one of them. It became a strong driving force for the growth and development of the country. According to the Ministry of Finance, Lithuania has allocated over LTL 4 billion in the last three years following the guidance of the Single Programming Document (SPD). Even though the first stage of the EU funding in 2004 did not allocate any funds for computer literacy projects, however, in the second stage 18 percent of the allocated EU funding was planned for the second SPD priority- “Development of Human Resources”. EU support under this measure helps to implement various educational, professional training, retrain programs, teaching of the unemployed, improve the qualifications of employees and help their ability to adjust to the changes in the labor market. 16 projects intended to improve computer literacy received assistance under this particular measure. The total support for improvement of computer literacy in Lithuania equals to LTL 20 356 775 and LTL 15 267 580,75 of that amount comes from the EU funds.

Out of 16 projects for improvement of computer literacy skills, only 1 is implemented at the national level, the rest are implemented at the regional level. The biggest project for improvement of computer literacy skills is presented below as well as overviews of other projects.

### 4.1. Project „ Fundamentals of Computer Literacy of an E-Citizen of Lithuania”

The results presented by the public computer literacy training programs carried out by the alliance “Window to the Future” in 2003 proved, that such projects are very important for the development of the country, human resources and influenced the decision of asking for EU funding for yet another new project. On August 22, 2005, Association “Window to the Future” submitted a request for financial support for the project to the European Social Funding Agency under the measure 2.2., Activity No. 4:”Improving citizens’ computer literacy” of the SPD 2004-2006 administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor”.

Project aims at information society development by increasing the level of computer literacy in Lithuania. It also aims to decrease the digital divide, which prevents equal regional development, and a result allow for equal regional development.

#### *The Aim of the Project*

The main aim of the project „ Fundamentals of Computer Literacy of an E-Citizen of Lithuania” is to provide fundamentals of computer literacy to 50 thousand adult citizens of Lithuania through direct training in computer classes and public internet access centers.

#### *Target group of the project*

The target group of the project are all the economically active citizens of the Republic of Lithuania older than 16. The latest survey of the department of Statistics disclosed that the majority of respondents (70 percent) said that they have never taken any course on computers (including training in schools or other places of studies).

This project is the first step towards the achievement of the goal specified in the strategic documents of the Lithuanian Republic-the fundamentals of internet usage must be acquired by no less than 300,000 adults what would encourage a breakthrough in information society.

*The length of the project- 27 months.*

### *Stages of the project*

Three stages have been distinguished in the length of the project:

I stage – preparation. At this stage, groups of project administration and management are formed; public purchases are held to purchase the required services, technical prep-work.

II stage– active training. This stage is the longest (duration- 22 months) and comprises the main activities of the project- training of the citizens. The direct training takes place in computer classes and taught by teachers of Informatics hired for this specific purpose. The trainings were implemented in the territories of 60 municipalities throughout Lithuania. The size of the groups is limited to 15 students per group in order to ensure the quality of the educational process to the participants.

III stage – closing. The final reports on project implementation are produced and submitted to the implementing institution- Support Foundation Europe's Social Fund Agency. Project results will be achieved all through the proceedings of the project.

### *Project scope and implementation*

The project takes place in all 60 municipalities throughout Lithuania in order to train more residents in small rural settlements.

The education will take place in computer classes that will be leased out from secondary schools, vocational schools, gymnasiums and other educational institutions and provide adequate facilities as required by the project. In rural settlements, the education will take place in public internet centers. Trainers hired to teach the courses are secondary school teachers of IT, possessing the required qualifications. As per data of August 2007, 223 teachers have been hired to work in the project, and 221 computer rooms have been leased for the purpose.

### *Project management*

Project is implemented without formal partners, just through the effort and initiative of the host, however it involves social partners through close collaboration with municipalities. Project management group has been formed to observe the project and the project administration group accountable to it.



Project administration group consists of:

- Project manager;
- Project financier;
- Two junior project managers;
- Project observer;
- Public relations specialist.

The main functions of the project administration group:

- Organize the purchases necessary for achievement of the project results;
- Ensure overall administrative readiness, involve the appropriate experts and coordinate project activities in different regions and the main headquarters;
- Develop preparatory programs for trainees and teachers needed for the course;
- Fine-tune the preparatory programs for trainees and teachers and make it ready for printing;
- Organize timely printing of preparatory programs for trainees and teachers needed for the course;
- Organize project publicity campaign and constantly renew project publicity tools;
- Ensure implementation of the project following the envisaged stages of activities;
- Collaborate with municipalities in organizing the publicity campaign;
- Place the information intended for information exchange, observation, administration and dissemination of results on the project host's website;
- Prepare project results reports;
- Perform other tasks related with project administration and make decisions relevant with project administration.

#### *Training program and material*

The target group of the project are all the economically active citizens who have no knowledge nor skills in computer literacy or have acquired very poor skills and as a result, cannot be full members of the knowledge society.

They will come to know and understand internet-based services, learn to use internet safely and with confidence, learn to use public and business services via the internet as well as perform their citizen duties as provided by the Lithuanian laws by using electronic government services.

The training program was prepared according to the minimum standard computer literacy qualification program approved by LR Government, which corresponds with ECDL (E-Citizens) program for Citizens, which has been implemented in the European Union as well since the second half of 2005. The length of the computer literacy course-30 acad. hours (20 acad. Hours of practical classroom activities and 10 acad. Hours of individual work and 1 acad. hour for knowledge assessment test).



Classroom work consists of 5 lessons of 4 academical hours, so that the participants of the course have enough time to prepare their practice tasks and to learn the material covered in the course. The courses take place in the morning, afternoon and evening to accommodate better attendance. Individual practice assignments can be done either at home or using the facilities of over 450 public internet access points all over Lithuania.

During the course citizens acquire knowledge and skills adequate to the minimum computer literacy standard, i.e.:

- Fundamentals of PC usage;
- Usage of simple application programs;
- Organizing of files and folders;
- Fundaments of internet usage;
- Fundamentals of e-mail usage;
- Information search;
- Information protection;
- Services on the internet;
- Browsing the internet.

Having completed the course, participants of the course take a test for knowledge evaluation and are awarded a certificate. Each participant is given a complementary course book, which has been published for this specific purpose as part of the above mentioned program. The course books are used during the course, and having completed the course the participants can use it to further develop their knowledge individually. The electronic version of the course book will be available to the public on the project website.

Methodological material is prepared for the teachers to ensure uniform content of the course

### *Project publicity*

Since the project takes place all over the territory of Lithuania, it is essential that the information about this free of charge opportunity to acquire e-citizen skills reaches even the most remote parts of Lithuania. Information and publicity tools are employed to reveal the contribution of the structural funds into the development of Lithuania and provide the information about the collaboration of the European Union and the Republic of Lithuania, its principles and positive benefits for our country and people. Providing continuous information to the citizens is a very important factor in making the project a success. In order to achieve the highest possible results, a powerful publicity campaign was envisaged to employ various publicity tools and attract the eye of the public.

Project publicity tools:

- TV commercial on the national television;
- Radio commercial on the national radio station;

- Advertisements in the national and regional press;
- Information displays in project training sites;
- Information posters in municipalities, county centers, etc;
- Promotional booklets in public internet access points;
- Project presentation (upon the launch of the project), conferences;
- Organization of information conferences (to present interim results of the project);
- Meetings with community leaders and representatives of county centers;
- Project presentations in the Lithuanian Labor Exchange and other organizations.

With regard to publicity, there are two main functions to be performed-information and motivation. The information part includes activities of publicizing the information on the project, its implementation, proceedings, partners, EU support and the benefits of the project. The aim of the motivation part is to spread a clear message about the opportunity provided by the project for the citizens of Lithuania to learn the computer literacy and internet skills free of charge. This message has to be spread to the target audience in the most effective and accurate manner. This part of publicity seeks to motivate the citizens to enroll in the course and provide all the relevant information about registration procedures. The motivation part of the publicity will remain topical and ongoing all through the proceedings of the project, because new groups will be formed and the trainings stage will continue for 22 months. Therefore the recruitment of citizens will remain important and actions will be taken in each region according to the specific situation of course attendance in each particular region.

Publicity actions will be taken all through the duration of the project. Public Relations Specialist in the project administration team is responsible for preparation of the publicity plan, selection of publicity tools and their usage at an appropriate time, prompt reaction at the times of decrease of interest in course attendance and registration ( increase publicity in the particular regions with decreased interest), for organizing of the conferences and project presentations, for maintaining relations with TV and radio stations for the publicity of interim and final results of the project.

Project publicity is implemented in accordance with Information on structural funds support regulations under the SPD of Lithuania 2004–2006 and publicity regulations of sponsorship.

#### *Project subcontractors – providers of services*

In order to achieve project results and carry out the activities, services are outsourced from service providers who have been selected through the procedure of public purchases. Below is the list of services providers required for the project:

- Training organizers are responsible for trainings all across the country. Trainings take place in at least 2 locations in each municipality , i.e. 120 locations (classrooms) in the country. Training

organizers are responsible for leasing out the computer classes with fast speed fast speed Internet connection, hire teachers with relevant qualifications, prepare them for work and provide them with methodological recommendations, provide them with course books designed for course participants.

- Publishing services are purchased to ensure timely production of teaching materials- methodological recommendations for teachers and course books for participants. Among the materials are also information display panels, information posters and promotional brochures
- Design services. A lot o visual aids area employed within the implementation of the project like posters, flyers, stickers, etc. and many of the materials are printed using the same visual style so that it can be easily identified with this particular project and its aims. All information and publicity materials use the same logo, colors, font, illustrations, etc. In other words, they fulfill the same set of requirements for publicity material and program.
- Call center registers new participants of the course, who use the same number to call and register and they are calling from different parts of Lithuania. Besides the registration, the call center also provides all the relevant information about the course, registers participants' complaints and suggestions. The contact telephone number for registration is advertised through all publicity materials.

*Project added value.*

In the frame of this project, 50 000 economically active citizens of Lithuania older than 16 will be provided with the fundamentals in computer literacy and this way, the overall computer literacy of the country will be improved. The competitiveness of the trained people in the labor market will be improved as well as their accessibility to job-related information and opportunities for any further educational training.

It is also expected that the 50 000 trained citizens will disseminate their acquired knowledge in their environment and will help to advertise the benefits of such knowledge in relatively computer illiterate groups and will help to motivate members of these groups to learn.

It is noteworthy, that a significant amount o attention nowadays is given to develop the system of services of e-government. However, the success of e-Government on major part depends on the skills of the citizens and their ability to explore the benefits of these services. Through improving the level of computer literacy of e-citizens, the project will contribute to the training of those who are willing and able to use the services of e-government.

Besides, on the basis of the analysis carried out by the association, such a number of educated persons would give a possibility for the



breakthrough necessary for the formation of social environment encouraging the computer literacy and supporting its attainment.

Therefore, orienting towards the goals set by the Council of the Knowledge Society, the objective of „Window to the Future“ is to give education in computer literacy to 300,000 citizens of Lithuania. However, considering necessary resources, it is purposeful to attain this objective through stages. The first stage would be the project describes above- „ Fundamentals of Computer Literacy of an E-Citizen of Lithuania”

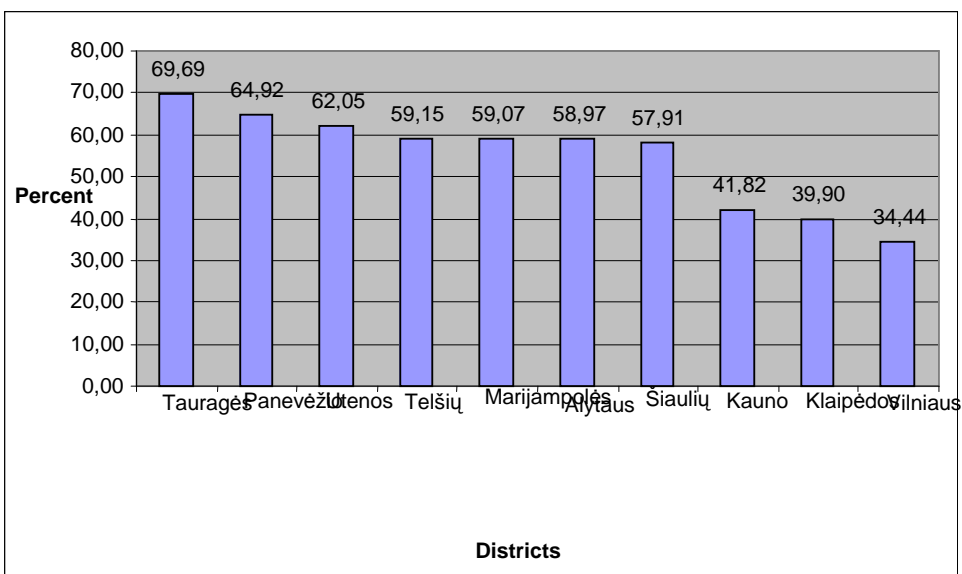
On the basis of the experience in this project and by using the education program, further projects would be prepared and implemented. Through continuation of the project activities in new projects, 300 000 Lithuanian citizens will be trained and this would give a possibility for the breakthrough of the computer literacy which will lead to universal computer literacy.

Besides, educational material designed as part of the project and tuned with ECDL e-Citizen program, will be successfully used after the termination of the project. It will be placed on the internet website of „Window to the Future“ alliance for public and free use and facilitators of the public internet access points will also be encouraged to make use of the material in teaching the visitors about the opportunities provided by the internet.

### Project interim results

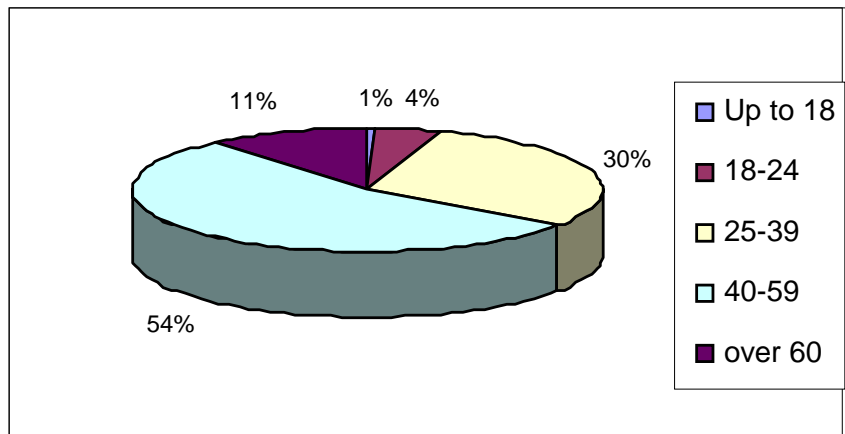
According to the data as of August 1, 2007, 29871 citizens of Lithuania took part in the course and passed the final knowledge assessment test. Gender of participants:

- 22 % male
- 78 % female



Distribution of course participants by location:

- Big cities and towns (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Alytus) 28%
- Other towns 46 %
- Rural areas 26 %



Distribution of course participants by age

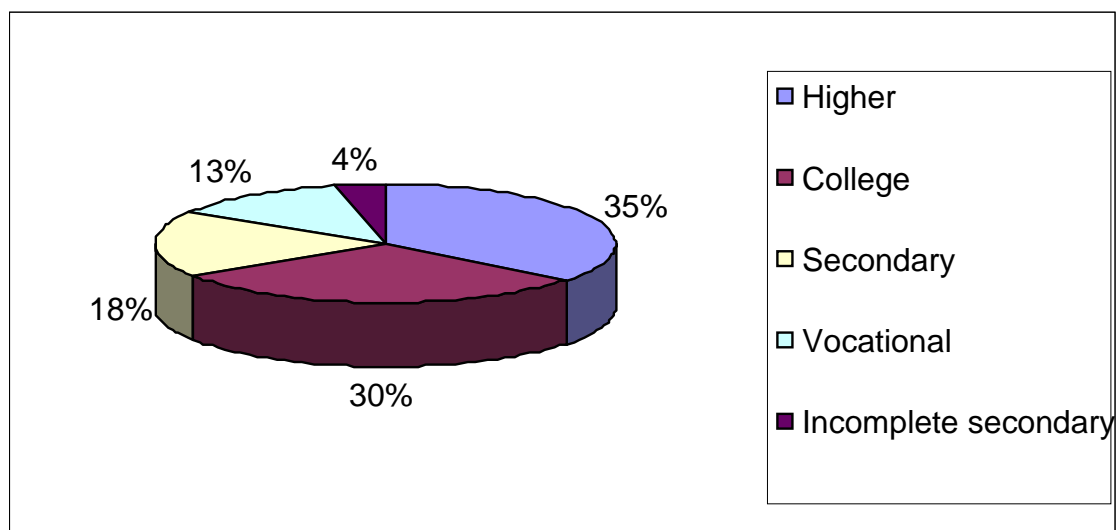
In urban areas:

- Average age 45 years.
- The oldest participant – 85 years-old pensioner from Kaunas with higher education degree;

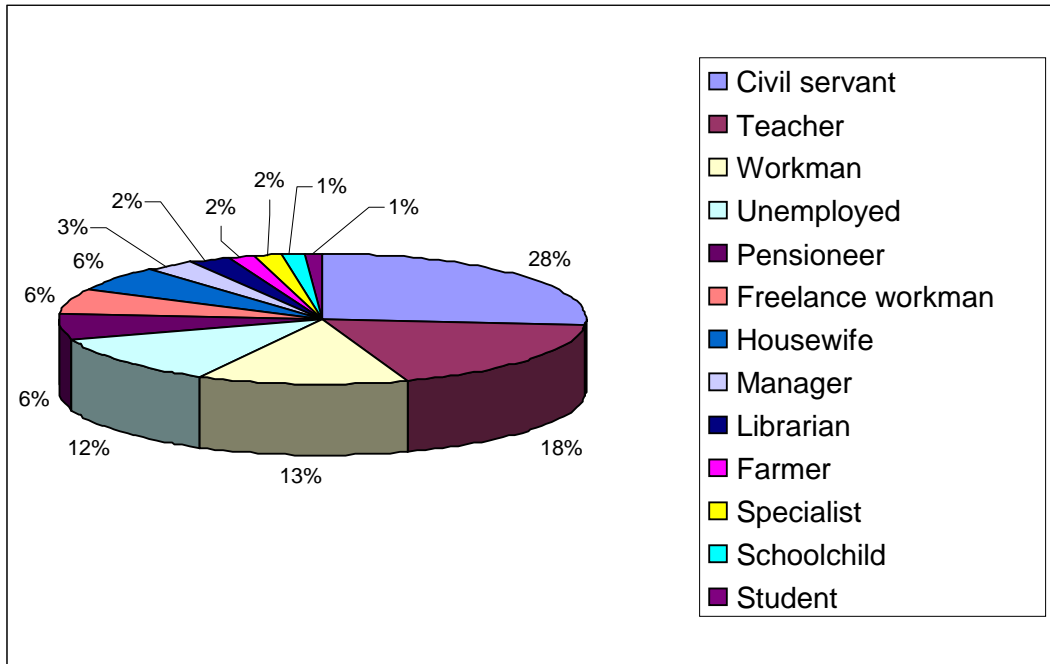
Rural areas:

- Average age 42 years.
- The oldest participant 83 years-old pensioner from Raudondvaris (Kaunas region) with higher education degree;

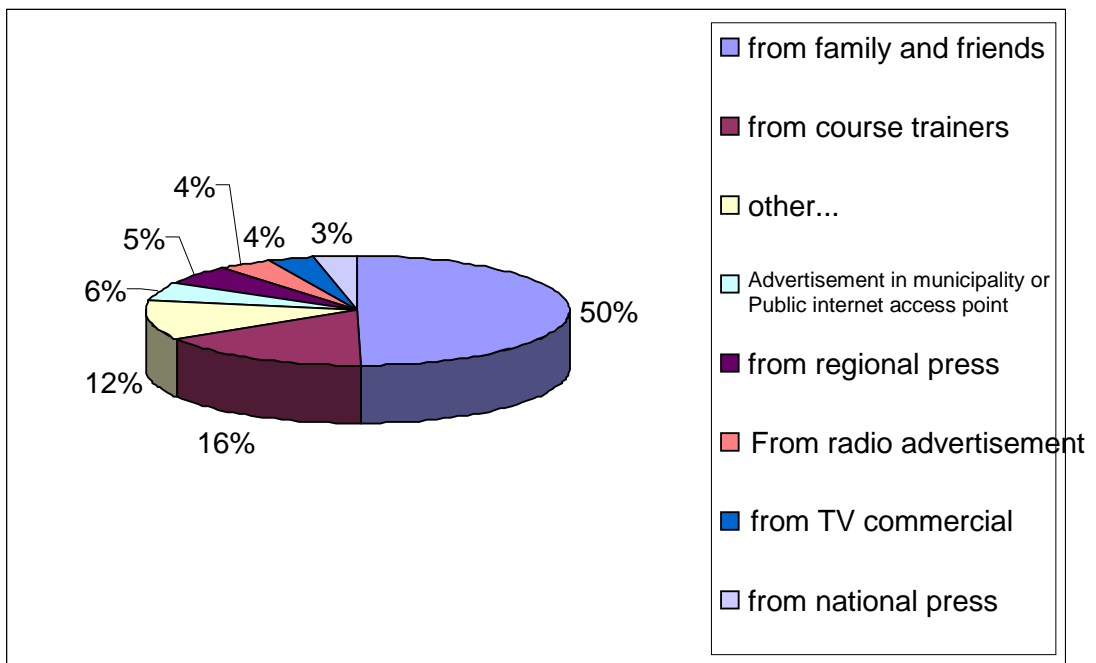
Distribution of course participants by education:



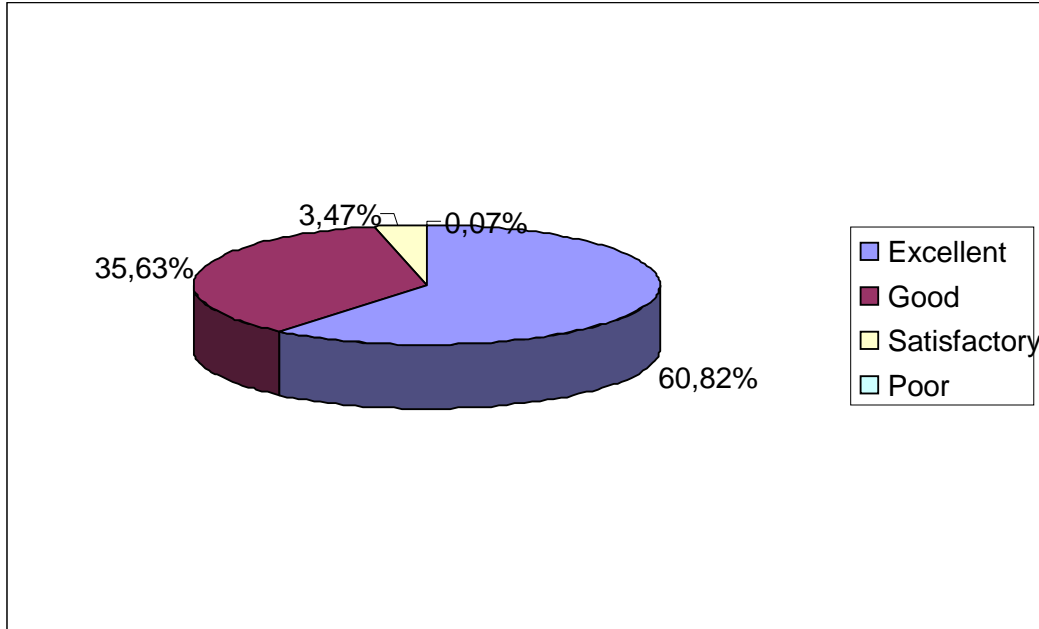
Distribution of course participants by occupation:



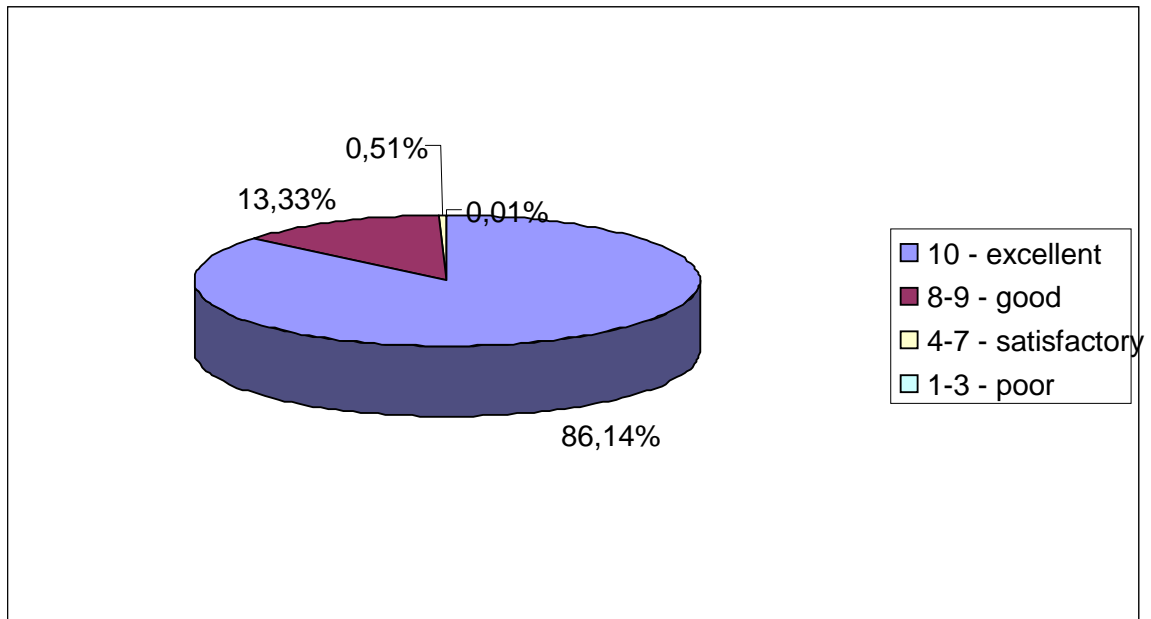
Participants found out about the training from:



*Course evaluation by participants: course content*



*Course evaluation by participants: teaching*



#### 4.2. Overview of other computer literacy projects implemented in various municipalities

Besides the above mentioned nationally implemented project „Fundamentals of Computer Literacy of an E-Citizen of Lithuania” initiated by association „Window to the Future“, there are 15 more projects that have been implemented or are being implemented in Lithuania using the EU structural funds assistance. The projects take place in various towns and regions of the country and they are implemented by municipalities or public institutions. These projects aim to improve the computer literacy of certain social groups like municipality employees, county residents, pensioners and etc. Below follow brief overviews of some bigger projects.

*PROJECT „@cademy” aimed to improve the computer literacy of the residents (employees) of the regions of Birštonas, Elektrėnai, Kaišiadorys, Širvintai and Trakai. Project is administered by the Administration of Elektrėnai municipality.*

Project is intended to improve the computer literacy of residents of the regions Birštonas, Elektrėnai, Kaišiadorys, Širvintai and Trakai. The target group of the project- residents of employment- age of Elektrėnai, Kaišiadorys, Trakai, Birštonas and Širvintai regions who have no computer literacy skills. The activities of the project fall under the guidelines of ECDL (start) program. In the frame of the project, more than 3060 residents will be trained.

Project will address the following issues:

- The number of computer literate people in cities and towns is much bigger than that in small towns and rural areas. The project will significantly

reduce the disparity of indicators in cities and the regions of Elektrėnai, Kaišiadorys, Trakai, Birštonas and Širvintai.

- Disparity in number of holders of ECDL certificates in cities and smaller towns and villages, which will be significantly reduced in the above mentioned areas of project activity.
- Insufficiency of employees competent in using the IT compared to employees' expectations. Within the frame of the project, potential employees will be trained and their professional qualifications will be improved, in other words, the project will help them to adjust to the conditions of the rapidly changing labor market.
- Project will contribute to implementation of the Program for Universal Computer Literacy approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. In order to assure the continuation of the project, non-formal education trainings will be organized, where residents will be encouraged to learn to use the IT individually.

*Project aimed to improve the computer literacy of the Lithuanian Pensioners' Union (LPU) "Bociai" members.*

The aim of the project- to train 1400 members of the union according to the general ECDL computer literacy program and improve their qualifications. (LPU) "Bociai" expects that upon successful completion of the project 1400 members will be trained according to the ECDL computer literacy program and acquire specific knowledge on the modern IT. A number of people of pre-retirement age and pensioners are expected to learn how to use the PC for professional purposes and hence significantly improve their qualifications. Successfully implemented project will help the members of the LPU "Bociai" to increase their competitiveness in the labor market and extend the period of their social activity as well as increase their income. This project was prepared considering the aims of the initiator's activities and the most urgent needs of the members that have settled in the current economical and social environment in Lithuania.

With the help of active participation of its members and constant analysis of the members' needs by heads of structural divisions, LPU "Bociai" management have identified a very topical socio-economic problem, which is related with insufficient computer literacy of the members of organization and results in fewer opportunities to extend their social activity and seek employment in the labor market.

*Project: Development of the information society through improvement of coputer literacy of employees. Project administrator- Vilnius Zirmunai Labor Marker Training Center*

The project primarily aims to provide the opportunity for the residents of Alytus, Utena and Vilnius districts to attain computer literacy skills by bringing the training closer to their location. Through improving their computer literacy, increase the competitiveness of the residents and their

groups in the labor market, improve their accessibility to information required for their work and open up wider educational and professional prospects.

Goals of the project:

- Provide the participants with fundamentals of computer literacy;
- Improve their competencies and knowledge in computer literacy;
- Provide mobile learning opportunities for those who are not able to travel to the educational institutions in region centers or other towns.

Having implemented the above goals, all residents in the selected regions will be given equal opportunities to learn how to use the modern ITs. Within the duration of the project it is intended to organize 107 computer literacy courses and train 890 – 1050 residents.

*Project: Encouraging the computer literacy of employed residents of Klaipeda counties Project administrator- Jono Lankučio public library of Klaipėda District Municipality.*

The aim of the project is to reduce the lack of general knowledge in the field of information technologies which is typical to employed residents of Klaipeda Region County. This will help to ensure better productivity of their work, closer collaboration and better adjustment to the new outside and internal changes.

Goals of the project:

- To improve the computer literacy competencies of employees working in the offices of Klaipeda district wards and provide them with opportunities to acquire computer literacy skills as established under the standards in the Program for Universal Computer Literacy.
- To provide the opportunities for employed residents of Klaipeda district wards to get acquainted with new ITs in practice and thus adjust to the rapidly changing environment in the labor market;
- To provide for practical learning of the ITs on the job, to develop practical skills and encourage keen interest in ITs.

The project will take place in all Klaipeda district wards. It has been decided to select all of them in order to ensure equal computer literacy learning opportunities and equal development for all residents of the district. There are 24 rural library branches in these district wards that offer established working stations with internet connection. Therefore, after the termination of the project, the residents will be able to maintain and further use their knowledge.

In order to provide the computer literacy training to the residents in the most effective and efficient manner, it has been decided to provide one-day training seminars to the residents of district wards. With the help of the seminars, the overall lack of knowledge in the field of IT, which occurred due to rapid development of ITs and the spread of ideas of life-long learning, will be reduced. Seminars would be designed according to the general computer literacy competencies program under the Program for Universal Computer Literacy, therefore the residents, upon completion of the course would

become competent users of computer-based services. Seminars would be held in five different locations in Klaipeda district. It is planned to train in computer literacy 240 residents in the whole district of Klaipeda.

*Project: Computer literacy for the residents of Sakiai district. Project administrator- Public institution „Sintautų academy“.*

The aim of the project – to improve the opportunities of the residents of wards of Šakiai district municipality in labor market and increase their competitiveness by improving their computer literacy skills.

Goals of the project:

- To improve the computer literacy competencies and skills of the residents of Šakiai district by prepared and implemented computer literacy program of two levels and published course material.
- To ensure the continuity of information society development and computer literacy training and create an operating institutional structure and action group of “active community leaders and wardens”, which would observe and evaluate the situation of computer literacy in the region and would search for alternative funding sources for similar trainings. *Computer literacy for the residents of Sakiai district*

It is planned to use 2 different computer literacy programs of different levels: ECDL–(80 academic hours) and ECDL START (60 academic hours).

Project “Computer literacy for the residents of Sakiai district“ is aimed to improve the computer literacy skills of the residents of Sakiai district who are older than 16. Participants of the project, upon attaining the skills and knowledge in computer literacy, will become active members in development of information society and will use their knowledge in their work. The goals of the project will be achieved through organizing 2-level computer literacy training for 440 residents and forming an action group who would search for more opportunities for the residents to improve their computer literacy and become active members of information society.

*Project: Improvement of computer literacy skills of economically active residents of Kaunas district*

*Project administrator- Kaunas County Governor’s office.*

General aims of the project:

- Accelerate the processes of establishment of information society and knowledge economy in Kaunas district;
- Enhance the human resources in Kaunas district and their integration into the labor market;
- Decrease the information divide in the region.

Within the project, 300 participants, who are economically active residents, will take an 80-academical -hours computer literacy course based on ECDL Start program. Part of the course will be done via distance

learning, which is an innovative approach. Participants will acquire distance learning skills, which will be useful in other training programs. Trainings for economically active residents will be implemented under ECDL Citizen Program as well (700 participants will be trained for 30 academic hours). Part of the course will be taught via distance learning



## 5. The most popular computer literacy training program in Lithuania- ECDL

The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) is a qualification that verifies a person's competence in IT, declares their computer skills and most frequently used computer programs. In practice, the ECDL certifies that the holder of the certificate has passed a test of practical skills and competencies that consists of six separate modules covering computer theory and practice. ECDL certificate is recognized all over the world. It is intended to simplify the employment procedures and assure the employer that candidates for the job and those who are already employed, have the necessary skills to use the computer and use the software applications in the environment they are required to use. The ECDL is for anyone who wants to certify their computer skills according to a widely recognized ECDL program.

ECDL aims to:

- Raise the general level of competency of IT
- increase knowledge levels about IT and the competencies in using the PC and the applied program software in Europe and the world;
- assure that all computer users realize the benefits and advantages of using the PC.
- Improve productivity at work of all PC users;
- enable more profitable investment in IT;
- Provide the fundamental competencies which will allow everyone to become members of information society.

### *The benefits of ECDL*

Today, computer skills are increasingly important to people in all walks of life. The ECDL is an information technology certificate for all citizens. It is intended for those who need to, or wish to, know how to use a personal computer. It is suitable for people from every work discipline, for people entering the job market, and for all ages.

### *ECDL benefits:*

- Evaluated skills levels in essential IT and computer use
- Demonstrates innovative and direct method of testing and evaluating the knowledge;
- Provides an effective and way to educate and train the information society;
- Informs the society about the benefits of active participation in information society;
- Provides a flexible and easily accessible way to improve the competencies, which is available in any country with ECDL program.

### *ECDL Program*

ECDL standard is based on what a computer user should know about information technologies and personal computers and the most popular applied program software to use. The areas or required knowledge are described in the ECDL program. The aim of the ECDL program is to identify the facts that need to be learned and skills that have to be possessed according to the standard requirements.

ECDL does not touch upon teaching methodology, technological aspects or programs. It simply defines the set of uniform requirements for testing and exam administration of computer literacy all over Europe.

There are seven modules in the test:

- Key Concepts of Information Technology (IT).
- Using a Computer and Managing Files.
- Word Processing.
- Spreadsheets.
- Databases.
- Presentations.
- Information and Communication.

Module 1. Basic Concepts of Information Technology (IT). Requires the candidate to know about the basic physical make-up of a personal computer and understand some of the basic concepts of Information Technology (IT) such as data storage and memory, the context for computer-based software applications in society, and the uses of information networks within computing. The candidate should also apprehend how IT systems are found in everyday situations; and how personal computers can affect health. The candidate has to be aware of some of the security and legal issues associated with computers.

Module 2. Using the Computer and Managing Files. Requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and competence in using the basic functions of a personal computer and its operating system. The candidate should be able to operate effectively within the desktop environment and be able to manage and organize files and directories/folders and know how to copy, move and delete files and directories/folders. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to work with desktop icons and to manipulate windows. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to use search features, simple editing tools and print management facilities available within the operating system.

Module 3. Word Processing. Requires the candidate to demonstrate the ability to use a word processing application on a personal computer. He or she should understand and be able to accomplish basic operations associated with creating, formatting and finishing a word processing document ready for distribution. The candidate should demonstrate competence in using some of the more advanced features associated with word processing applications such as creating standard tables, using pictures and images within a document, importing objects and using mail merge tools.

Module 4. Spreadsheets. Requires the candidate to understand the basic concepts of spreadsheets and to demonstrate the ability to use a spreadsheet application on a personal computer. He or she shall understand and be able to accomplish basic operations associated with developing, formatting and using a spreadsheet. The candidate should be able to accomplish standard mathematical and logical operations using basic formulas and functions. The candidate should demonstrate competence in using some of the more advanced features of spreadsheet application such as importing objects, and creating graphs and charts.

Module 5. Databases. Requires the candidate to understand the basic concepts of databases and demonstrate the ability to use a database on a personal computer. The module is divided in two sections; the first section tests the candidate's ability to design and plan a simple database using a standard database package; the second section requires the candidate to demonstrate that he or she can retrieve information from an existing database by using the query, select and sort tools available in the database. The candidate shall also be able to create and modify reports.

Module 6. Presentations. Requires the candidate to demonstrate competence in using presentation tools on a personal computer. The candidate should be able to accomplish basic tasks such as creating, formatting and preparing presentations for distribution and display. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to create a variety of presentations for different target audiences or situations. The candidate shall demonstrate the ability to accomplish basic operations with graphics and charts and to use various slide show effects.

Module 7. Information and Communication. This module is divided in two sections. The first section, Information, requires the candidate to accomplish basic Web search tasks using a Web browser application and available search engine tools, to bookmark search results and to print Web pages and search reports. The second section, Communication, requires the candidate to demonstrate their ability to use electronic mail software to send and receive messages, to attach documents or files to a message and to organize and manage message folders or directories within electronic mail software.

