

# HACKATHON FOR HEALTH '23

STATUS REPORT



21 March 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Hackathon for Health was a one-day youth competition for secondary school students (14-19 years old) living and studying in Białystok. The competition took place on the 10 March in the Centre for Innovative Research at the Medical University of Białystok.

Hackathon for Health was a unique opportunity for Białystok's youth and their teachers to participate in the event that was designed around the ever-popular idea of *hackathon* i.e an event where teams of like-minded people gather for a short period to develop new approaches to solving problems or completing projects.

Hackathon was the very first competition of this kind in Białystok, where young people were allowed to: engage with scientific data; identify health problems applicable to their population; and design solutions that are effective and relevant to young people in Białystok municipality.

The event was organized by SocLab Foundation, the Medical University of Białystok and the University of Białystok, with the support of WhiteBits, and GoApps. This competition was developed as part of JoinUs4Health project and funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the EU.



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## WHY

The idea of Hackathon for Health stems from the belief that science should be made more inclusive and open so that society can understand it better and engage with it more meaningfully. This assumption is strongly underpinned by the E.U. Responsible Research and Innovation framework, which is also at the heart of JoinUs4Health philosophy.

Another rationale underlying the event comes from evidence, which shows that young people are facing many health challenges, particularly related to mental health and well-being. It is also apparent, the recent pandemic deepened this problem and exacerbated the consequences it has on youths' health, self-confidence, and social skills. We also acknowledge there is no comprehensive, safe and friendly framework in place, which would enable young people to voice their concerns and needs about health, but also engage in a problem-solving process, which brings positive changes.

These two reasons led the Białystok's JoinUs4Health team to produce an event, that, in a friendly, inclusive and structured way addresses the following:

- Promotes a ground-up approach to science
- Familiarizes youth with inquiry-based learning and Design Thinking framework - Promotes four key competencies i.e. cooperation, creative thinking, critical thinking, and cooperation
- Encourages youth to discuss health issues they face

## WHAT

As a way of engaging young people with a creative process, we harnessed the following measures and broke them into 3 Stages:

### 1. STAGE - Recruitment and shortlisting

Over 3 weeks (between the 6th and 26th of February), we ran a recruitment campaign, which focused on secondary school students in Białystok. As a way of recruitment students had to answer a few simple questions, select one of the five subject areas they are interested in (i.e. mental health, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, diabetes, mouth and teeth hygiene), and shortly describe their



idea for a social campaign.

As a result, we recruited 13 teams from 12 different schools and shortlisted 6 teams who stood with the chance of participating in the hackathon's final.

Topics that gathered the most interest were:

- Mental health and well-being
- Diabetes
- Sedentary lifestyle

## 2. STAGE 2 - main event (hackathon's day)

The main hackathon event took place on the 10 March at the Centre for Innovative Research In Białystok. 6 shortlisted teams were in a one-day marathon of ideas and projects. During the day teams were using different designing and brainstorming tools, intending to design the most comprehensive, innovative, and creative social campaign.

## 3. STAGE 3 - project implementation

Straight after the hackathon one winning team - TALKS WITH HUMMINGBIRD - started working on implementing its campaign. During this stage, one of our coordinators is assisting and continuously mentors the members of the team, and helps them with logistics. It is projected that the team's social campaign will be completed by early May 2023 and its results will be published during the Podlasie Festival of Science and Arts 2023.

## **'HACKATHON FOR HEALTH' IN NUMBERS:**

1. 46 secondary level collages from Białystok were directly contacted and invited to participate in the Hackathon
2. 47 secondary college students from 13 schools who applied to participate in the competition from Białystok's secondary schools have registered on our website
3. 6 teams from 6 different schools were shortlisted to participate in the competition
4. 1 team won the main prize (FitBit Watches and support in implementing a social



campaign), and 1 team got a distinction

5. 8 mentors and experts from marketing, medicine, diet, social science and more were supporting the teams throughout the day.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE & REACH**

1. All major local media covered the event (see links below)

a. 1 x major TV station TVP3 Białystok

b. 4 major radio broadcasters have streamed interviews with organizers 2.

The event secured media matrons/patrons from local news agencies: Kurier Poranny, Współczesna, TVP3, Radio Białystok

3. The Lord Mayor of Białystok and provincial governors became honorary ambassadors of the event

4. Białystok wide-spread Social Media campaign (managed by WhiteBits) reached over 69 041 ad viewers

5. GoApps agency built websites, which supported the recruitment process as well and the promotion

## **CONCLUSION**

Hackathon for Health was a very successful event, which generated immense interest among young people, teachers, schools and organizations, be it representatives of the local governments or media outlets.

The competition showed that local youth is eagerly engaging in projects and events dedicated to health and science. The key takeaways and learning points, which stem from this initiative are:

- Local youth has an immense interest in science and technology
- Local youth faces structural and cultural barriers, which enable them to engage in science in a friendly and fun way
- Project-based learning and inquiry-based learning are one of the most effective ways of engaging young people in the educational process
- Schools show interest in alternative ways of learning and engaging with the



scientific and creative process

- Local governing bodies and councils see the importance of such events and are willing to cooperate and support youth initiatives and events
- Youth is eager to talk about health matters but on their terms, by the media, they know and use language they understand
- Scientific and technical language is one of the barriers when engaging young people
- Local actors understand the seriousness of health problems the city's population is facing and see the importance of engaging with communities in the early stages of their life
- Percs, attractive prizes help to attract youth



## APPENDIX

### Media Links:

1. Clip from region-wide TV station covering the event:

<https://bialystok.tvp.pl/68428289/hackathon-dla-zdrowiafot-tvp3-bialystok>

2. A radio clip from a regional broadcasters:

<https://www.radio.bialystok.pl/wiadomosci/index/id/224233>

<https://akadera.bialystok.pl/kampania-spoeczna-o-mlodziezy-i-dla-mlodziezy/>

3. Google Drive with photos:

<https://drive.google.com>

[/drive/folders/1B0X-4AWSW7gTI\\_pNY-7Bj14eUCsy5cPo?usp=sharing](https://drive/folders/1B0X-4AWSW7gTI_pNY-7Bj14eUCsy5cPo?usp=sharing)

4. Online portals and magazines:

- a.

<https://poranny.pl/hackatlon-dla-zdrowia-uczniowie-stworzyli-kampanie-sp-oleczne-skierowane-do-mlodych/ar/c14-17363531>

- b.

<https://www.eska.pl/bialystok/trwaja-zgloszenia-do-bialostockiego-konkurs-u-hackathon-dla-zdrowia-aa-CDKm-ZT9j-mjxX.html>

- c.

<https://www.bialystokonline.pl/hackathon-dla-zdrowia-2023-mozna-sie-z-gla-szac-na-maraton-projektow-o-zdrowiu,artykul.134694.9.1.html>

5. Promotional video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75Sg08FDwLA>

