



Inclusion projects presented at the National Valorisation Conference

ANPCDEFP
Bucharest, 2010

Learning by doing, living by working

Our Comenius Multilateral school partnership “Learning by doing, living by working” started in 2007, and it is a partnership of 7 special schools and a mainstream school with integrated pupils. Our partners come from all over Europe: Poland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and UK under the coordination of The School Centre for Inclusive Education No.1 Oradea, Romania.

The partners of this project worked together in the past and we had the chance to identify this mutual need of creating protected workshops for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). In the coordinating school from Romania, the target group of the project is especially constituted by severely disabled children, who have no chance of



being professionalized in the Schools of Arts and Professions and all the other involved children, easily disabled and integrated pupils, take part as support factors for them.

Over a period of 2 years, the project developed workshops for the SEN pupils with motivating, enjoyable and productive activities and it also provided skills that will be useful for the children’s future. We decided on music, dance and drama, kitchen and gardening, sports and work skills. Each school produces a DVD, works of art, takes part in sports competitions and for our secondary students we developed access skills for helping them with work experiences.

Each partner school developed practical, life enhancing workshops, meaning 5 protected work spaces for organizing activities with the SEN pupils that focus on enhancing their self image, their self esteem and their trust in their future perspectives, as they experience success and achievement during the time they are involved in the activities and while working at the final project products.

Beside these workshops, within the project it is planned to create 2 support groups in each partner school, shaped as workshops for teachers and parents, in order to help them work together for the wellbeing and social inclusion of their pupils and children.

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ELLVIS

English Language Learning programme for Visually Impaired Students

ELLVIS

HOME (H) PROJECT (P) PARTNERS (A) TECHNOLOGY (T) PRODUCTS (R) LINKS (L) NEWS (N) IMPRESSUM (I)
LARGE FONT (+) | SMALL FONT (-)

English language learning for visually impaired students

Home

The Comenius Project «English Language Learning programme for Visually Impaired Students - ELLVIS» offers new ways of language learning for blind and visually impaired people.

ELLVIS intends to improve the access of visually impaired persons to language learning. As good learning material for visually impaired children is rare, it is essential to create innovative material which opens up new possibilities for this target group and makes it possible for VI children to take part in lifelong learning.

Duration 18 months
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Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

MACHIAVELLI

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Partnership

Centro Machiavelli Tandem Florence (IT)
UICI, Italian Union of Blind Florence (IT)
Tandem Hamburg (DE)
DAA Berlin (DE)

Institut Montclair Angers (FR)
Centrul Cultural German Braşov (RO)
Asociația Nevăzătorilor Braşov (RO)

Aims

The ELLVIS project (<http://www.ellvis.allvip.org>) wants to amplify the innovative results of the former project AllVip, which has developed an alternative user interface for language learning without a screen reader, using force-feedback device (joysticks). The playful attitude this technical device suggests adds to the motivational value of the program.

The ELLVIS project aims to adapt and to amplify the English course for young blind learners of other mother languages to the needs and interests of children and teenagers. Four language institutions and three schools for the blind are working together to achieve these targets: one English course each for blind Italian-speaking, French-speaking and Romanian-speaking students.

Innovation

The learners, blind and visually impaired children, and their trainers as well, face the situation that they have to adapt existing materials (produced for sighted people) or make use of technical aids such as Braille readers, screen readers or purely audio-based materials. Learning tools based on iconic material (images, pictures, animations) are practically unavailable for visually impaired persons. At present there is no alternative solution to the “book and tape” methodology. This language course is aimed at those who are unable to use these technical aids, who need further assistance and prompting through a system that supplies feedback in other than audio-file form, namely by “force-feedback” reaction that the joystick offers.

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The ERASMUS programme and aspects of social inclusion

As you all know, ERASMUS is an education and training programme of the EU, which aims at accomplishing certain objectives on the higher education level, bringing innovation in higher and professional education, developing the quality and the means of cooperation between institutions, raising the level of transparency and compatibility between higher education and professional qualifications needed on the European labour market.

Since 1987 up to now, there have been approximately 2.2 million students who had an ERASMUS grant. The EU future objective is to reach 3 million students by 2012. According to the European Commission facts and figures, 140 students with disabilities have taken part by now to the programme, which means only 0.09% of the total number of attending students.

In Romania, there are some universities that are organize mobilities for students with special needs: in 2007 there was only one: the University of Bucharest, but in 2010 there are several more: the University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine “Ion Ionescu de la Brad” (Iași), the Wallachia University (Târgoviște), „Ștefan cel Mare“ University (Suceava), Arts and Design University (Cluj-Napoca).

The main problem of these students is that they do not apply for the programme because they are afraid they might be “labelled” by other students, which leads to a feeling of exclusion.

One of the well-known success stories related to ERASMUS is the one of Giedre Pranaityte, student of the Vytautas University in Lithuania who went on an exchange to Bergen University in Norway. She says: *“The people I met and the things I saw taught me about Norwegian culture. Being a wheelchair user presented complications for some social activities, but not many”*. After finalising her mobility with great success, she started her PhD on International Relations.

An example of good practice is the ESN project called ‘**ExchangeAbility**’, developed together with UNICA (Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe), EDF (the European Disability Forum) and Youth Agora (an NGO for Youth).

The goals of this project are: to make ESN accessible for students with disabilities and to provide opportunities to these students to actively participate in student life, to increase the number of exchange students with disabilities and to create better conditions for them during their staying abroad. There are two different projects: one at internal level, which aims to promote **ExchangeAbility** all around the network and to involve students with disabilities as ESN active members, an the project with UNICA which aims at monitoring the accessibility – through site visits to the universities involved in exchanges, and production of audiovisual materials, development of a website, blog, printing postcards etc.

Some of the results of the project are: 18 ESN sections in 16 countries have integrated students with special needs in their everyday activities, positive feedback from students, organizing of regular training meetings in 2010: February (Bruxelles), May (Antwerpen), December (Athens).

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LET'S GO TO ITALY

Within the project „Let's go in Italy“ there were organized 20 2-week training courses in Italy. The beneficiaries are young – most of them children – who are enrolled in or have completed a training course. Some of them come have disadvantaged social backgrounds or have difficulties in learning. Final objective of the project was to promote these 2-week internships in Italian companies and/or associations chosen together by the sending and the host organizations. The training subject was strictly related to vocational education and common to all beneficiaries. Entering into a foreign firm was preceded not only by language and cultural training, but also by applying of training and teaching methods so that the beneficiaries were able to overcome the challenges and difficulties during the mobility experience. At the end of the internship, the recipients received the Europass-Mobility certificates and certificates attesting their training stage in the host organizations.

Fundația de Voluntari Somaschi is an NGO, which was opened in 1997. It was founded by the Somaschi Congregation in Italy and funded primarily by La Nostra Via (Italy). The foundation was established as a response to the social problems that were and continue to be present in Romania.

We deal primarily with children between the ages of 12 and 18 who are either homeless or live in very troubled homes. We have a day center with 33 kids and a group home for 10 boys. Our day center has two major programs: one for children who attend school and the second, designed for those who don't go to school. The later program is designed to teach children work skills and to provide them with technical training needed by a future profession. The purpose of our foundation is to reintegrate all these children into society, to offer support to their families and to give them the tools needed for entering on the labour market. We also have a street children drop in center, a mobile aid unit and a high school volunteer program.

For about 4 years we have a shelter for homeless people, especially children, but also adults. At the time it started it was the only one in our area and it was mainly maintained by us. We have there a daily presence of up to 30 children. The shelter is sustained on the field by a unit of educators that initiate the first contact with the street kids and propose them activities in order to understand and help each one properly. We also have a weekly programme of sanitary education in a Roma Community.

After the project, the biggest changes for the involved children were:

- Increasing of self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Changing the mindset in terms of labor and social rules;
- Constant interest for the Italian language and culture;
- Flexibility in thinking in terms of further studies and finding jobs during holidays and/or seeking a second job to supplement income;
- The disposition to do some different training courses;
- Visits and even looking for jobs, with a view to the work offers abroad;
- Volunteering – understanding the concept and doing volunteer work in daily life, but also responding to the activities organized by the foundation.

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Professional Training for Parents of People with Down Syndrome

The project known as “Professional Training for Parents of People with Down Syndrome” - PoD lies within the Leonardo framework of projects undertaken by the European Union. The project benefits from collaboration between 7 partners from 4 different countries: Spain, Romania, Italy and Greece; and the partnership enable cooperation and social dialogue among the various countries taking part in it.

The aim is to design, develop and implement a new training tool with digital support (DVD) to help the improvement and development of intellectual capabilities of people with Down syndrome.

The final goal is to improve the quality of life of this community and achieve maximum autonomy.

The tool is aimed for family members to help them to stimulate and educate people with Down syndrome. It is a supplement to what is done by professionals in specialized centers and can never be used as a substitute for their work. The tool is both formative and informative in nature, and has three components: a DVD, a CD and a book.

To achieve our goal a well structured and adequate methodology has been provided, following clear and successive steps:

1. Identification of training needs of parents and relatives of people with Down syndrome.
2. Development of training methodology and learning tool.
3. Experimental application of the learning tool developed in the previous task.

Beneficiaries of this tool are specialists, public and private institutions involved with educating persons with Down syndrome and family members of persons with Down syndrome. They can benefit by improved knowledge of people who care for and work with the topics and have a direct influence on the life of individuals with Down syndrome. Improved knowledge goes to a better quality and accessibility of learning opportunities, and contribution to social cohesion and inclusion, which means quality of life. These outcomes can easily be transferred and exploited in more European countries. The outcomes invite for reflecting the national differences or family social life peculiarities.

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The story of a wonderful project...

- Duration: 2 years
- Budget: 15.000 Euros

- No. of mobilities/institution: 12
- No. of meetings: 4 (Sofia – BG, Pitești – RO, Vienna – AT, Ulm – DE)

Partnership:

- Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education of Ulm University (ZAWiW), Ulm – DE (coordinator);
- Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH, Volkshochschule Ottakring – Hernals, Wien - AT;
- European Management Centre (EMC), Sofia - BG;
- Group of European Integration, Pitești - RO;
- Cultural Non-profit Ltd. of the 13th district of Budapest – HU;
- Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Library and Information Science, Bratislava – SK.
- Lately: Croatia (silent partner)

General objectives:

- Increase the participants' creativity through writing texts and the preparation of contents for the website;
- Fostering participation of older learners through application of methods designed according to the needs and requirements of older people such as self-directed learning, oral history and time witness work, and with it appreciation of personal life experiences and fostering own learning competences;
- Fostering digital competence of older people through targeted application;
- Activation of given language skills through task-oriented application (communication with the partners, translation tasks);
- Exchange of personal knowledge, experiences and researches about the common subject “Danube/Danube country” to foster intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and civic engagement;
- Comparison and learning about other countries and cultures, reflection of intercultural competences and their widening;
- Fostering European integration on the level of regions;
- Becoming familiar with what were up to now foreign cultures and rediscovery of joint old cultural roots;
- Introduction to networking – development, structure, enlargement.

Achieved outcomes:

- Website: www.danube-networkers.eu
- Learners' discussion group
- Learners' introduction
- Standardized learners' visit card
- “Bridges over the Danube” (life-histories of the learners)
- Interviews of the senior learners
- Collection of poems & songs about the Danube
- Training materials
- Intercultural experiences
- Natural Monuments along the Danube River (clickable map with descriptions)
- Danube Networkers Statement on the Danube Region
- Dissemination products & activities.

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An e-learning environment for HIV/AIDS education

The project “An e-learning environment for HIV/AIDS education” has developed an integrated e-learning solution for adult education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Six European institutions have been working in this project. Some partners already had experience in e-learning (Taurus and Euro-Net), in the HIV/AIDS subject (Save the children) and in research work (University of Rome). Some other partners (Tempo and Agora), who were experienced in adult education and training, extended their experience by approaching new subjects. The project products address adult learners who work or are in contact with HIV/AIDS, especially teachers, medical staff, volunteers, social workers, as well as professionals in adult education: trainers and staff of adult education institutions.

Using the online learning environment created in the project, individuals from all over Europe can improve their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The website www.e-aids.ro is available in seven European languages: English, German, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Czech and Romanian. The informative space on the web site, containing basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS and a dictionary, offers opportunities to acquire important information about HIV/AIDS by means of an easy-to-use and interactive minicourse.

The project developed and adapted a new methodology for HIV/AIDS education based on e-learning technology. During the two years of the project, the partners have created and tested an interactive and integrated e-learning environment and a Virtual Learning Community for HIV/AIDS education. The platform contains all the features necessary for organizing online courses, which enable collaborative and constructivist learning, communication in virtual classes, multi-level knowledge assessment and tracking of learners’ progress.

In order to ensure the appropriate quality level, the e-learning platform was evaluated during the pilot online courses, which were organised in the second year of the project for several groups of persons: teachers, medical staff, volunteers, social workers. The platform also contains pedagogical tools, together with the learning content in the HIV/AIDS subject, which were evaluated during the pilot stage and which can be used or adapted for organizing the new online courses about HIV/AIDS related topics. The platform can be also used to organize online courses about any other subjects according to the clients’ needs.

A European training course was organized at the end of the project, in June 2009 in Craiova, Romania. The 15 teachers from Poland, Italy, Czech Republic and Romania and 8 trainers from the partner institutions tested again the platform and the training course methodology.

The new training courses will be included in the European courses catalogue in the following years. The e-aids.ro platform is expected to attract more and more professionals from all European countries to organise online courses using it.

After the end of the project, the partner institutions, but also other institutions of adult education, may use this platform to organize online courses for HIV/AIDS adult education.

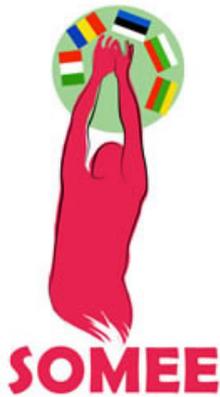
All information related to course organization is available on www.e-aids.ro.

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Special Olympics Movement in Eastern Europe (SOMEE)



Our project took place in Suceava. It was a project financed by the UE through Youth in Action, aiming to promote youth exchange by organizing youth activities, to share experiences and facilitate social inclusion for people with disabilities, to prevent discrimination, and to educate via outdoor activities. During 10 days, 30 youngsters from 6 EU countries (Romania, Austria, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria) tried to find solutions on how to increase social inclusion for people with disabilities and less opportunities.

The methods we used in implementing the project were: debates, role play, case studies, team building games, energizers, and sport competitions.

The biggest event that we organized within the frame of the project „SOMEE” was the “*Special Olympics*” event (SO) and it took place in Iulius Mall Suceava, on 18.02.2010. The participants worked on adapting the available space and the rules of the games in basketball and table tennis in such a manner that 60 persons (youngsters and adults with an IQ around 50-60 and people with different disabilities) could take part and enjoy competing.



Results:

- ✓ This project created a “bit of history” in organizing activities and events for young people with disabilities, by involving young local disabled, and by bringing European participants in our city.
- ✓ The methodology adapted within the project will be used in carrying out future editions of **Special Olympics** or to organize other activities for people with disabilities;
- ✓ Promotional materials: 100 shirts, 100 CDs, one banner (which is now used in every Special Olympics organized in the city of Suceva);
- ✓ We gained visibility: we had people invited from 30 institutions and 20 media representatives;
- ✓ Youth Pass certificates were handed to the 30 project participants;
- ✓ The participants in SO Suceava got attendance certificates;

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Roma Youth – European youth

Our project was a seven days training course dedicated to trainers, youth workers, social workers, youth leaders, young people with less opportunities and Roma youth. The training was coordinated by *Nevo Parudimos* association from Romania and had 27 participants from five countries: Romania, Lithuania, Austria, Germany and France.

The budget of the project was 18.050 euro.

The purpose of the training was to prepare the youth workers to be able to work with Roma youngster, in order to increase the inclusion of the Roma youngster in the society.

The objectives were:

- To capacitate young participants to develop activities witch promote inclusion;
- To plan and to implement the new working method experimented in order to increase the social inclusion of the Roma youth;
- That the participants manage to know better the Roma tradition and history in order to know and understand them better.

The training took place in Baile Herculane, in Romania, and lasted seven days, from 15 to 21 may 2010. The activities were based on the non-formal education methods and promoted tolerance and understanding of the Roma culture and tradition. The participants have gained knowledge about how to work with Roma youngsters; they had developed methods and techniques which can to be used in their daily work with that category of youngsters.

One of the most important activities was a visit in a Roma musician's communities in Armenis, visit which offered to the participants the opportunity to see a model of living together in a intercultural community.

The participants were delighted with what they have lived in those seven days, as evidence of emotional moments of the last day when everybody shared their emotions to all of us.

All participants expect the second edition.

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I CREATE! EVS Short term project in August 2009

The project proposed an approach to local needs that can be solved with specific tools (like the short term EVS), with the involvement of volunteers with few opportunities in a way that offers them further self-development solutions. The EVS volunteers were asked to use their imagination to create a colourful decoration for a day-centre, suitable for the beneficiaries and for the objectives of the centre.

Renovation activities

We worked on renovating the MS Day Centre, Children Hospital, Special School for Disabled Children and other social facilities having very small resources for keeping their own buildings and facilities well preserved. This was why they asked for our support and were happy to involve themselves in organizing such an initiative which basically consisted of: cleaning and preparing the walls for painting, painting the walls, windows, doors and other building parts, helping with gardening and such.

Self development activities

Young European people need time, space and a certain framework to answer specific questions they ask themselves, like: *Who I am?, How much can I give to the others?, What will I do in my life?, Are there any skills that I can develop?, What is the way of thinking, acting, and living of other young people from Europe?, How they really are?, What is interculturality for Europe, but for me? ...* and many other

This project offered this kind of “laboratory experience”, by helping this youngster to discover who they are, by helping them in finding an answer at least to some of the questions above. Their experience was deepened by the fact that the participants were not tourists, but teammates concentrating on solving the same problems and reaching the same goals. They developed some practical skill, and they were proud to do a service for the community – we can say that the “re-decoration” activity addressed the buildings but also the people involved.

You can read more about the project at: http://fsti.ro/projects/i_create/

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Community cafe

Nămăești village, Valea Mare Pravăț, is located in the north region of the Argeș county, 10 km away from Campulung, Romania's former capital, in the 15th century and an old commercial centre.

ASIDERA, *Association of Specialists in Rural Development Argeș*, is a member of the National Network for Rural Development, and supports a group of local initiative in achieving a strategic goal, namely the renewal of activities in the local cultural centre and the building rehabilitation. We have also confronted a particular problem, namely the local authorities' intention to demolish this building.



The project looked interesting from the very beginning, so that young people from Poland, Italy and Hungary joined us, and the project partners were:

1. ASIDERA, Informal Group of Nămăești – Romania
2. GIDA Association, Foldanya Alma – Dream of Mother Earth informal group – Hungary
3. Grup Wicherki, Stowarzyszenie Europa Nszym Domem – Poland
4. Arcistrauss Association, Informal Group Party Strauss – Italy

Objectives:

1. Promoting active European citizenship in the village, developing the capacity of information and involvement in local policies, for a group of 30 young people: 13 promoters from our community, 4 Italians, 9 Polishes, 4 Hungarians.
2. Improvement of social cohesion, development of social capital by providing local community with a set of services such as Internet access, information on European issues and topics of current interest for Romanian rural areas, non-formal education and socialization.
3. Youth cooperation between 8 groups/promoters from Romania, Italy, Poland and Hungary, sharing experiences and values in order to improve the groups capacity to be socially active and to contribute to the personal development of each participant.

Community Cafe was meant to be a public agora, with debates of local interest, revival of socio-cultural activities, and educating people to take part more actively in the local public life. **We covered a whole range of socio-cultural activities, held in the cultural centre and around for 6 months:** we watched movies – documentaries about the EU and Romanian movies; we offered Internet access for the general public and we worked on restoring the building of the cultural center, with the little means that we had, but with a lot of energy and diligence; we set up the Cafe, we studied English and we organized meeting groups in the village (for farmers, retired people a.s.o.); we organized exhibitions and fairs where we sold traditional local products and handicrafts, we organized seminars on family counseling/domestic violence, held in the Gypsy village Gura Pravăț, and information seminars on European issues (institutions, European Parliament elections); we had sessions of non-formal educational games on participatory democracy, ecological cookery and traditional healing, and we had trips in nature, documentaries about deforestation, mountain trips with a group of young people.

Beneficiaries of this project were 200 people from Nămăești and Gura Pravăț.

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