



For the third year in a row, Studenac empowers future leaders of digital transformation through the Kodira<ONA> project

The competition for female students in STEM once again brings together data science and real business challenges – the winner will receive the opportunity to present at the .debug conference and participate in a mentorship program at Studenac Digital

Omiš, 7 May 2025 – Studenac, the most widespread and one of the fastest-growing retail chains in Croatia, is launching the **Kodira<ONA>** project for the third consecutive year. The initiative is dedicated to recognising and fostering excellence among young women in the fields of digital technologies, programming and data analytics. The competition is open to female students who possess basic knowledge of predictive analytics and are proficient in at least one programming language.

Applications are open **from 7 to 26 May 2025**, and interested candidates can apply via the project's official website at www.studenac.hr/kodiraona. After registering, each participant will receive simulated data and a competition task via email, which must be completed and submitted by 26 May at 10:00 a.m.

This year's task reflects real-life challenges in the retail sector and focuses on analysing and proposing models for Sunday store operations. Participants will analyse business data and customer behaviour and propose a sustainable and commercially viable Sunday operating model for Studenac stores in a selected city. Evaluation criteria include analytical accuracy, creativity of approach and clarity in explaining the applied methodology.

For the first time, the project is being implemented with the support of partner higher education institutions that recognise the importance of empowering young women in technology. These include Algebra University College, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology Osijek, RIT Croatia, the Faculty of Informatics and Digital Technologies of the University of Rijeka, the Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varaždin, and the Faculty of Science in Split.

"We launched Kodira<ONA> within Studenac Digital with the aim of connecting our expertise in innovation and digitalisation with young talents from the community. According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2023*, four out of five employers plan to invest in on-the-job learning and training as a key workforce development strategy, with mentoring being the most common form of education. This is exactly the approach we embrace. We are especially proud that last year's winner, Iva Tereza Čagalj, has gone from being a student participant to a member of our team. We invite all potential candidates to apply — we look forward to discovering new



ideas and perspectives that can help shape the future of digital retail,” said **Marin Grgurev**, Director of Data Science and Engineering at Studenac.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their solutions in person to an expert jury in Zagreb on 6 June 2025, after which the winner of the competition will be announced.

The winner’s name will be published on Studenac’s official website, and she will also present her approach and solution at the .debug conference, the largest regional gathering of developers, taking place in Zagreb on 12 and 13 June 2025.

The main prize is a six-week mentoring programme with the Studenac Digital team, bringing together experts in data science, engineering and business analytics.

“Participating in the competition was a significant challenge, but the effort resulted in an exceptionally valuable mentoring experience. It was also my first hands-on experience in data science, which opened up new professional opportunities for me. Through intensive collaboration with mentors and colleagues, I gained relevant knowledge and developed key skills that strengthened my confidence and enabled further professional growth,” said Iva Tereza Čagalj, last year’s competition winner and now a Junior Data Scientist at Studenac Digital.

The mentoring programme includes direct collaboration with teams developing analytical tools, predictive models and operational optimisation solutions, giving the winner the opportunity to work alongside professionals driving the digital transformation of one of the country’s most dynamic industries.

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