



Winter Event 2023 Workshop Report

'Exploring the aspects of Upskilling and Education on Citizen Science' - CeOS_SE Project

This report details the outcomes of a workshop conducted at the 2023 LIBER Winter Event in Florence, Italy. The Winter Event brings together LIBER Members and Project Partners to discuss the matters at the heart of research library work. [Read the full event report.](#)

Workshop: 'Exploring the aspects of Upskilling and Education on Citizen Science'

This workshop, initiated by the [Erasmus+ CeOS SE Project](#) (Citizen-Enhanced Open Science in Southeastern Europe) coordinated by LIBER, focused on the ways that Citizen Science (CS) is getting the attention of relevant stakeholders, equipping them with knowledge and skills, and securing its long term sustainability. Upskilling and education are crucial activities that libraries often undertake within their institutions and beyond. Having the essential knowledge of Citizen Science enables library staff to be effective during the delivery of these services. The need for highly skilled information professionals is imperative, and this requires not only the upskilling of the current workforce, but also of new, early career librarians.

The workshop presented the current state of skills and knowledge in Southeastern Europe among the library community and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). During these presentations, polls and short surveys were held to gather the opinion of the audience. Between the presentations, discussions among groups provided insights about the aspects of education and training on CS.

Workshop goals

The organisers aimed to share knowledge, through their own experiences, about the skills and competencies that are required to perform CS activities and services. Participants had the opportunity to provide their own input about the skills that information and library professionals should have to perform CS-related tasks effectively.

Citizen Science is an important aspect of LIBER's goal to enable world-class research. It is a plateau of collaboration - not only among research libraries, but also among researchers, public libraries and HEIs. It allows research libraries to collaborate with citizens, highlight the role of research and innovation to society and welcome all to the research lifecycle.

Citizen Science relates to the following areas of [LIBER's 2023-27 Strategy](#):

- *Research Libraries as Engaged and Trusted Hubs*
- *Upskilling the Library Workforce*





Report

More than 20 participants from research libraries across Europe attended the workshop “Exploring the Aspects of Upskilling and Education on Citizen Science”.

The session opened with an introduction and outline of the project’s aims by **Andrej Vrčon**, Head of International Projects at LIBER. **Nataša Dakić** from the University Library “Svetozar Marković”, Republic of Serbia, presented the current state of Citizen Science awareness and engagement in Southeastern Europe. Data for this presentation were gathered through a survey and analysed and processed to develop the [Roadmap for Citizen-Enhanced Open Science](#) in the Balkan countries. The Roadmap is a valuable tool that guides any interested professional in organising CS activities effectively, including the effective identification of participants, the setting of goals, and the selection of the right tools and resources. One of the key areas of the Roadmap was the identification of the key skills and competencies that include a broad range of soft skills, such as communication, analytical, instructional, and social media skills.

Dolores Mumelaš from the National and University Library in Zagreb (NSK) informed participants about the status of upskilling for Citizen Science in Croatia through the training they provided. NSK is an exemplary case of stimulating interest through several CS activities, such as [Dendroteca](#), and of training professionals in a country where the level of experience in organising CS activities is relatively low. When asked, many of the participants mentioned that they had no experience organising these activities either and that the preferred means of education would be workshops and accredited webinars, as well as practical means like events. However, it was their strong belief that libraries can position themselves as hubs for CS skills training inside their institutions.

Maria Cassella from the Library of the University of Turin guided us through the Learning-by-doing method. The Learning-by-doing method was used to train and educate librarians on CS and its activities during the CeOS_SE Project. The barriers to performing Learning/Training/Teaching Activities were analysed; one of the important factors being lack of experience. Moreover, communication skills and collaboration are needed, as they have slowly become essential to the work of librarians.

The final presentation was by **Theodora Karaiskou** from the Library and Information Centre, University of Patras (UPatras), Greece. Theodora gave an overview of the surveys that the UPatras teams conducted, both at the student and the faculty levels. Both surveys were planned to create an indirect “dialogue” between the students and the faculty. Preliminary results were presented, and the participants of the workshop were asked about skills that would be essential for young professionals. The common denominator was that communication skills are considered critical skills for educators to possess or obtain in the future to be able to make Citizen Science part of HEI curricula.

Conclusion

The workshop presented the gaps that are identified in the current workforce, the means to overcome them and the targeted skills and competencies needed. Working on the capacity building of library professionals is essential to making CS a sustainable practice within HEIs, and more generally across the scholarly research landscape.

View all of the presenters slides on our [Winter Event Zenodo Community](#).