



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Romanian  
National Commission  
for UNESCO

# UNESCO'S Academy of Young Women

## The Fight Against Xenophobia, Extremism and Aggression

# How We Can Help?

**educate** children  
take **human attitude**  
acceptance of **diversity**  
**values** of another culture  
**free** dialogue  
**combating** aggression



BUCHAREST 2017



Dragoș Tiberiu Niță, Expert, Subcommission for Science; Iris Constantin, Expert, Subcommission for Communication and Information; Daniela Popescu, Expert, Subcommission for Interdisciplinary Programmes; Iulia Jugănar, Economic Director; Professor Ani Matei PhD, Secretary-General of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO; Cristina Molea, Consultant; Cristina Butescu, Expert, Subcommission for Education



## SCHEDULE



## UNESCO's Academy of Young Women 2017: The fight against Xenophobia, Extremism and Aggression August 23/29

### Day 1 - 23rd August 2017

19:00 - 20:30 - Opening Ceremony, at the Romanian Cultural Institute Opening of the Carmen Emanuela Popa Exhibition "56 Route"

### Day 2 - 24th August 2017

9:30 - 13:30 - Module: "Attitudes against extremism and violence" Facilitator: Andreea Buzec, project manager, consultant and trainer in the non-governmental sector (Partners Foundation for Local Development) 15:30 - 16:30 - Visit to Genpact headquarters 17:00 - 18:30 - Film viewing "L'enfant du diable"/ "The Child of the Devil" by Marion Le Roy Dagen

### Day 3 - 25th August 2017

9:30 - 10:00 - Presentation of the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries - by Maria Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta (President, Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO) 10:00 - 13:30 - Module and training: "Intercultural Dialogue" Facilitator: Rodica Precupețu, independent expert in human rights, national minorities, interethnic and intercultural dialogue; former advisor to the Romanian Government, the Interethnic Relations Department 15:30 - 16:30 - Presentation of the social enterprise project MamaPan Bakery by Irina Sorescu (Executive President, MamaPan) 16:30 - 18:30 - Visit to the Hellenic Union of Romania (with Member of Parliament Dragoș Gabriel Zisopol)

### Day 4 - 26th August 2017

9:30 - 13:30 - Module: "PR and Organizational Communication" Facilitators: Yannick Le Guern and Laura Petrache, CEOs and founders of B1-AKT Leading Sustainable Strategies and Paragon Communication 15:30 - 16:00 - Presentation of UNESCO Centre Torino's focus activity: Fight for gender equality, by Barbara Costabello, leader of the Youth Section of the Centre for UNESCO in Turin, Italy

### Day 5 - 27th August 2017

9:30 - 13:30 - Round Table with Susana Pletea, Editorial Director BURDA Romania 15:30 - 18:30 - "Metamorphoses" Project 9th Edition, "European Identity Symbols", by Alumnus Club for UNESCO Facilitator: Anca Dumitrescu, former UNESCO Paris employee and participant in the previous editions of the "Metamorphoses" project

### Day 6 - 28th August 2017

17:00 - 18:15 - City Tour 18:30 - 21:00 - Closing Ceremony and cocktail reception, at the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO Viewing of the Carmen Emanuela Popa Exhibition "Contemporary Unknown Soldier"





## The Academy of Young Women in the context of UNESCO

**A**rtfully named *UNESCO's Academy of Young Women - the fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression*, the event reflects the current concerns of the prestigious international organization UNESCO. The word „academy“ aims to give this event the attributes of perennality, continuity and consistency in promoting the fight against the global phenomena of xenophobia, extremism and violence among women in general and young women in particular.

Such an objective has its roots in UNESCO's attitudes and actions dating back more than two decades. Without claiming or intending to have an exhaustive evocation, we refer, in this context, to the *World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance*, organized in South Africa, 2001.

Also, on that occasion, it was reiterated that the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance has been at the very heart of UNESCO's mandate ever since its creation. In the fulfilment of its mandate, UNESCO has created a complex set of instruments with a predominantly normative and actionable value - special statements, programs and projects. All of this is part of the UN's broader concerns about the fight against such phenomena. Importantly, through the conceived documents and tools, the *Conference of 2001* emphasized the role and importance of education, science and culture in this endeavour, which it embedded in an „integrated strategy of struggle against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance“.

This strategy has been associated with an *Action Program* that contains numerous recommendations, specifically addressing the UNESCO agenda. Among other recommendations, is one that encourages all States, in cooperation with UNESCO and other competent international organizations to undertake and develop cultural and educational programs aimed at fighting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, all of which are ultimately associated with respect for human dignity, while fostering mutual understanding among all cultures and civilizations.

The *UNESCO's Academy of Young Women* project, organized by the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO, is part of the UN's and UNESCO's efforts by design, previously highlighted. Over the course of several days, organized activities were focused on various modules on „Attitudes to Extremism and Violence“, „Intercultural Education“ and „PR and Organizational Communication.“

At the same time, the Academy provided a framework of cooperation and mutual respect for knowledge of the cultures and traditions of the states present at the event.

**Professor Ani Matei, Ph.D**  
Secretary General  
National Commission of Romania for UNESCO



## Why a UNESCO Academy of Young Women?

**E**NOUGH may be the word that sums up the feeling behind this project organised by the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO. Nowadays, in the third millennium, there are still situations in which women are discriminated against and oppressed. In order to secure a decent status, similar to that enjoyed by men in society, and to fight against all kinds of discrimination and violence, women need to feel safer and more connected so they can make their voices heard and their contributions seen.

It was towards this end that we proposed the project *UNESCO's Academy of Young Women: The fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression*. It offers both a new perspective and new solutions, by allowing participants to share ideas for combatting discrimination and violence through numerous training modules, opportunities to exchange experiences and good practice and instructive activities focused on the following topics: organisational communication, intercultural education, creating (positive) attitudes that reject extremism and violence of any kind and partnerships and networks for solidarity.

The project is aimed at both men and women, in order to facilitate understanding of the differences in perspective between genders and to explore the insights and emotions of each. Great efforts are needed to address the cultural conflicts and acts of aggression and violence that in many cases lead to extreme situations, especially violence against women, and we express our commitment to contributing to the establishment of a space, a society, governed by understanding and solidarity – a society of non-violence, based on dialogue, cooperation and peace.

Ultimately, we expect the project to lead to a deeper understanding of the core issues and of how we might work to achieve a non-violent society through public education.

**Daniela Popescu, Ph.D**  
Project Coordinator

# Opening ceremony at the Romanian Cultural Institute

On 23 August at the Romanian Cultural Institute, the inaugural edition of UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, subtitled "the fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression", was declared officially open by the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO. Participants from twelve countries – Italy, Slovenia, Turkey, Serbia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, France, Greece, Cyprus and Romania – had been invited to take part in the project. Daniela Popescu, Project Coordinator, introduced the honorable guests during the Opening Gala.



"The word «Academy» is intended to give this event a sense of permanence, continuity and consistency, to promote the global fight against xenophobia, extremism and violence against women everywhere".  
**Mr. Ani Matel, Secretary General, National Commission of Romania for UNESCO**

"The world needs to experience and enjoy excellence without the prospect of violence, pain and aggression; for this to happen, we all need recognition and appreciation. That is why, through this event, which centres on a theme that has an impact on our daily lives, we wanted to promote clear feminine values in an effective way".  
**Mrs. Daniela Popescu, Project Coordinator and Expert of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO**



"Culture and violence have nothing in common. They do not like each other. They reject each other. And yet, this is what we are talking about. Violence exists, facts and figures unfortunately prove it, and we need to find solutions to this problem, to define it and become aware of its presence in the most diverse environments. Culture must be a bridge through which violence is replaced by beauty, and discrimination replaced by collaboration. It may seem like a fantasy, but it can become a palpable reality."  
**Mrs. Liliana Țurciu, President of the Romanian Cultural Institute**

"The fight for women's equality is a priority in today's society. In recent years, progress has been made on women's civic, professional and sexual rights. From a legal point of view, it can be said that women are equal to men, but there is a gap in terms of putting this law into practice, which is why I consider the work of UNESCO's Academy of Young Women to be very welcome".  
**H.E. Mrs. Michèle Ramis, Ambassador of the Republic of France to Romania**

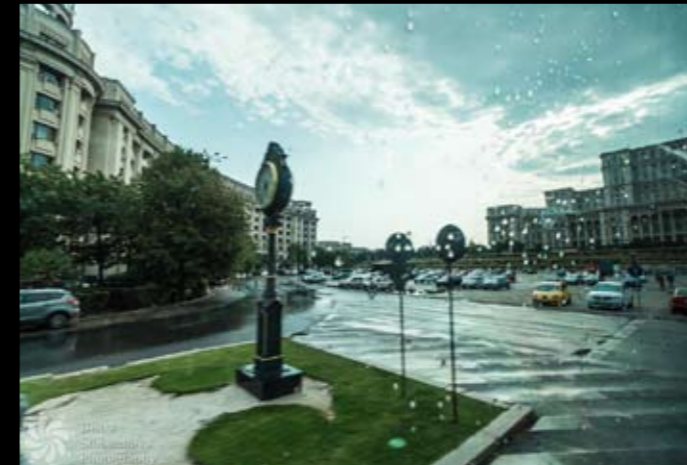


"I emphasise once again the need to foster and promote through all available means the role of the young woman in a world governed by equality".  
**Mrs. Maria-Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta, President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO**

"This project can be a platform for dialogue and solidarity between young women, with beneficial effects for the social status of women in Romania".  
**Mrs. Monaliza Cîrstea, Secretary General of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, Ministry of Labour and Social Justice**



"The themes of the UNESCO's Academy follow the mandate set out by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN level, underlining the importance of education as a means of promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and diversity, and as a tool for promoting human rights and gender equality".  
**Mrs. Monica Gheorghiuță, Secretary of State for global bilateral affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**



**Bistra Stoimenova - Bulgaria:**  
*I've been to Romania more than once, but this is actually my first visit to Bucharest. So, as a photographer, I should say, and I will say, that it is an amazing city with great history and even greater architecture. It was an honour for me to be here.*

**Luka Kropivnik - Slovenia:**  
*It was my first time in Romania and I am really impressed. People are really friendly and also the project we were part of helped me to find out many new things about Romania, Romanian culture and so on. I will take home very nice memories; it was really a pleasure to be here and to work with such nice people.*



**Polytimos Galerakis - Greece:**  
*Bucharest is one of the best places that I have ever been to. It has unique history, very nice architecture and warm people that are very open to intercultural communication and networking. I feel very happy because I had the opportunity to make new good friends and to interact with people who fight for making the world a better place.*

**Juliana Vrublevskaya - Belarus:**  
*After attending the Academy and getting acquainted with the Romanian people, Bucharest and Romania, I can say I associate this country and its people with help and helpfulness. People on the street and people who surrounded me were really helpful and I didn't notice any indifferent people. And it's amazing. And I think Romania for me now is a country of kindness, generosity, unique cultural heritage and a big heart.*



Photo credit: Bistra Stoimenova



# Fighting attitudes of violence and extremism

This module is dedicated to changing attitudes related to violence and extremism, based on a practical approach of “learning by doing” and getting participants involved in sharing some of the diverse knowledge and expertise available within the group.

Author:  
Andreea Buzec

## Learning objectives

It was expected that during the module, participants would:

- get to know each other and reach a common understanding of the module's working methodology, learning objectives and expectations, and of what they could contribute to these sessions
- develop a solid understanding of the nature of discrimination, its dynamics and causes, and exercise empathy towards victims of discrimination
- enhance their motivation to take action towards promoting positive changes related to the gender balance at a personal, organisational and community level.

Session 1 opened with a welcome message from the organisers and a clarification of organisational aspects, and continued with:

- an icebreaker to warm up the group
- a “get-to-know-each-other” activity and a clarification of what was expected of participants and their contributions to the training module
- a “know your prejudice” activity from the Compass manual

(an educational resource from the Council of Europe, used in human rights education).

The second session was dedicated to introducing Forum Theatre and an enactment of a real-life situation related to discrimination. Participants were guided through the dynamics of a simple Forum Theatre exercise and were given the opportunity to experiment and argue for potential attitudinal changes in situations of discrimination, from the different perspectives of the oppressed, the oppressor, their allies and other, neutral characters.



## Reflection exercise

At the end of the second session, the participants were given the task of reflecting on the following question overnight: “What can I do at a personal, organisational and community level to bring about positive change related to gender equality?”

## Added value

The participants engaged enthusiastically with the role-play activities, exploring the different perspectives of disadvantaged people, with a focus on women, and

challenging their understanding of and empathy towards less privileged groups: immigrants, religious, ethnic and sexual minorities and those who are socially and geographically excluded.

At the same time, participants reflected on the obstacles to respect for human rights in both theory and practice, on the understanding that human rights are not privileges, but elementary provisions for all human beings, including women, and that the discussion and implementation of human rights should be aligned to this principle.

A substantial part of the module was focused on rehearsing approaches that can be applied in everyday life through Forum Theatre, an interactive and participatory method that allows the “actors” to replicate real-life situations of discrimination and portray the positive attitudes of witnesses, in order to shift the balance of power in favour of the oppressed. Thus, the participants jointly recreated a real situation of discrimination during a gay parade in Belgrade, and offered suggestions for attitudinal changes that could lead to positive outcomes.

# Women and girls: key actors in intercultural dialogue

Waves of intolerance, xenophobia and violence have confronted Europe and the entire world in recent years. In London, Paris and Barcelona - intercultural cities - terrorist attacks have attempted to provoke fear and make both men and women humble and weak. This is why we proposed to include the fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression on the agenda of the first UNESCO's Academy of Young Women (Bucharest, August 2017).



Author:  
Rodica Precupețu

Differences are important, but less important than similarities. Cultures co-exist and intersect, so our message is: let's take a step forward, from an acceptance of diversity, from simple coexistence, to communication, intercultural dialogue and collaboration!

"Building bridges between societies, promoting dialogue and understanding, seeking opportunities for constructive exchanges of ideas and peaceful coexistence, all these tasks must be continued." (Remarks by H.E. Mr Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, Agadir Conference, Morocco, April 2017)

## Module objectives

To learn more about two possible solutions used by states in recent decades to manage ethno-cultural diversity: multiculturalism and interculturalism.

To encourage the young parti-

cipants not only to understand the issues and to have a public voice, but also to design and implement projects aimed at addressing real problems and needs.

To promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

## Activities

**"May I introduce...?"** The first session introduced the group to the local context with a few words about the 20 historic national minorities living in Romania.

**Tour de table** - short case studies on the situation of minority women in the participants' home countries.

**Role play** on the famous quotation, "Multiculturalism has failed" (German Chancellor Angela Merkel, 2010). The participants split into two groups and discussed multicultural versus intercultural approaches in our societies. "Which is better at the moment? Why?"

By the end, the participants understood the distinction between the two concepts.

While multiculturalism emphasises the unique value of each culture and encourages the preservation of minority cultures without any interference, leading to a lack of contact and collaboration, interculturalism derives from the understanding that cultures thrive only in contact with other cultures. Interculturalism means strengthening intercultural interaction as a means of building trust and reinforcing the fabric of the community (definitions inspired by the "Intercultural Cities" programme, a joint initiative by the Council of Europe and the European Commission).

Even if there are important differences in the way the two concepts are interpreted from country to country, the conclusion was that the intercultural approach could bring many more benefits, more solidarity in achieving common goals, more cohesion and more



Rodica Precupețu presented the module on intercultural dialogue

creativity in society. It is true that multiculturalism has failed, and so something needs to change. The tendency in our societies now is towards shifting the balance in favour of interculturalism, moving from multicultural to intercultural societies.

How? One of the most important tools is intercultural dialogue, understood as "an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect." (Definition given by the Council of Europe in its 2008 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue)

At UN/UNESCO level, culture in general, including intercultural dialogue, is related to the Sustainable Development Goals. "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marks a substantial step forward for sustainable development in many fields, and particularly for culture as it is the first ti-

me that the international development agenda refers to culture within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals related to education, sustainable cities, food security, the environment, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, peaceful and inclusive societies."

The last session was aimed at making an inventory of the most important needs and problems to address in our societies in order to achieve a proper status for all women and girls, including minorities. The brainstorming session was followed by a short simulation, with participants working together to develop three outlines for possible future projects.

## Follow-up

These project outlines could offer the group an opportunity for further collaboration and for making positive contributions to strengthening intercultural dialogue and equal opportunities for all in Central and Eastern Europe.



**Yannick Le Guern and Laura Petrache offered to learners "Sustainable solutions against violence"**

# Sustainable solutions for leading change against violence

Violence against women and children has far-reaching consequences, resulting in significant death and disability. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate and effectively interact with people across cultures, and to work with varying cultural beliefs and agendas.

Author:  
Laura Petrache

The main question for discussion among the participants was: "What specific approaches, behaviours and tips can help women communicate, manage projects and become Global Sustainable Leaders?"

**Lab outcomes:** a comprehensive approach to the prevention of violence against women and the identification of keys for communication to build leadership. Approach: presentation of successful communication strategies, promising initiatives and emerging research that could potentially be applied in global settings.

**Subjects discussed with the international attendees by the B1-AKT Paragon Communication Lab and overall results**

The experts offered the trainees "sustainable solutions against violence", through discussion of the following topics:

- open-mindedness, awareness and the global mindset
- appropriate approaches, behaviours and attitudes
- leading tools for communication
- PR and organisational communication for influencers
- sustainable projects
- social entrepreneurial consciousness
- game changing: how to become a change agent
- political issues surrounding inclusiveness: addressing global issues through European communication channels
- developing a message, reaching audiences and targeting the right channels
- committing to being a local, national and international sustainable community builder

- building networks
- youth inclusion

Participants answered questions and discussed themes such as:

- what are the issues and expectations facing generations X, Y and Z and millennials today?
- intergenerational and sustainable projects
- what are the keys to becoming leading communicators?
- how can youth participation chan-

- nels become accessible to all?
- fostering inclusive youth participation in Europe
- how can we become Global Sustainable Leaders?
- how can we contribute to the advancement of our society and the world?
- how can we build sustainable communities?
- how can we act as global citizens?
- how can we build and use power bases effectively?
- communicating positive expectations of others
- fostering creativity and managing change

The training lab was aimed at those who aspire to establish positive communication with a diverse group of stakeholders and was designed by our two experts and founders of B1-AKT Leading Sustainable Strategies and Paragon Communication, Laura Petrache and Yannick Le Guern.

## Added value:

Experiential and participatory trainings are seen as the most effective approaches to learning, focusing on skills and attitudes rather than simply on information.

Providing ample opportunities for learners to express themselves is key to the learning process.

Sustainable solutions for youth inclusion and action against violence. Global sustainable leadership.



## Portraits

**Laura Petrache** - founder of the Migrants' Integration Lab and director of AKT AS 1, a leading intercultural training institute, is a perfect example of a Global Sustainable Leader, a visionary entrepreneur and change-maker. Her background and lifestyle are international and her sharp and agile thinking style can adapt to both "in-" and "out-of-the-box" approaches. She also strongly believes that creativity drives innovation, innovation drives entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship drives sustained economic growth.

**Yannick Le Guern** - with 16 years of professional experience in the field of strategic management, organisation and complex project steering, Yannick Le Guern is actively involved in global sustainability, public policy implementation and politics. A clear example of today's global sustainable leader and change-maker, he has the ability to turn his extensive international experience into value-creating opportunities that serve both his organisations and the world.

[contact@b1-akt.com](mailto:contact@b1-akt.com)

# Three questions for five fellow participants

In speaking with almost 20 participants at the Academy, we asked every one of them for an interview to find out what they learned during the three workshops. We selected five of them.

## Questions from the UNESCO's Academy of Young Women:

- 1 Based on the knowledge you gained during UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, what future projects would you like to propose? On which subjects/themes?
- 2 Which of the three workshops would you like to take forward and act upon in your own activities?
- 3 What opportunities for intercultural cooperation did you identify during the five days of the Academy?



LUKA KROPIVNIK,  
student of Slovenian and  
Russian studies at the Faculty  
of Arts, University of  
Ljubljana, Slovenia



IRIS CONSTANTIN,  
expert at the  
Romanian National  
Commission  
for UNESCO



BISTRA STOIMENOVA,  
member of the Executive  
Board of the National  
UNESCO Club for Scientific  
Expeditions, Bulgaria



YULIANA VRUBLEVSKAYA,  
supervisor  
of local UNESCO club  
"Mosaic" in Brest,  
Belarus



POLYTIMOS GALERAKIS,  
member of the Youth  
Committee of the Hellenic  
National Commission for  
UNESCO, Greece

## Bistra Stoimenova, BULGARIA: „A great opportunity for all!“



1 Choosing my project is a really big responsibility, but considering what we learnt during these past few days, I am thinking about promoting the cuisine of the Balkans somehow, because, of course, it's women who create the recipes that are passed down through the generations. The other thing that came to mind after the first workshop, which showed us how many women are underprivileged because they were unlucky enough to be born in some underprivileged state, even though legally they have rights, is that we should do something to help them understand that those rights were not taken away from them at birth. Those rights are theirs; they were born with them. So, perhaps I could propose some kind of awareness campaign around that, involving a lot of media, a lot of coverage.

2 Actually, I would like to take forward some aspects of each, if not everything. The first workshop taught us a lot about tolerance and about trying to put yourself in the other person's shoes. The second workshop taught us that we should be open to the culture and the individuality of others and that being unique is something that we should cherish and develop further, but to do that we need dialogue. Finally, the third workshop showed us that it's up to us to change the status quo; it's up to us to be proactive and learn to communicate with others.

3 The entire Academy was one huge opportunity for all of us. I expected to meet a lot of young and really proactive people, and in fact I did meet many people like that. My colleagues really amazed me with all their achievements and aspirations, so the whole thing was one great opportunity for everyone, and we were really able, if not to get to know each other well, to at least get a glimpse of each other's cultures.

## Luka Kropivnik, SLOVENIA:

### „I really liked the workshop about intercultural dialogue“

1 At UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, we had the opportunity to find out more about minorities, extremism, aggression, xenophobia and so on. I think that these are issues which we have to focus on every day, not just in dedicated projects. They are also the ones on which I would like to work in my projects, starting with gender equality and exposing the invisible violence in modern society – a big problem even in Western countries.

2 I think that all the workshops were good, but I really liked the one about intercultural dialogue, because we got an opportunity to talk about minorities and to see the approaches used in different countries to work with these groups and promote social integration. I think the most important thing we learned was that interculturalism really is the right approach to working with minori-

ties, because it includes all stakeholders and does not exclude anyone. The most important aspect of intercultural dialogue, as I see it, is cooperation, and finding examples of good practice that can be implemented in countries where there are still tensions with minorities.

3 I identified a lot of opportunities, because there were many participants from different countries with different views on intercultural dialogue. Also, working together in workshops was an opportunity for intercultural cooperation.



**Polytimos Galerakis, GREECE:**  
**„Social and intercultural skills are the key factors for a new generation of leaders”**

**1** I would like to propose a UNESCO programme, organised by the National Commissions for UNESCO and their partner organisations, on the topic of “Intercultural Communication and the Mediterranean Diet in Greece”.

**2** Out of the three workshops, I would like to take forward the third module (PR and Organisational Communication) for my own future activities, because social and intercultural skills are the key factors for a new generation of community leaders.

**3** During the five days of the UNESCO Academy, I had the chance to meet some very open-minded young people from many European countries, who can bring change to their nations through intercultural cooperation on equality issues.



**Juliana Vrublevskaya, BELARUS:**  
**„I believe in the future of intercultural education”**

**1** I am planning to work on projects devoted to the transformation of negative thoughts into positive beliefs and, of course, to intercultural and intergenerational education and sustainable communication, in order to build a sustainable society in the future. Such a society ought to consist of decisionmakers. So, as a teacher, and as a supervisor, I think this is something I can do.

**2** It's a difficult question for me, as I'm going to take certain lessons from each workshop, so I will try to explain from the perspective of a teacher. A child is born into a family, and every child has his or her background. Every child needs love and care in order to be able to love and care in the future. But sometimes, due to difficult circumstances, a child doesn't receive enough love and care and grows up into an aggressive adult who doesn't accept others and doesn't know how to cooperate and communicate effectively and respectfully. Someone like that is not ready for a sustainable society and cannot build bridges with others, and that's what we desperately need nowadays – to build bridges with others. In saying that, I've just highlighted the important lessons from every workshop – how to try, how to fight against aggression, how to improve, how to spread the idea of intercultural education and how to use different communication strategies in your life. So that's what I think.

**3** I'd like to start with the cooperation we experienced while working in teams. I liked that very much, and it's an example of how this idea can really work; we tried to help each other, we tried to support and encourage each other and I enjoyed every moment. Generally speaking, I think it is really important to build dialogue on different levels, within countries and between countries all over the world. I believe in the future of intercultural education, in inclusive youth participation and in sharing our experience, knowledge and cultural heritage.

**Iris Constantin, ROMANIA:**  
**„We can for sure inspire and support one another”**

**1** The challenge is to get involved as many institutions and individuals – public, private, civil society – as possible in order to create awareness regarding the types of violent behavior against women and further promote the main objective of the Academy, to fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression. This fight is a long term one and it requires both soft power and coherent legal framework, since the complexity of the issue necessitates an integrated approach. Coming together for empowering and protecting women makes our message and impact stronger.

**2** Each one of the workshops was valuable in structuring knowledge and inspiring attitudes towards combating violent behavior directed to women. The PR and Organizational Communication workshop presented successful communication strategies, promising interventions as well as emerging research that can potentially be applied in global settings. The training module „Women and girls, key players in intercultural dialogue” focused on building understanding of the ethnocultural and religious diversity of today's world and in our region, so that women can fulfill their aspirations, while enjoying respect and a dignified status. “Fighting attitudes of violence and extremism” tackled the dynamics of discrimination, exercised our empathy towards victims of aggression and persuaded us to reflect on what our contribution could be at personal, organizational and community level in order to improve the status of gender balance.

**3** Meeting young representatives of 11 different nations sharing common values and principles was encouraging to me and we had the chance to discuss fresh perspectives on old issues. Interchanging ideas based on our own cultural identities established the basis for a general understanding and overview of the topic. A step forward could be to integrate our vision within European Union's pillars and local government national policies and impact both at international level and local grass-root level. We can for sure inspire and support one another in building and delivering meaningful projects and ultimately generate positive change. Our mutual drive to build a sustainable approach towards raising the quality of life for women could grow UNESCO's Academy of Young Women into a good case practice for the entire region!





# The Impact of Genpact

As a case study for our third module, PR and Organisational Communication, participants at UNESCO's Academy of Young Women visited the Genpact Romania Headquarters in Bucharest. Genpact is the largest employer and talent developer in Romania's business services industry, with more than 3,500 employees between our Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest offices.

Author:  
Genpact

In 2016, our success was publicly recognised when Genpact received a number of prestigious awards for the BPO industry in Romania: "Outsourcing Company of the Year", "Business Leader in Business Excellence" and "CSR Event of the Year".

Genpact Europe is present in Romania, Poland, Slovakia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, with 11 delivery centres and over 5000 employees. We offer services in more

than 23 languages for more than 60 clients. Globally, Genpact currently has more than 77,000 employees in 25 countries. That's why we are known to "GENerate IMPACT".

We started our partnership with UNESCO by focusing on gender diversity, which is one of today's most important issues for companies worldwide. Our very first collaboration took place in the context of the UNESCO project "The Academy of Young Women", during which

45 young people from 12 European countries visited Genpact's office in Bucharest to attend a workshop on gender diversity. The session was hosted by Crina Ilie, VP of HR, who talked about the company's contributions in this important area. From her presentation, the participants learned that Genpact invests a great deal in ensuring that women occupy a significant proportion of positions overall, including management positions. This message is un-

derlined by Tiger Tyagarajan, CEO of Genpact, who states that to attract the best talent to the company, it needs to appeal to 100 percent of the top talent, not 50 percent, and that to be able to do so, strong female role models are needed.

## Best practice for recruitment

In order to reach this goal, our strategy focuses on establishing progressive policies around maternity benefits, building and expanding infrastructure to support day care for children, implementing programmes to encourage diversity in recruitment – the company has launched its Career 2.0 programme, which helps women who are on leave make a phased transition back into the workplace, at a global level – adopting best practices for diverse recruitment, introducing targeted development schemes for high-potential women at mid-management level, launching the Genpact Centre for Women's Leadership and running various networking forums and events celebrating the contributions of women.

The participants enjoyed the interactive workshop, asked a lot of questions and were amazed by all the activities that are run across Genpact, as well as by the way we have been able to integrate the various cultures we work with all over the world while also striving to respond to their needs and rights.

Our service portfolio includes finance and accounting, banking and insurance, procurement and supply chain management, collections and customer service, enterprise applications, IT infrastructure management and smart decision services.



Crina Ilie,  
VP of HR,  
Genpact



## L'enfant du diable by Marion Le Roy Dagen at Genpact



From the left: Marion and her mother, Ana, together with Anca Dumitrescu

During the visit to Genpact, participants had the opportunity to watch the documentary "L'Enfant du diable" / "The Child of the Devil", which touches upon the oppression of women's reproductive rights during the communist regime in Romania.

During this period, hundreds of thousands of children were locked up in orphanages and mistreated. Marion Le Roy Dagen is one of those orphans, a "child of the devil", as she says herself, adopted by a French couple at the age of six. With the

photographer Élisabeth Blanchet, who for nearly 20 years has devoted part of her work to the orphans of the Ceaușescu regime, Marion returns to the scenes of her past. The film follows her quest over the course of a road trip through Romania, 25 years after the fall of the dictatorship.

After the film, most of those in the projection room were in tears. It was a screening to bring "a lump to the throat". The big surprise came when the facilitator, Anca Dumitrescu, invited both protagonists of the film, Ana and Marion, to stand up in front of everyone. Before that moment, nobody knew their full story or guessed that they were right there in the room, sitting in the front row.

"Your story is overwhelming; I am lost for words! Thank you very much for this meeting. It has been one of the most exciting ones I've ever seen here at the Genpact headquarters", said one young woman among Genpact's staff.

Marion and Ana answered many questions about their life stories – definitely a case of life exceeding art!

Read more about  
Marion's story on page 20



## Happy ending story: Testimonial by Marion Le Roy Dagen

# How I found my mother

I was born 40 years ago in the town of Aiud, in Transylvania. I was placed in an institution a few weeks after my birth. I lived for nearly five years in a **leagăn**<sup>(1)</sup> in Alba Iulia, before being placed in a **casa de copii**<sup>(2)</sup> in Bucharest. At that time, the dictator Ceaușescu was still in power and it took almost two years of administrative machinations before he authorised my adoption – my freedom! I was adopted at the end of 1982, at six years old, by a French family.

<sup>(1)</sup> A **leagăn** is a residential centre for infants and toddlers.

<sup>(2)</sup> **Casa de copii** literally means "house of children": an orphanage. It is sometimes used interchangeably with **leagăn**.

My parents never hid the fact that I was adopted. My biological mother's name and surname were in my adoption file; my father was recorded as "unknown". Shortly after my adoption, my parents received a letter from the director of the **leagăn** announcing that my birth mother had died. Strangely, I always had the vague sense that this was wrong. In 1989 I was 12 years old. One day, with Christmas approaching, I was sitting in the living room in front of the television, watching the news with my parents – every channel was showing looping reports on the chaos in Romania. This revolution that was consuming my country also started a revolution in my mind. It was the trigger, the spark that set off my quest for my identity, my search for my origins.

I was in the midst of a pre-adolescent crisis. I had negativity in my head, in my heart and in my body. I

I was haunted by unanswered questions, by the shadows surrounding my birth. I had this idea that it was despicable and inexcusable for parents to abandon a child

felt so different and so misunderstood by others. I was not always easy for my parents to deal with at that time – I would put up a wall of silence, I was sullen and I had a rebellious

spirit. I was haunted by unanswered questions, by the shadows surrounding my birth. I had this idea that it was despicable and inexcusable for parents to abandon a child. This made me wonder if I was possibly carrying "bad blood". This idea inevitably left me feeling ashamed of my origins and mistrustful of myself. I felt like a victim. This, on the other hand, made my adoptive parents seem like saviours to me and not just parents. The feeling of being indebted to them interfered with all the love I felt for them. I needed to understand the reasons why I had been abandoned, the reasons behind this parental act that seemed both incomprehensible and cruel to me. I wanted to know how this act had affected my birth parents. Had I ever been nourished, cared for and surrounded by tenderness, attention and love, or had I been completely rejected? These questions became an unbearable obsession.

Ana and Marion,  
mother and daughter



## My first trip back to Romania was a shock

If Ana (my birth mother) had actually died, I would never have my answers. To find out, I would have to do some research. But was I really ready to confront a painful past in order to build an identity for myself and thus be able to approach my future more serenely? I went to Romania for the first time in 1994 with a small association from the south of France. This first trip was a shock. On the way to Romania, I still thought that the country would have evolved since the fall of Communism. But as I crossed the border, I was very saddened to see that Romania was still marked by this communist past, with its run-down and abandoned buildings, poverty and faces marked by sadness due to the lack of basic necessities. I was afraid to relive the things that had marked me when I was in the institution.

In July 2000, when I went to Romania on a humanitarian trip with a small group of students, I found Ana by chance. Our team passed through Aiud, the town of my birth, and we decided to stop there, just for a coffee. We were sitting quietly on the terrace when one of my friends suggested I ask the waitress if she knew anyone with my biological name. I said to myself, why not give it a try? The woman behind the bar replied that she knew a family of that name in a nearby neighbourhood called *la machine*, and directed us

to a house where I could find more information. We arrived at the indicated address and met a drunken guy dressed in rags. I said to myself, "Please don't let him be my father!" Phew — he turned out to be the caretaker of the house!

### "You, you are Romanian!"

Just then, a young woman left the house next door. Her name was Sanda. She came out to greet us, so we offered to take her for a coffee. Two hours later, her father Bunicu (a nickname translated as "Grandpa"), just happened to come by on his bike. Sanda introduced us, watching closely, and his gaze lingered on me. I was shocked when he exclaimed, "You, you are Romanian!" Amused, I replied, "Yes! I am Romanian; I was adopted." Then, to my great astonishment, he went on, "You are Ana's daughter!" At that moment I was overwhelmed. I felt like I'd been struck by lightning! I replied, "You know, that's not possible, Ana is dead!" Bunicu told me that he knew her well and that he saw her at the market last week. In fact, Ana worked in a factory near Aiud, and Bunicu was her workshop manager.

My birth mother was, and is, very much alive, and very close by! Bunicu took us to Ana's house. The shock was indescribable, and probably even more so for Ana, who was not expecting to see her child suddenly appear before her, metamorphosed into a young foreign woman. She, too, had been told that I was dead!

From an emotional point of view, the meeting was difficult and communication was made even more complicated by the language barrier. I did not speak Romanian, only French, and she spoke only Romanian. Was Ana afraid of disappointing me? Her explanations of my origins and history seemed confused. She gave me a different version from the one I had heard from my adoptive parents when I had asked them the same question. I was left perplexed. Later, I returned to Romania several times to see Ana, but I always kept my guard up and felt no urge to invest in our relationship.

It was only after the birth of my son in 2013 that I felt ready to really "get in touch" with Ana, to finally hear and understand her story and

my own. I wanted to know what to tell my son when he asked me about my origins. For me, my true parents are my adoptive parents, because it is to them that I have affective ties. Finding my biological mother brought up more questions than answers. The communication difficulties, the complexity of our history and the lie that surrounds it meant that our relationship had not worked very well until that point.

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As for my birth father, Ana had only a picture and a name. She suspected that one day I would also look for this unknown father.

### Shooting the film "The Child of the Devil"

In 2014, we began shooting the film "The Child of the Devil" and this gave me the occasion to find Ana with the help of a good French-Romanian interpreter. I discovered that Ana had not abandoned me, but that we were separated by force. She was rejected by her family when she became pregnant at 17. After a short love affair, Ana gave birth to me, a premature baby, on her own. She had been struck by a train that was carrying wood, which caused her to go into labour early at just seven months. Penniless, helpless and with no income, she placed me a few weeks later in an "orphanage" that would ensure my survival until her situation improved and she recovered from the accident.

I was four years old when she was told that a French couple would like to adopt me. For this to happen, she had to sign a document. Ana did not understand the difference between being in foster care, which was temporary, and adoption. She was young, alone and impressiona-

ble. Once she had signed the document, which turned out to be a confirmation of abandonment, the director and lawyer made her understand that she would never get me back. Shortly afterwards, it was announced that I had undergone an eye operation and that I could not be adopted because, unfortunately, I had died.

As for my birth father, Ana had only a picture and a name. She suspected that one day I would also look for this unknown father. The film crew helped me find him. The meeting with my biological father was totally unexpected. We found individuals of that name at several addresses. After hours of research, we headed to the centre of Alba Iulia, to a building where a 50-year-old woman was sitting outside, reading. Her name was Monica. Our interpreter asked her if she knew Nicolae, my birth father. She said, "Yes, that's my husband!" With a big smile, she added, "I know who you are!" She took us to their flat and called her husband and their son, Niki. Monica never stopped talking. She was very surprised by my resemblance

to my half-sister Nicoletta. Nicolae and Niki arrived at the flat half an hour later; emotions were running high and tears sprang to our eyes. Laughter, questions, photos and a phone call to Nicoletta, who lives in Spain, followed. A huge happiness invaded the room. I quickly felt at ease because I had been given such a warm and friendly welcome.

### On the path of forgiveness

I made the documentary *The Child of the Devil* in memory of my fellow survivors of the Ceaușescu regime. It is also a way of paying tribute to all those who survived, suffered and continue to suffer the consequences of the dictatorship. The film is a tribute to all those who lost their souls and their lives. It is also a way for me to pay tribute to my adoptive father, who encouraged me to find my biological mother. He died when I was three months pregnant with my son.

I am now on the path of forgiveness that will free me from anger and hatred. I am lucky to have closed the loop on my quest for answers about my origins and to have a healthy re-

lationship with my biological family. Subsequently, I wanted to look into other adoption stories from Romania. This led me to meet Laura Giraud, who was adopted from Romania. Our meeting opened our eyes to the complexities of adoption for the adoptee, the adopting family and the biological family that are generally forgotten.

We found that there were very few services providing follow-up support or assistance for adoptees searching for their origins. In my opinion, the adoptee and both his or her adoptive family and biological family must be given information and support during this process, hence the importance of having access to professionals trained in search and reunion before, during and after this search. We co-founded the French association "Orphelins de Roumanie" with the mission of offering a personalised support service to those on a quest for their origins, because there is a growing demand in France, Europe and internationally.

For details:  
[contact@orphelinsderoumanie.org](mailto:contact@orphelinsderoumanie.org)

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«You, you are Romanian» Amused, I replied, «Yes! I am Romanian; I was adopted». Then, to my great astonishment, he went on, «You are Ana's daughter!» At that moment I was overwhelmed. I felt like I'd been struck by lightning!



# Carmen Emanuela Popa, Designer Visual Arts Partner, UNESCO'S Academy of Young Women 2017



With her collection "56 Route", the Romanian designer Carmen Emanuela Popa presents a visual trajectory with a strong anti-violence message. The collection was shown as part of "UNESCO's Academy of Young Women: The fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression", an international project initiated by the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO, which took place between 23 and 29 August 2017.

Carmen Emanuela Popa is an emerging designer known for her conceptual and avant-garde works and her active interest in the social issues affecting humanity. "56 Route" is a feminist manifesto for the modern woman, who faces many diverse forms of aggression, intolerance and violation of her emotional intimacy.

In this young millennium, men are more than ever in need of alternative forms of physical, psychological and emotional guidance, as their direct and indirect relationships are generally becoming more and more difficult.

A "swerve to the right" is the instinct of a society whose "utopia" remains an imaginary landscape. People cannot live indefinitely guided by conventional signs alone; sooner or later they will feel the need for some kind of emotional guidance device, an "emotional GPS". They will experience the metaphor as the rarest form of nourishment, endeavouring to refine their emotions and turn to the contemplation of absolute beauty, which speaks to us of the concerns and poetry of the pacifist essence of this world.

The exhibition "56 Route" by designer Carmen Emanuela Popa was inaugurated as part of the official opening of UNESCO's Academy of Young Women at the Romanian Cultural Institute in Bucharest on 23 August 2017.

Her distinctive works hold direct references to art as an essential form of formal and chromatic discourse. Carmen Emanuela Popa is a disruptive artist, because her work brings to the forefront the condition of contemporary man, based on a highly developed existentialist philosophy.

In 2014, she presented her collection WOMAN N at the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Moscow: a feminine vision described by the in-



ternational press as a glimpse of the future.

Carmen Emanuela Popa campaigned for peace in Paris on 25 September 2015, International Day of Peace, with pieces from the "Contemporary Unknown Soldier" collection, for which she received the Best Catwalk Award at Athens Exclusive Designers Week.

The "Contemporary Unknown Soldier" is a eulogy to the solitude of contemporary man, who must wage multiple battles to earn his living, to live in safety and to uphold his own values, one of the highest forms of self-expression.

Man is an anonymous and unique song in the immaterial light of a Sunday. The unknown soldier of today's world, you can often see him in a simple passer-by or a passenger travelling with brutal speed in the next metro train. He's a soft-edged hero, who defends the "poetry" of this world.

"The Contemporary Unknown Soldier" was exhibited at the closing ceremony of "UNESCO's Academy of Young Women: The fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression", at the headquarters of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO on 28 August 2017.



## Carmen Emanuela Popa - Profile

Carmen Emanuela Popa is a graduate of the Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design at the National University of Arts (UNAB), Bucharest, with a Master in Fashion Design/Strategies of Fashion and Costume, also from UNAB. She is currently a PhD student in the Fashion Design Department at the same university, studying visual arts. Her thesis addresses the migration of the symbolism of fashion to other forms of contemporary art.

Her unconventional works have appeared in publications such as British Vogue and Tatler, the Huffington Post, Parismodes TV and ITAR-TASS, and in specialist publications in Russia, Ukraine, Greece and Romania.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.carmenemanuelapopa.com](http://www.carmenemanuelapopa.com).

# The Hellenic Union of Romania: a bridge between cultures



Academy participants learned about one of the oldest cultures in the world through a visit to the headquarters of the Hellenic Union of Romania.



The meeting with the members of the Hellenic Union provided another example of the well-known traditional Greek hospitality. For several hours, the participants felt like they had travelled to a small Hellenic island, surrounded by the attention and goodwill of their hosts. Mrs Maria Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta, president of the Greek National Commission for UNESCO, spoke about the importance of promoting Greek history and folklore in Romania and throughout Europe. Mrs Olimpia Bâdea, secretary general of the Hellenic Union of Romania and Mrs Ana Nicola, educational counsellor, introduced the centre's numerous activities.

The Hellenic Union of Romania is an apolitical and non-affiliated organisation; its goal is to maintain and perpetuate the ethnic identity, language, culture, religion, cultural heritage, traditions and historical continuity of the Greek minority in Romania.

The Hellenic Union of Romania was founded in Bucharest on 28 December 1989, and obtained legal status on 26 February 1990. The organisation is comprised of the Hellenic Communities of Romania, who represent the historical and legal continuity of the Greek communities that formed and developed here throughout history. It promotes, both in Romania and abroad, the highest values of Romania's democratic traditions and defends and preserves the Greek national identity, rights and interests of its members, so that they are able to freely exercise their rights.

The Hellenic Union of Romania aims to cultivate the excellent historical relations between Greece and Romania and to further develop the dialogue between local public authorities and other nongovernmental organisations, such as those of the other national minorities recognised by the Romanian state.

It is the biggest community of Greeks and Hellenophiles in Romania, with over 10,000 members.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The editing and printing of books (monographs on the Greek communities in Romania, dictionaries, school textbooks, novels by several noted writers and personalities from Greece and Romania, compilations, etc.), periodicals (such as the trimestral magazine *Elpis-Speranța*) and promotional materials;

Modern Greek language courses for different age groups and ability levels, aimed both at those who work within the institutional system of the Romanian state and members of the Greek minority communities within Romania's borders, taught by Greek and Romanian instructors;

The Neo-Greek Olympiads, with local, county and national rounds, included in the calendar of competitions organised under the aegis of the Romanian Ministry of Education since 2010.



# MamaPan Bakery: a social enterprise project for single mothers

MamaPan Bakery is a social enterprise that produces sourdough bread and pastries, employing single mothers and women in difficult situations.

MamaPan's work was the subject of a presentation by Mrs Irina Sorescu, executive president of the company, as a successful case study for the Academy's second module. MamaPan Bakery produces sourdough bread and artisanal pastries, both healthy and delicious. MamaPan's products don't use any

industrial yeast, additives or preservatives. The bakery currently produces ten different types of bread (including wholewheat, gluten-free and organic rye) and 12 types of artisanal pastries, using traditional recipes and including dairy-free or sugar-free options.

MamaPan is a social enterprise, employing women from particularly vulnerable groups whose children are also at a high risk of social exclusion. Launched by the Centre for Partnership and Equality, it provides employment for single mothers or women with more than two children who have experienced difficulties finding work.

These women are either single mothers or mothers of more than two children who are living in poverty. The bakery currently employs ten women who work on the premises as bakers or delivery drivers.

## "We decided to create natural and organic bread"

"At MamaPan, we do more than make bread; we have a social purpose. We initially started this project to offer much-needed support to single mothers in the community. Then, we decided to create natu-

ral and organic bread, like the kind you used to get, and develop a sustainable business. With the help of women facing economic and social challenges, we have created a healthy product which we can responsibly offer the community," says Irina Sorescu, executive president of MamaPan Bakery.

## Delicious bread

MamaPan Bakery creates sourdough bread, oven baked with a delicious crust. The entire breadmaking process is based on an authentic, traditional recipe, carefully and patiently followed by the bakers. The lengthy traditional fermenting process ensures a delicious taste, while preserving all the nutrients of the wholegrain wheat intact.

The MamaPan Bakery sells its products both B2B (providing customised services for business, such as delivering pastries for coffee breaks at events, organising tasting sessions at company offices and delivering corporate gifts) and B2C (directly through the website with home delivery, through their presence at certain food fairs, etc.).

## CSR and private sector support

Unilever/DERO included the MamaPan Bakery in its "DERO supports women's dreams" campaign, providing MamaPan with support for expanding its distribution capacity (helping it buy a new car for deliveries and employ a new driver).

"Bread is a gift" is a CSR programme supported by Kaufland. Through this programme, Kaufland supports the production costs of bread and pastries for a period of one year. The bread and pastries are then delivered on a daily basis to ten associations and foundations providing services for children from disadvantaged families who are at a high risk of poverty, school dropout, etc.





Susana Pletea, editorial director of Burda Romania:  
 “Women will always have, structurally, the primordial role in education”

On the fifth day of the UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, participants had a round table meeting with Mrs. Susana Pletea, editorial director of Burda Romania. The Burda International Trust is the number-one magazine publisher in Romania, with over 35 titles in both print and online formats covering various topics from lifestyle and travel to nature. Most impressively, their portfolio includes no less than eight publications focused predominantly on women's issues.



The Burda Romania representative brought along several of the company's publications to the meeting: *Cosmopolitan*, *Femeia*, *Femeia de azi*, *Casa și Grădina* and *Practic în Bucătărie* (*Cosmopolitan*, *Woman*, *Today's Woman*, *House and Garden* and *Practice in the Kitchen*, respectively). The magazines were not left on the tables for long; the participants were keen to look them over and they were scrutinised with especial interest by the young female members of the Academy. Even to those who did not understand Romanian, it was obvious that the impeccable photos on the glossy magazine pages said as much as any words. Topics related to editorial work, choosing subjects, compiling a magazine summary, gender issues, switching from print to online formats and social networking all prompted vivid debates among the Academy participants.

#### **We are different, but we share the same values**

During her discussions with the young participants at UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, Mrs. Susana Pletea offered several unique observations and hints, such as suggesting they read her favourite book, “Dune” by Frank Herbert.

“I reread the whole Dune series every year, because every time I discover new aspects of it. It seems to me that it really captures the human spirit and what people need from society. As a species, we perpetually follow the same patterns without realising it. Even though we live differently today from how we lived yesterday, some things have not changed. Women have always had and will always have an important role in education, and this is wonderful!” Susana Pletea said. The meeting with the Burda Romania representative could be summed up in a few words: enthusiasm, communication, the pleasure of talking to people and sharing.

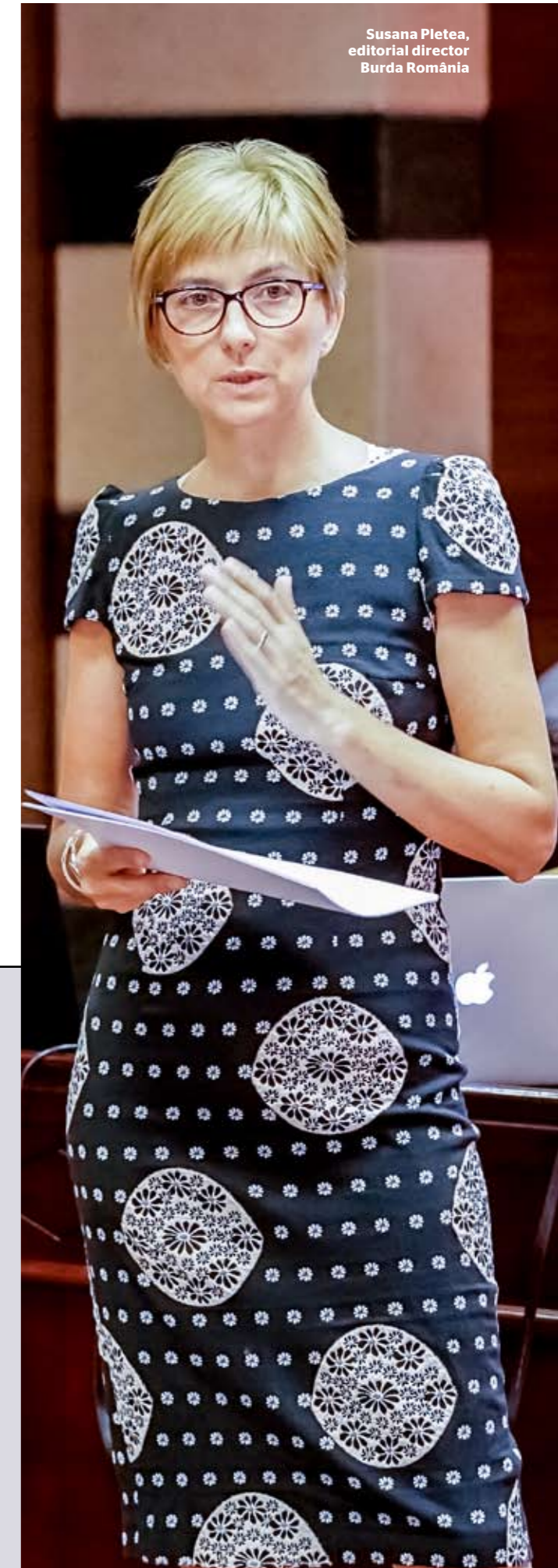
Susana Pletea, editorial director of Burda Romania:

#### **It is good to know that someone will follow in your footsteps**

“These young people convey a lot of enthusiasm, and when you are with them you feel the need to improve yourself and be more like them. I come from a company for which I have worked for 20 years; I have colleagues who have worked with me for ten years or more, and so something new is always welcome. Whenever we get a new, young colleague we feel like we too are renewed, filled with youth and enthusiasm. However, we are also enthusiastic every day, because otherwise we would not work for the Romanian media but would look for other jobs.

My first thought after this encounter was that their youth was such a pleasure! They are very young and already involved in social and general interest issues, not only in Romania but worldwide. It is nice to know that someone is following in your footsteps, that the young generation is not only interested in social media and online content. It is nice to find that people in the younger generation are very capable and talented, that they are interested in what's going on in the streets, outside their own neighbourhoods and in societies beyond their home country, and that they want to change things.”

Susana Pletea,  
 editorial director  
 Burda România





## The “Metamorphoses” project, step-by-step

The *Metamorphoses* project, created and run by the Alumnus Club for UNESCO, is an international project with different educational and creative themes each year, aimed at stimulating young people’s ideas, talents and ambitions and encouraging them to create artistic works (such as exhibitions, films and performances). It provides a conceptual, virtual space for the many expressions of European identity: cultural, ethnic, scientific and artistic.

The aim of the project is to strengthen a sense of a European identity as an intrinsic part of national and regional identities, and to promote cultural exchange by allowing participants to access, explore and apply information about other European countries – thus reinforcing the idea of a “tangible” European identity, as a response to increasing ethnic diversity and the integration of European minorities. “Metamorphoses” project was presented by Daniela Popescu and Anca Dumitrescu.

The Alumnus Club for UNESCO is an organisation created in 2000

which for over 15 years has been attracting members from ten different countries. It is part of the Romanian Federation of UNESCO Associations, Centres and Clubs, and consequently of the European and World Federations. The club is formed mainly of young students, and its aim is to offer its members the opportunity to get involved in projects that help them build their experience in their selected field of study. Through its UNESCO affiliation, the Alumnus Club has access to a valuable network of information relating to domains such as education, science, culture and communication.

### The history of “Metamorphoses”

Each year, the project is included on the agenda of the World and European Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations.

■ **July 2009 – Metamorphoses I: European Identity.** Held in Sinaia, Romania, the first international workshop involved 16 young people from seven countries, who worked together to propose three projects for a museum of European identity: EUROMORPHO, EUROPEION and EUROFLUX; the projects were presented at an exhibition in Paris in October 2009.



Anca Dumitrescu

■ **June 2010 – Metamorphoses II: The Woman in Europe.** The 2010 event, which took place in Tergnier, France, concluded with a screening of a film created by participants from seven countries about the status of women in Europe.

■ **May 2011 – Metamorphoses III: The European City in the Context of Multiculturalism.** The 2011 event took place in Bucharest, Romania, and brought together young people from eight countries; it culminated in the creation of a film entitled The European City.

■ **August 2012 – Metamorphoses**

**IV: A Life Dedicated to UNESCO.** In 2012, the project centred around the creation of a film paying homage to those who have dedicated their lives to UNESCO. The film shows the presentation of the ceremonial plaques “A Life Dedicated to UNESCO”; this event was part of the third General Assembly of the European Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations in Bucharest, Romania.

■ **October 2013 – Metamorphoses V: Interethnic Traditions Camp – The European City at Brasov.** In 2013, the project ended with the opening of the “European City” exhibition, where the work of the young participants was displayed.

■ **October 2014 – Metamorphoses VI: Bucharest Rediscovered.**

The 2014 edition concluded with the homonymous photographic exhibition by the famous photographer George Dimitriu and the photo book Bucharest Rediscovered, which gathers together useful information on Bucharest, a city full of charm, stories and bewitching hidden places. The book was published in three languages and contains tourist and historical information.

■ **October 2015 – Metamorphoses VII: The Traditional European Culinary Arts.** In 2015, young people from 18 countries cooked their traditional national dishes in Bucharest, Romania, at the

Arts and Crafts College UCECOM Spiru Haret. Three sessions of the project were financed by UNESCO.

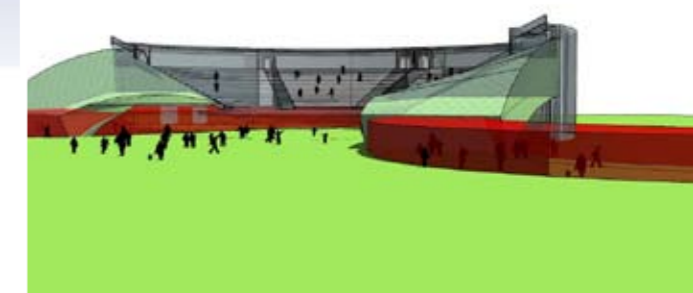
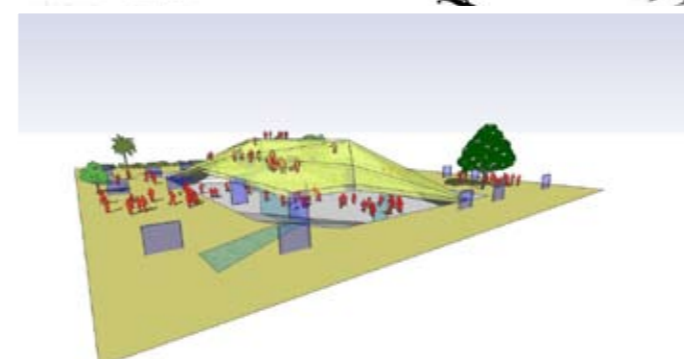
■ **October 2016 – Metamorphoses VIII: Minorities, Culture, Goodies.**

The 2016 project aimed to encourage cultural integration through the discovery of the culinary traditions and creative customs, such as egg painting and traditional dances, of the Roma, Ukrainian, Russian Lipovan, Greek, Italian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Tatar, Polish, Serbian, Armenian, Hungarian, Jewish and German minorities in Iasi, Romania. In partnership with the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO and the Romanian Government through the Interethnic Relations Department, an intercultural cookbook was published online.

■ **August 2017 – Metamorphoses VIII: Symbols of the European Identity.**

This year, participants from more than ten countries took part in a debate after which they were asked to come up with the most representative symbol of European identity that could be captured on an A4 page. The pages were then collected and combined to create a visual collage of European identity.

More information is available on the Alumnus Club website <http://youthandmuseums.org/alumnus>



# The commitment of the UNESCO Centre in Turin and the International Mediterranean Women's Forum

Barbara Costabello, leader of the youth section of the UNESCO Centre in Turin, Italy, gave a presentation on the centre's activities.

The UNESCO Centre in Turin is an NGO and recognised international UNESCO centre. A national training organisation founded in 1983, it organises projects and activities in keeping with UNESCO's values. These initiatives are aimed at promoting the knowledge and practice of human rights and facilitating dialogue among cultures and generations. It also has a documentation centre that is open to the public.

Since 1997, it has housed the headquarters of the **International Mediterranean Women's Forum**.

Since November 2014, it has also housed the headquarters of the **Italian Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Centres (FICLU)**.

In September 2014, the UNESCO Centre in Turin organised the 2nd Intermediate Congress of the European Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (EFUCA), subtitled **"Global Ethics and Equal Opportunities: Women's contribution to the development of Europe and the Mediterranean"**.

This is a quotation from Oluyemisi Alatisi from Nigeria, President of the Inner Wheel Club of Lagos, who participated in the workshop on women and culture, in which she reflects upon the status of women in her country.

The Congress brought together 220 participants from 16 countries: Belarus, China, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Nigeria, Romania, Serbia, Somalia, Spain, Tunisia and the USA.

It was structured around three plenary sessions and three thematic workshops: **Women and Culture**, **Women and Nutrition** and **Women and Violence**.

From the **Women and Culture workshop**, it emerged that the restoration of artworks by women is

essential for historical memory. Participants discussed the possibility of developing a feminised vocabulary for discussing heritage, in contrast to the masculine etymology of "patrimony". There is a long list of overlooked women in science and culture; we are all familiar with Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Oscar Wilde or Amadeus Mozart, but we probably don't know enough about Hypatia, Hildegard of Bingen or Artemisia Gentileschi. The study of women's contributions to culture is a subject that should be introduced in schools.

**The Women and Nutrition workshop** highlighted the key role of women in raising awareness of and promoting the preservation and respect of nature, by avoiding waste and developing positive attitudes and best practice in nutrition and healthy food.

**The Women and Violence workshop** reaffirmed that women's rights are an integral part of human rights. Specifically, participants called strongly for the right of every child to be registered at birth, for changes in discriminatory laws against women and for the promotion of education for peace, to instil respect for human life and dignity.

It was also the occasion for the launch of the international contest, **"Culture, nutrition, violence: Experiences of women of all ages and countries"**. In their stories, many women testified to their suffering; some recalled childhood memories that have become integral to their experience and teaching; some wrote of hope and freedom and others gave thanks for specific people and events.

**The Declaration of Turin**, unanimously adopted on 13 September 2014, reaffirms a shared commitment to continuing to work to safegu-



ard equal opportunities for everyone and to promote human rights, intercultural dialogue, knowledge and mutual understanding.

All the official documents and outcomes from the **Congress** were collected in a 391-page publication presenting (in both Italian and English) all the contributions, insights and testimonials offered by participants.

**The International Mediterranean Women's Forum** is an NGO working in official partnership with UNESCO and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), founded in 1992 in Valencia. It is a network of associations and institutions from 20 northern, southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. Since 1997, it has been based at the UNESCO Centre in Turin, in the UN Campus. Its main goal is to promote collaboration and

the exchange of experiences between women of the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans, and to implement solutions focused on improving equal opportunities.

Among its numerous activities, the Forum held training courses in Turin between 2000 and 2003 for the creation of a network of female trainers in the Mediterranean Basin, on the theme of **"Women, Science and Development"**.

**The results were:**

- the implementation of 20 development projects in Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey and the training of approximately 3000 female trainers
- a series of multilateral and bilateral meetings, involving women from Italy, the Balkan



countries and China

- the creation of the website <http://www.womensciencenet.org/>.

In 2004, the IMWF organised the multilateral round table **"Poverty and subsistence: The quality and responsibility of women's contributions to the search for solutions"** in Burkina Faso.

This round table gathered female scientists from seven African countries – Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast,

Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo – to analyse policies and projects achieved with the contribution of women in the fight against poverty.

Members of the **International Mediterranean Women's Forum** have taken part in several international seminars, UNESCO conferences and annual meetings of the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** at the UN headquarters in New York.

On 30 June 2017, at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the conference entitled **"UNESCO's Soft Power Today: Fostering Women's Empowerment and Leadership"** took place.

Finally, the **Italian Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Centres (FICLU)**, composed of 150 clubs and centres scattered all over the country, is also strongly committed to gender equality.

## THE CLOSING CEREMONY GOODBYE, BUCHAREST!

On 28 August, the closing ceremony of UNESCO's Academy of Young Women, subtitled "the fight against xenophobia, extremism and aggression", took place at the headquarters of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO.

Among the ceremony's guests of honour were His Excellency Mr Branko Branković, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to Romania, His Excellency Mr Mihai Gribincea, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Romania and

His Excellency Mr Andrei Grinkevich, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to Romania.

After the speeches, the participants enjoyed a musical interlude from

Georgiana Chiriță, a member of the Community of Lipovan Russians in Romania. During the closing ceremony, we had the pleasure of viewing artist Carmen Emanuela Popa's exhibition, "Contemporary Unknown Soldier".





Organizația Națiunilor  
Unite pentru Educație,  
Știință și Cultură



Comisia Națională  
a României  
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The Fight Against Xenophobia,  
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