



A DIGITAL SKILLS TOOL KIT FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS  
FOCUSING ON WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

**DESKTOP RESEARCH**

**P2 – Nerda - Romania**

Project Coordinator: CIVIC COMPUTING

Project Number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

## Project information

Project acronym: eSkills4all

Project title: A DIGITAL SKILLS TOOL KIT FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS  
FOCUSING ON WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR  
MARKET

Project number: 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036712

Sub-programme or KA: KA2 Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of  
Good Practices

Project website: <https://eskills4all.eu/>

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Nerda

The North-East Regional Development Agency, the first regional-type institution in Romania, is a generator of social-economic development of the North-East Region.

Amongst our social-economic and political concerns of 1999, at a time when our organization was established, we had to introduce a new concept: the regional development policy. Through a sustained cooperation with the six county-level public administrations (of Bacau, Botosani, Iasi, Neamt, Suceava and Vaslui), which have signed the agreement for setting up the North-East Development Region, we have succeeded gradually in turning this concept into reality.

The institution currently has 160 employees, higher education graduates as engineers, economists, public administration servants, etc., and almost 10% of them are involved in vocational education activities within the North-East Regional Studies Centre (CRS), structure set up in our institution since 2010.

North-East Regional Studies Centre is our VET center, providing until now, trainings for more than 600 persons in: Project Management, HR Management, Public Procurement, Strategic Management, Leadership, Financial Management for university graduates. We have well trained lecturers and researchers with proof experience, having national (National Qualifications Authority) and international certification (Extremadura Business School, Spain).

So far the center obtained operation permits from the National Council for Professional Training of Adults as provider of certified training for the three courses/occupations: project manager, human resources manager and public procurement expert.

The training programs are tailored in such a way as to adapt to the needs of the organizations both through contents and learning methods and by adapting the difficulty level of the concepts to existing training levels of trainees, the learning process being based on partnership.

RSC also proposed itself to carry out the following main activities into the regional development field:

1. Professional training
  - a. Professional training programs certified by the National Authority for Qualifications.
  - b. Specialized training courses on interdisciplinary fields (cost-benefit analysis, management of infrastructure projects, territorial marketing, etc.)
  - c. Training courses tailored on issues specific to RDA's activity.
2. Research and applied studies and surveys
3. Assessment of professional competencies.

## 1.2 General Aims

North-East Regional Development Agency aims the quality training, as a resource that can lead to the improvement of the economic and social sectors from North-East Region of Romania. NERDA developed a global thinking model, oriented to generate and transfer knowledge and know-how for the internal staff, but mainly to create future specialist, leaders in regional development sector. Until now, more than 600 participants graduated with certificates/diplomas the training programs provided by North-East Regional Studies Center.

NERDA is constantly preoccupied on all the levels of educational sector and employment in the North-East region, key components of sustainable economic development. For example, RDA coordinated the regional consortium and has developed the Regional Action Plan for Development of Technical and Vocational Education.

So, our participation in this project is important due to our large experience, on the one hand in regional development and, on the other hand, in adult education, training programs, research and applied studies and surveys.

## 1.3 Purpose of this Document & General Aims

This document aims to present the unemployment status and digital skills in Romania for both men and women (25-40 years old) with a special focus on women.

## 2. Demographic Data at Romanian Level

Unfortunately, Romania ranks the penultimate place in the European Union in terms of digital competences, according to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The large number of IT specialists in the economy is one of the reasons why Romania does not occupy the last position in the European Union (EU) in the field of digital competences.

Romania's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 4.7 percent in November of 2017, from 4.9 percent in the previous month. It was the lowest jobless rate on record, as the number of unemployed went down by 8 thousand to 443 thousand.

Unemployment rate for men decreased 0.1 percentage points to 5.6 percent, while that for women also declined 0.1 percentage points to 3.7 percent. A year earlier, the jobless rate was higher at 5.5 percent.

Unemployment Rate in Romania averaged 6.67 percent from 2004 until 2017, reaching an all time high of 8.60 percent in January of 2004 and a record low of 4.70 percent in November of 2017.



(Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/romania/unemployment-rate> )

Regarding the structure of unemployment by level of education, the unemployed without education and those with the level of education primary, secondary and vocational education had the highest share in total unemployed registered (79.68%), while the unemployed with lyceum and post-secondary education level represented 15.63% and those with university studies 4.70%. (<http://www.anofm.ro/files/Comunicat%20de%20presa%20somaj%20decembrie%202017.pdf>).

The structure of unemployment by age groups is as follows: under 25 years of age represents 11,06%, between 25 and 29 years of age 7,08%, 30 – 39 year 19,92%, 40 – 49 years 28,99%, 50 – 55 years 14,97%, over 55 years 17,98%.

It can be seen that the 30-49 age group represents almost half (**48,91%**) of the total number of unemployed, as for Romania, may represent the target group of the project.

### 3. Romanias current scene at National Level

Romania has experienced a fall in the number of wage-earning employees since the beginning of the century. This has been explained with reference to high rates of inactivity recorded by the working-age population, the large number of people working in subsistence farming, and the outward migration of labour (mostly to elsewhere in the EU), bringing about a loss of human capital. Similarly, the extent of early school leaving also has affected the competitiveness of Romania's human capital.

According to <http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/bg/countries/romania>, there will be modest employment growth, but employment levels in 2025 are expected to remain below our pre-2008 financial crisis levels. Most employment growth over the medium-term will be in the distribution and transport sector, and most job opportunities will be for skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers.

Sectors with the largest share in employment in Romania in 2016:

- Agriculture, forestry & fishing 23.10%
- Manufacturing 18.91%
- Wholesale & retail trade 13.93%
- Construction 8.03%
- Transport & storage 5.59%

Occupations with the largest share in employment in Romania in 2016:

- Farmworkers and gardeners 18.50%
- Sales workers 7.53%
- Drivers & vehicle operators 6.27%
- Metal & machinery workers 5.38%
- Construction workers 5.12%

## 4. Romania's current scene at European Level – Participation in EU programs

In terms of digital skills, Romania's performance is below the EU average but it's making some progress with more people getting online and digital skill levels slowly improving. A little more than half of Romanians are regular internet users (56%) compared with 79% in the EU. 28% of Romanians possess above basic levels of digital skills versus 56% across the EU.

Romania benefits from a good pool of science, technology, math and engineering (STEM) graduates with 1.6% of Romanians aged 20-29 years old holding a STEM degree although this level is falling according to the latest figures. The share of ICT specialists in the economy is increasing as IT jobs offer attractive salaries.

The Ministry of Education and Research aims to increase the digital skills of the new generation and is preparing some initiatives to tackle this issue. As of 2017, both ICT and programming classes are being introduced in middle school. They allow for simple coding and algorithmic thinking in order to ensure that children are able to search, find and interpret data.

A pilot project called 'The Digital Catalogue' has been implemented, allowing for parents to digitally track grades and absences in school. School books - the availability of which has been a significant public issue in Romania in the past years - are currently available for free, online<sup>9</sup>. Various private companies have launched their own campaigns to improve digital skills and attract ICT specialists.

At this point digital skills still seem to be mostly promoted through private sector initiatives, rather than by public policy.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, following country-level research, we can say that in Romania there are more unemployed men than women and that most (48,91%) are part of the age group 30-49 years.

It can also be seen that the sectors with the highest employment rates are agriculture, forestry & fishing, manufacturing, construction and, given that half of Romanians are regular internet users (56%) compared with 79% in the EU and 28% of Romanians possess above basic levels of digital skills versus 56% across the EU, we can conclude that the eSkills4all project will be more than welcome and also necessary.

## 6. References

<http://www.anofm.ro/files/Comunicat%20de%20presa%20somaj%20decembrie%202017.pdf>

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<http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/bg/countries/romania>