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National Commission
of Romania for UNESCO

Comisia Națională a
României pentru UNESCO

CAE

BEST PRACTICES FROM ROMANIA

1ST EDITION, JUNE 2025

TEACHER TRAINING HOUSE BUCHAREST

LITERATURE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The Reading Hunt in Libraries is a digital product competition that engages students in non-formal learning activities after reading a chosen book from school or public libraries. Initiated in 2021–2022 in Bucharest schools, it later expanded regionally, and in 2024–2025 it will reach the national level.

By offering students from diverse backgrounds access to Romanian and world literature, the competition fosters a collaborative environment between school and public libraries. Its objectives include stimulating interest in reading, developing critical thinking, creativity, and digital skills, and promoting cultural awareness, tolerance, and civic spirit. The contest also aims to enhance teachers' and librarians' abilities to design and implement cultural animation activities and to strengthen collaboration between libraries.

Students, supported by a teacher and librarian, select books guided by short, anonymous fragments from Romanian and foreign authors, provided by the organizers. These excerpts hint at themes but do not reveal the author or title, prompting students to consider any book relevant to the chosen fragment. This approach encourages critical thinking and fosters a wide variety of reading choices.

After finishing their selected book, student teams create a digital product using free web applications. The product's format depends on the competition stage: for local competitions, it might be an animated reading diary; for county or sector stages, comics or book trailers; and for the national stage, a song with original lyrics and accompaniment.

Through these creative efforts, The Reading Hunt in Libraries cultivates cultural awareness and expression, highlighting the significance of communicating ideas, experiences, and emotions in diverse artistic forms. It reinforces respect for literary works and their creative expression across different cultures. By promoting reading as a cultural habit and nurturing narrative traditions through modern media, the competition enriches cultural and aesthetic education, preserving the literary heritage that connects generations.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

The main partner is the Bucharest Metropolitan Library (BMB), a public institution whose mission is to facilitate free and non-discriminatory access to fundamental cultural rights, serving as a community center that actively supports information, research, education and recreation for the inhabitants of Bucharest and Ilfov County and actively contributes to improving the quality of life of Bucharest's citizens through its innovative offer and integrated program of public services. BMB's role in the Reading Hunt in Libraries competition is to: ensure communication with the public libraries identified by the participating teams; participate, together with the organizer, in the evaluation of the products produced by the students, national phase; and get involved in identifying sponsors for the winners.

The public libraries in the locality of the schools entered in the competition have the following tasks: designate a person from the institution who will manage the communication and running of the competition, the county/sector and national stages; facilitate access to the library for the teams entered in the competition; provide support to the students in choosing the books; promote the competition in the local community of the county/sector/municipality.

OUTCOMES:

The Reading Hunt in Libraries promotes competences championed by UNESCO for cultural and arts education and aligns with the Council of the European Union Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning. These include reading, literacy, digital skills, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.

Launched in 2021-2022 at the municipal level, the competition expanded regionally in subsequent years. The first edition brought together 70 teams (314 students, 128 teachers/librarians). In 2022-2023, it again attracted 70 teams (280 students, 104 teachers/librarians). During the 2023-2024 edition, 177 teams participated (708 students, 193 teachers/librarians), accompanied by 205 library visits and the creation of 382 digital products.

On a qualitative level, the contest engages students, teachers, and librarians in extracurricular activities focused on Romanian and world literature. Participants develop reading skills, cultural awareness, and digital competences, with critical thinking and creativity at the forefront. Teamwork fosters communication, collaboration, respect, responsibility, tolerance, and civic spirit.

Partnerships with cultural institutions—including libraries, memorial houses, and museums—enrich participants' experiences and strengthen community ties. Parents' involvement bolsters the school-family connection, underscoring the role of reading and cultural heritage.

By showcasing activities and outcomes on institutional websites and social media, the competition heightens public awareness of literary and cultural education, ultimately supporting the preservation and promotion of Romanian and global cultural heritage.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

Lack of internet access or devices can hinder fair participation. Through partnerships with public libraries, we have provided temporary technology and internet services for students from underserved communities.

Limited student access to books, information resources, and cultural activities can also pose challenges. To address this, we establish partnerships with cultural institutions, offering dedicated resources and interactive events.

In areas without a public library, we secure transportation funding so students can visit the nearest library and expand their educational opportunities.

Funding for extracurricular initiatives and sponsor engagement in cultural projects is often low. To highlight the value of cultural education and reading, we organize student award ceremonies in public venues, featuring interactive presentations and products that invite community involvement.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF THEATER AND FILM "I.L. CARAGIALE"

THEATRE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The "Teatru pentru Bac" project was initiated by the National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale" Bucharest through the Theatre Pedagogy master's program designed to support high school students in their preparation for the Romanian Language and Literature exam, a key component of the national Baccalaureate. Through theatrical dramatizations of key texts, the project aims to make literary texts more accessible and to encourage reading among students, helping them achieve the best possible results on the exam. Each activity of the project consists of two parts. The first part is a performance, representing a dramatization of a work from the Baccalaureate syllabus and the second part is a discussion between the actors and the audience about the various aspects of the literary work viewed, structured according to the topics of the Romanian Language and Literature written exam.

The objectives of this educational initiative through theatre include:

1. Encouraging reading - by combining live performances with guided discussions, the project aims to inspire a greater interest in reading and a stronger appreciation of literature, motivating students to explore the original texts independently
2. Improving exam performance - being an immersive learning experience, the program supports students in developing an in-depth development of key literary concepts, ultimately preparing them to achieve better results in the Romanian Language and Literature exam.
3. Enhancing accessibility to Literature -by dramatizing key texts from the Baccalaureate curriculum, the program aims to make romanian literature more relatable and engaging, helping students connect with it on a deeper level.

Developing critical thinking and analytical skills -the interactive discussions following each performance encourage students to think critically, analyze various perspectives, and interpret themes - skills that are essential for success in the exam.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

The main partners in the "Teatru pentru Bac" project include the Ministry of Education, which provides essential logistical support by covering costs related to transportation and accommodation. This support enables the project to reach a broader range of students across various regions. Additionally, the County School Inspectorates facilitate connections with high schools across the country, where project activities are being held.

OUTCOMES:

In line with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, the "Teatru pentru Bac" project helps students cultivate essential skills for academic success and personal growth:

- Literacy competence: Dramatizing literary texts enhances reading comprehension and textual analysis.
- Personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence: Post-performance discussions foster collaboration, encourage diverse viewpoints, and refine students' ability to manage their own learning.
- Cultural awareness and expression: By witnessing and discussing live performances of Romanian literary works, students develop an appreciation for cultural diversity and artistic expression.

Additionally, the project strengthens critical thinking and analytical abilities through in-depth discussions, directly supporting exam performance and broader intellectual development.

Social added value & impacts

Between March and November 2024, "Teatru pentru Bac" promoted inclusion and cultural awareness by reaching 12,000 students in 37 cities across 16 counties.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

Some barriers encountered in the “Teatru pentru Bac” project included time management, as actors had to balance rehearsals with their ongoing academic courses. Additionally, adapting to the spaces provided by high schools posed challenges, as each venue varied in size and facilities. Lastly, the numerous performances required careful distribution of roles, with actors playing multiple characters across different plays to simplify the logistical aspects. To overcome these, effective planning and coordination were essential, ensuring actors managed their schedules, adapted performances to available spaces, and organized cast members to perform efficiently across various productions without compromising quality.



„CITADEL OF ROMANCE” CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MUSIC

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The „Youth of Romance” National Educational Programme, initiated by the „Citadel of Romance” Cultural Association in Târgoviște (part of UNESCO designations for Clubs and Associations in Romania), celebrates and promotes the music of Romance („Romanța”), a treasured genre of Romania's cultural heritage. Officially launched on January 15, 2022, at the unique „House of Romance” Museum in Târgoviște, the Program aims, through culture and for culture, to educate and inspire young generations about the genre of Romance’s artistic and historical significance.

Organized under the patronage of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO and the European Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations, The National Educational Programme „Youth of the Romance” promotes the Romance genre to young generations. It includes physical and online visits to the „House of Romance” Museum, workshops, and concerts, showcasing its significance in music, poetry, and language. Online visits, conducted via the Zoom platform, are tailored to class schedules, aligning with multidisciplinary educational themes. Over 16,000 students, teachers and professors have participated in such visits, exploring the museum’s rich heritage. Their feedback, captured in press articles and social media posts, highlights the program's broad appeal.

The program strengthens cultural partnerships across Romania, Moldova, and the Romanian communities abroad, fostering appreciation for a genre that bridges generations and exemplifies national identity. Romance, which led to the creation of Romania's national anthem, is actively promoted to be inscribed in UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

The program benefits from the patronage of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO and the European Federation of UNESCO Clubs, ensuring a strong foundation for cultural promotion. Key stakeholders include cultural institutions, educational organizations, and media partners that support its activities. Artists, interpreters, and composers contribute by purchasing tickets, enabling access for students and educators. Local authorities and community leaders provide logistical and promotional support, while press outlets amplify the program's impact. The involvement of stakeholders creates a collaborative network that enhances outreach, ensuring the program reaches diverse audiences and continues to inspire appreciation for Romanian heritage.

OUTCOMES:

·Competencies Developed:

Aligned with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, the program develops cultural awareness, artistic expression, and communication skills. Participants strengthen their ability to understand and appreciate cultural heritage while improving teamwork and digital literacy through collaborative and online activities.

·Other Competencies:

The program fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of Romanian literary language and poetry. By engaging with multidisciplinary themes, participants enhance their ability to connect cultural, historical, and artistic knowledge, promoting holistic learning and innovation in approaching complex topics.

·Social Added Value & Impacts:

The program bridges generations by connecting young participants with cultural heritage and traditions through the Romance genre. It promotes inclusion by ensuring access for students and teachers from diverse geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, supported by subsidized tickets from cultural contributors. The initiative fosters a sense of national identity and cultural pride, encouraging the preservation of intangible heritage while uniting communities through shared appreciation of music and poetry.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

The Programme faced accessibility challenges, especially for students and teachers in remote areas. This was addressed through Zoom-based online visits tailored to school schedules, integrating multidisciplinary educational themes.

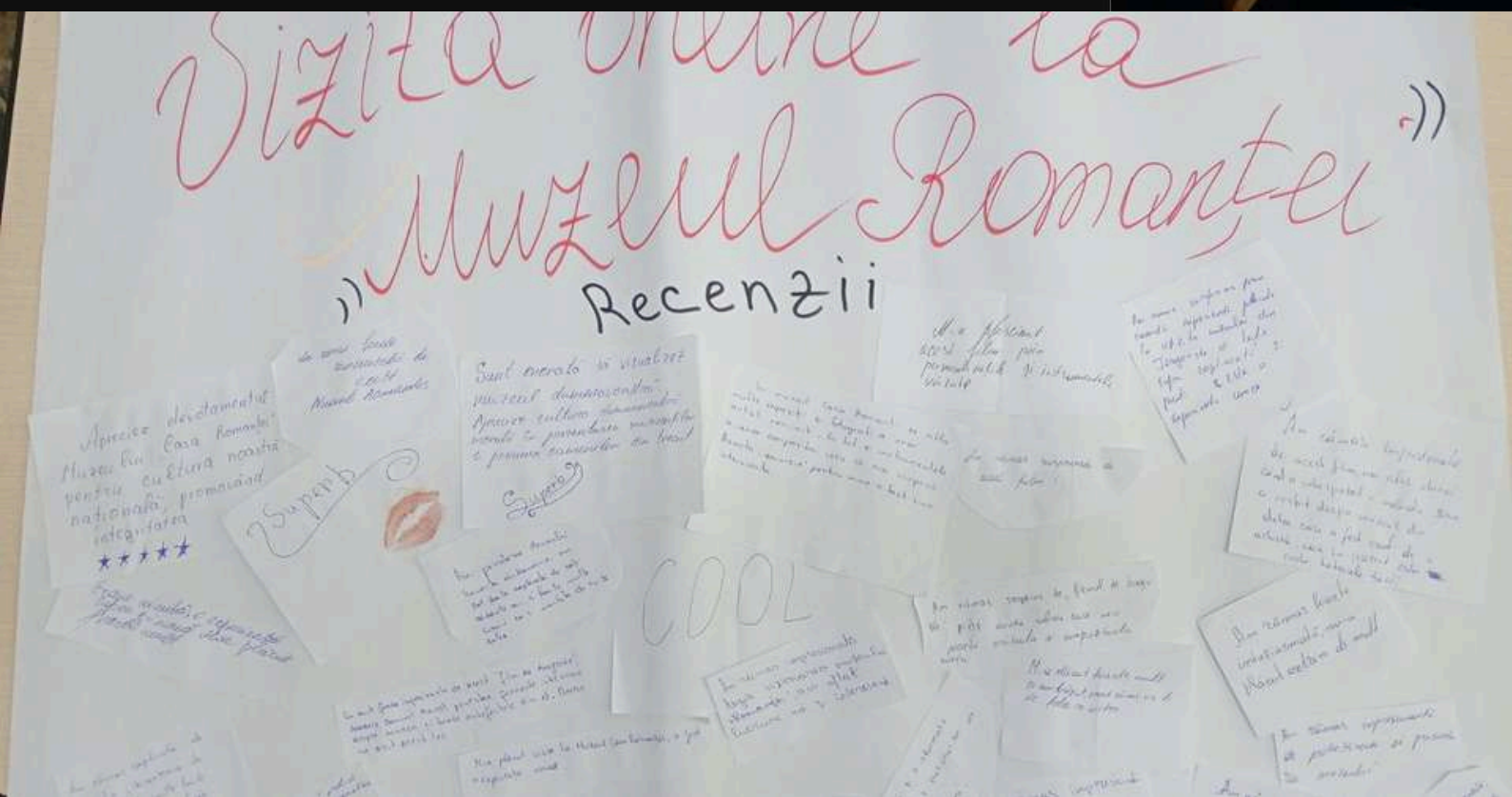
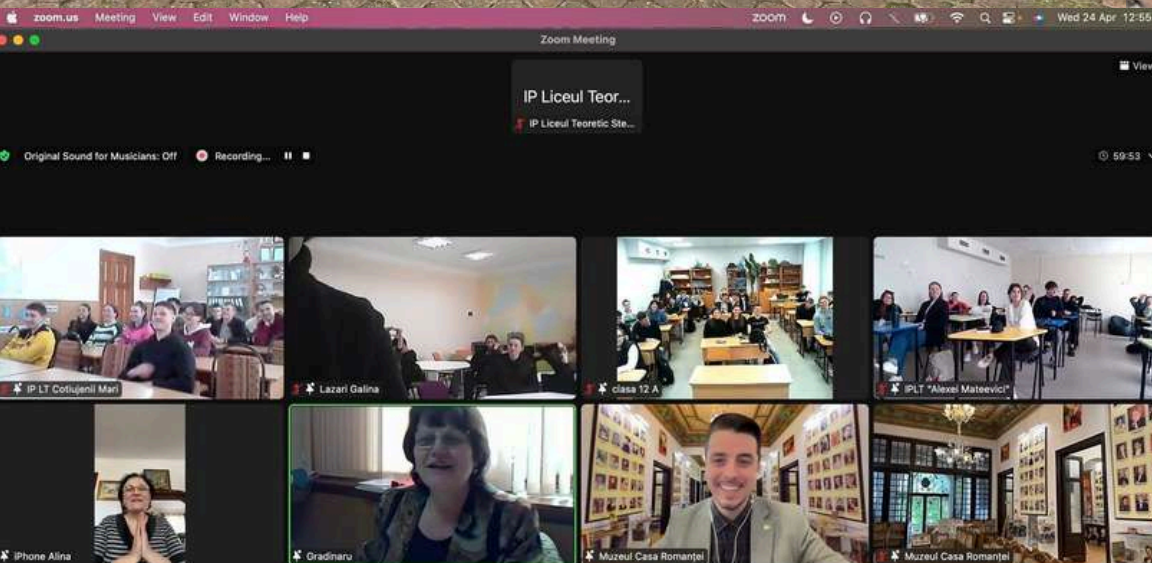
Financial barriers were mitigated by involving artists and cultural figures who subsidized participation through ticket purchases.

Engaging younger audiences unfamiliar with the Romance genre required interactive workshops and the involvement of renowned artists to make the experience relatable.

Maintaining high digital engagement was achieved through storytelling, visuals, and interactive sessions.

These strategies ensured inclusivity, participation, and sustained interest, overcoming the program's main barriers.





MIORITICS ASSOCIATION

CULTURAL HERITAGE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

Local History Manual of Râșnov

Because we want to build stronger communities and more attached to local values, the Mioritics Association, Râșnov City Hall and Hands on History (Norway) decided to develop a useful solution for teachers from schools in Râșnov: local history manuals adapted to the age of the students and with a format of lessons to take place both in the classroom and in historical places in Râșnov.

The author of the manuals is the historian Nicolae Pepene who structured the information for two distinct age categories: 8-12 years and 12-18 years. This approach considers children's needs and levels of understanding, providing them with an engaging and age-appropriate educational experience that manages to spark children's enthusiasm and curiosity about the city's past. The manuals are not only an informative resource, but also a source of fun and engagement for students. Containing numerous games, the manuals turn learning history into an activity full of pleasure and discovery.

To complement the launch of the textbooks, there were interactive history sessions for secondary school students in Râșnov, facilitated by the author of the textbook himself, Nicolae Pepene, both on the elevator platform, offering a fascinating panorama of the city, and in the Râșnov Citadel, putting them students have the opportunity to interact directly with the historical places in the city. These initiatives have been enthusiastically received by students and teachers, giving them the opportunity to discover and better understand the rich history and heritage of their city.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

Hands of History (Norway) – the organized a study visit to a school in Trondheim for Romanian team to discover the good practices regarding the history lessons in Norway.

Peter Thal School in Rasnov – 19 teachers took part in the trainings and more than 200 pupils attended the interactive history sessions.

School no. 3 in Rasnov – 12 teachers took part in the trainings and more than 150 pupils attended the interactive history sessions.

OUTCOMES:

Literacy Competence

Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence

Citizenship Competences

History guides us into the past of individuals, families, communities, peoples—indeed, the entire world. It helps us interpret maps, coats of arms, buildings, ruins, photographs, engravings, ancient documents, museum artifacts, or paintings. Those who study history gain a deeper understanding of the community and world they live in today.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

For many people, Rasnov only means the Citadel, but the city itself has a very rich history that must be understood in the larger context. We focus too much on the relationship between this history and tourism / visitors, but we forget an important component: the local community.

To develop a local history manual is a difficult task because you have to pay attention to different sensitivities of individuals and organizations. That's why we worked with a high experienced historian which is respected by the local community.

The local history manuals are just a tool and without the teacher's involvement the objectives will not be achieved.



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL ROMANIAN UNION

ARTS

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

Using Cultural Awareness to stop pollution

On October 2022 the exhibition *Clear Water/ Dirty Water*, dedicated to the image of clear waters was opened in the gallery of Romanian Commission for UNESCO by Soroptimist International Romania and ARTCITY Gallery. Soroptimist International is a world organization represented on the 5 continents, by unions and clubs sustaining girls and women education. The objective of this event was to make people aware of water pollution danger, by uncontrolled garbage disposal. To achieve this goal, the exhibited objects were created using waste materials. Among the most expressive exhibits were a whale that died because it swallowed plastic bottles, a globe whose lights go out due to pollution, and Prince Charming's Garden made of reusable wires. The message was clear, addressed to all kind of visitors no matter age, cultural background or professional profile and the visitors started to think about the danger of water pollution, admired the artifacts made of waste materials and were impressed by the artists. The impact was so valuable that both partners decided to move it to The National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest. Hosted by the main lobby of Politehnica, the exhibition was enlarged and seen by many students.

The second part referred to iia (traditional Romanian blouse) and was develop by 4 SI Clubs: Braşov, Bucharest, Craiova and Târgovişte. Objectives - to preserve traditional culture and to raise young generation awareness concerning popular immaterial heritage. For achieving the goals children of different age were involved in activities concerning their folk zone and encouraged to learn how an iia is made, which are the symbols of embroidery. Later some of their works were exhibited, sometimes accompanied by different popular textiles. The aims of the project were accomplished when we observed that children started to wear pieces of popular costume in their everyday life.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

1. UNESCO Commission Romania – hosted and supervised the public events organized to promote the programs
2. Soroptimist International Romania (mainly SI Club Brasov and SI CLUB Bucharest non-profit organization consisting of 8 clubs located in different cities in the country suggested and developed the program. It also had two partners-
 - ARTCITY Galley (a Bucharest art institution which promotes artistic values and fights against all type of pollution), and
 - educational institutions and schools from Brasov. (city and country)

OUTCOMES:

USIR tries by organizing different art events to create a framework which presents successful ways, such as workshops and exhibition to promote social competence development through innovative learning approaches. All attendances turn into learners achieving their full potential. To fulfil their different needs, the recommendation encourages Member States to provide quality early childhood education and care, improve school education, and modernize higher education. Our programs tried to develop other competences as well.

-Other Competencies

- some attendances should achieve special competences such as
- art understanding
- using visual aids to promote ideas
- how to make your voice important in a community
- cultural competences that help them to use artistic images and icons to promote their own ideas and others which they agree with.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

A barrier can be the difference in cultural background. Using images implies using symbols and iconic images. The two rats of Alexandru Rangă fighting over pile of waste things, is considered by the artist as an iconic image of contemporary society. Others view it as an image of miserable slums. Black is a symbol of death and now means also elegance. The image code is not understandable, its educational value does not exist. Exhibiting images, without a title or a simple and short note is not a good option. All our public events have an argument.



DE-A ARHITECTURA

ARTS/ BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: "DE-A ARHITECTURA - ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION"

De-a Arhitectura is a community of built environment professionals and educators shaping a better future through architecture education for children, youth and adults. Our programs foster creativity and innovation, and help children get ready for the real world.

Our mission is to make built environment education accessible to everyone. By raising awareness, we empower individuals to enhance their lives and improve the quality of their surroundings. We aim to equip younger generations with a deep understanding of how the built environment influences the natural world, inspiring them to actively contribute to creating livable, beautiful, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

The quality of our built environment is directly tied to our well-being. However, society often lacks awareness of its importance. As a collective of creatives, built environment professionals, and educators, we are committed to delivering practical education that resonates with all age groups. Our vision is to foster a vibrant culture around the built environment, emphasizing its critical role through education.

Educational programs are primarily conducted in schools as optional courses, but they also extend to museums and architecture and design events.

These programs are carefully designed, tested, and implemented using methods such as project-based learning, experiential learning, and participatory design. The interdisciplinary and integrative curricula are delivered by a team consisting of an architect and a teacher.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

Since 2012, built environment professionals have collaborated with educators to deliver our educational programs in schools all over Romania. We've reached over 37,000 pupils with the help of over 1200 teachers and 1100 volunteer architects, and we involve every school year over 3000 children, 100 teachers and 1000 architects.

"De-a arhitectura" is a cultural program endorsed by the Romanian Order of Architects (OAR) and financed, partially, by "Stamp of Architecture". In 2016 it became a priority cultural program for OAR, because it meets this five criteria: scale, singularity, uniqueness, complexity and quality.

OUTCOMES:

Critical thinking, creativity, spatial awareness, and civic responsibility.

Abstract thinking, visual expression, interpretation, and communication skills.

Empowerment of students to engage in civic responsibility through practical applications.

Inclusion, cultural awareness, and a sense of agency in shaping sustainable environments.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

In Romania, addressing ignorance about the built environment posed a significant challenge. Strategies included diversifying educational content, incorporating digital tools, and involving local stakeholders in participatory projects to enhance accessibility and relevance.



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IVAN PATZAICHIN – MILA 23 ASSOCIATION

CULTURAL HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: IVAN PATZAICHIN MUSEUM - COMMUNITY INNOVATION CENTER

Located in Mila 23 village, in the heart of the Danube Delta, Romania, the Ivan Patzaichin Museum - Community Innovation Center celebrates the legacy of the legendary canoeist Ivan Patzaichin, while fostering sustainable development through conservation and creative capitalization of local natural and cultural heritage. Built on the site of Patzaichin's parents' house, the museum integrates modern design with local traditions, embodying a green and sustainable architectural approach.

While offering a memorial for the great Ivan Patzaichin, the museum shines as a hub for community life, innovation, and education. It highlights the rich culture and traditions of the ethnic Lipovan community of Mila 23 and surrounding villages, while showcasing the fragile biodiversity of the Danube Delta.

It hosts educational programmes, artistic residencies, and cultural events, empowering the local community and setting an example of collaboration for protected natural areas across the country and abroad. The MIP-CIC vision underscores the importance of public consultation and community involvement. It also stimulates the creation and consolidation of networks of various partners. To this end, it fosters the creativity of potential partners, by offering them a platform for their original projects, and by encouraging cooperation as the foundation for new, innovative initiatives.

By presenting Ivan Patzaichin's life, achievements, work, and dedication to the Danube Delta, the Museum highlights the importance of this exceptional cultural and natural site as an inspiration for sustainable development based on a balanced rapport between culture and nature. The interactive exhibits and curated collections at the Museum unveil Patzaichin's universe, allowing the visitors to explore the history and traditions of Mila 23, as premises for imaginative models for preserving local heritage while generating inclusive community development.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

Initiator:

Ivan Patzaichin Mila 23 Association

Construction Support

Financial Support:

Funded through the 2014-2022 European Operational Program for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Measure III.3 – local development strategies.

Main Partner:

Romanian Commercial Bank (BCR).

Sponsors:

Alpha Bank, Bosch Romania Foundation, Vasile Tomoiaga Association, Imuc Global Group, Addinol Lubricants Romania, TMD Pro Solutions, CTE Solution-Specialized Equipment, Energoconstruct. Additional support from the Romanian-American Foundation.

Inauguration Support

Under the patronage of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO.

Main Partner:

BCR

Partners:

Alpha Bank, Romanian-American Foundation, Aqua Carpatica, Bosch Romania Foundation, Orange Foundation, PPC Energy, Tulcea County Council, ASTRA Museum, Vasile Tomoiaga Association, Imuc Global Group, Addinol Lubricants Romania, TMD Pro Solutions, CTE Solution, Energoconstruct.

Logistic Support:

Deltaica, Domeniile Sâmburești, Ivan Pescar & Scrumbia Bar.

Media Partners:

Agerpres, Radio Romania (Actualități, Cultural, International), București FM, Radio Constanța, Radio Antena Satelor, Green Report, Igloo Media, IQAds, Modernism.ro, Spot Media, SMARK, The Institute, Zeppelin.

OUTCOMES:

The Ivan Patzaichin Museum – Community Innovation Center promotes cultural awareness, citizenship, and entrepreneurship. Through educational programs, artistic residencies, and community initiatives, it fosters creativity, critical thinking, and responsibility toward Danube Delta traditions, sustainability, and biodiversity. It also supports lifelong learning, digital literacy, and modern technology access for both adults and children.

Serving as a collaborative hub, the museum tackles cultural and environmental challenges and offers opportunities for shared learning and engagement. It nurtures entrepreneurial competences by backing local crafts, artistic residencies, and sustainable practices—especially among youth—emphasizing collaboration, resilience, and adaptability.

By highlighting the Danube Delta's fragile ecosystem and celebrating cultural diversity, the museum has a strong social impact. It encourages local assertiveness, particularly among the Lipovan community of Mila 23, through cultural projects and educational initiatives, fostering cross-cultural dialogue, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion.

Additionally, the museum's building models sustainable development by integrating green building practices and preserving both cultural and natural heritage.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

A challenge for the Ivan Patzaichin Museum – Community Innovation Center is ensuring stable access to resources, especially financial support and infrastructure, in the remote village of Mila 23. This aspect can limit the museum's ability to expand its impact and carry out important projects related to local development, such as preserving cultural heritage, promoting slow tourism, supporting local gastronomy, and improving digital skills in the community.

To overcome these challenges, the museum takes a comprehensive approach. It builds partnerships with local, national, and international organizations to secure funding, expertise, and visibility through grants and collaborations.

The museum also uses digital tools to reach a wider audience, offering online educational content, virtual exhibitions, and promoting community-driven initiatives. This helps make the museum's cultural and educational resources more accessible, including those focused on sustainability and local traditions.

By aligning with UNESCO's goals and positioning itself as a UNESCO-related cultural hub, the museum gains international recognition, attracting more support and highlighting the region's heritage. Working with UNESCO's National Commission in Romania also strengthens the museum's role in preserving culture, promoting sustainability, and protecting the environment.



“HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE” CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

CULTURAL HERITAGE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: MARTHE BIBESCO, LA NYMPHE EUROPE

This documentary on Princess Martha Bibescu was directed by Sabina Pop and produced by the “Heritage for the Future” Cultural Association. It celebrates the life, achievements, and legacy of one of Romania’s most iconic cultural figures, tying her contributions with universal principles of culture, education, and diversity.

Martha Bibescu’s life is portrayed as a testament to culture and education as global public goods, accessible and impactful beyond borders. Her role as a writer, diplomat, and intellectual illustrates the transformative power of education and culture in fostering societal well-being. The documentary emphasises her dedication to enriching humanity through literature and dialogue, aligning with the principle that education should advance inclusive and sustainable development.

The film highlights Bibescu’s unwavering commitment to diversity and intercultural dialogue, framing her work as a bridge between nations, ideas, and communities. Her advocacy for cross-cultural understanding mirrors the recognition of diversity as humanity’s shared heritage, enriching societies by fostering greater appreciation for varied perspectives.

The documentary also embodies the principle of inclusion and respect for diversity. Through her story, it shows how Bibescu used her platform to elevate marginalised voices and promote equal participation in cultural and artistic life. Her efforts resonate with the objective of eliminating barriers to cultural engagement based on race, gender, or background.

Lastly, the film underscores her enduring legacy in creative and critical thinking, inspiring adaptability in a rapidly changing world. Bibescu’s intellectual and cultural contributions remain a source of education and transformation, echoing the objectives of lifelong learning and cultivating creativity for a sustainable future.

This documentary integrates the principles of cultural education, inclusion, and human rights, offering an engaging narrative that honours both Martha Bibescu’s impact and the broader objectives of cultural and artistic advocacy.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

The production of the documentary used videos, photographs, and audio recordings from the archives listed below. Fragments were filmed in historic buildings of national heritage importance.

National Film Archive and Romanian Film Center

Académie royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

Académie royale de langue et de littérature françaises de Belgique

L'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA)

Critical Past collection

Collection of Ms. Alexandra Chiliman Juvara

Collection of Dr. Alin Ciupală

Collection of Dr. Narcis-Dorin Ion

Ministry of National Defence – General Inspectorate of Military Music

National Archives, Central National Historical Archives Service

The Romanian Academy

The "Carol I" Central University Library

The "Palatele Brâncovenesti de la Porțile Bucureștiului" Cultural Centre

The National Museum of Art of Romania

The "King Ferdinand I" National Military Museum

The National Museum of Romanian Literature

The Prahova County Museum of Natural Sciences, The Oil Museum

The Hunting Museum of the Carpathian Mountains

Romsilva

The Știrbey Palace – Buftea

The Cultural Heritage and Archives Service – Radio Romania

OUTCOMES:

- Cultural Awareness and Expression
- Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn
- Literacy Competence
- Civic Competence
- Entrepreneurship
- Multilingual Awareness

OTHER COMPETENCES:

- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration
- Intercultural Awareness
- Historical Awareness and Global Perspective Competence

The documentary on Martha Bibescu delivers significant social added value and impact, fostering inclusion, cultural awareness, and intercultural dialogue. The film serves as a medium for promoting cultural diversity and heritage, showcasing her contributions to bridging cultures and fostering understanding across borders, by highlighting the Princess' remarkable life as a writer, diplomat, and cultural advocate.

Through her story, the documentary explains the importance of inclusion and accessibility in cultural and artistic spaces. It portrays Martha Bibescu's efforts to transcend social and gender norms of her time, inspiring viewers to value diversity and challenge exclusion in their own contexts. This aligns with contemporary efforts to eliminate barriers based on race, gender, or background, creating a more equitable cultural landscape.

The documentary further enhances cultural awareness, introducing audiences to the richness of Romanian heritage and its interconnectedness with global culture. It highlights how culture and education contribute to personal growth, social cohesion, and societal well-being.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

Barriers to engaging with the documentary include a lack of awareness about Martha Bibescu's legacy and its contemporary relevance. Additionally, the digital divide restricts access for those without internet or technological tools, while cultural and linguistic differences may limit engagement for non-native audiences. To overcome these challenges, strategies include expanding digital accessibility through free streaming platforms and multilingual subtitles (Youtube and English subtitles available), promoting awareness campaigns in schools, libraries, and cultural centers, providing offline resources like screenings, and increasing partnerships with NGOs and educational institutions to ensure inclusive dissemination of the content.





<https://marthabibescu.eu/en/>

“HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE” CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: NOAPTEA DE SÂNZIENE (MIDSUMMER FAIRIES FEST)

Noaptea de Sânziene, celebrated on the night of June 23rd to June 24th, takes us back to pre-Christian roots, marking a night rich with traditions, folklore, and natural symbolism. This intangible cultural heritage celebration has successfully transitioned, via this cultural event, from its origins in rural communities to urban spaces, ensuring its preservation and relevance in modern society. Drawing on its themes of fertility, love, and the mystical power of nature, the event has become a vibrant symbol of cultural identity and inclusion. Over the years, the Association organised 10 editions of this event, that brought together more than 7000 spectators, numerous exhibitions, live performances, reinterpretation, and children’s workshops.

Aligned with objectives for lifelong learning, Noaptea de Sânziene exemplifies the integration of cultural education into public life. Its revitalisation promotes cultural awareness and expression, encouraging rural and urban population to engage with their shared heritage. The celebration highlights the diversity of cultural practices, mutual respect among generations and communities.

The revival this cultural event promotes embodies the principle that culture is a global public good, accessible to all. By reintroducing ancient customs to urban spaces, Noaptea de Sânziene creates an inclusive environment where individuals can connect to their roots. This inclusivity reflects the event's commitment to eliminating barriers to cultural participation, fostering belonging and shared identity.

Noaptea de Sânziene also aligns with the principle of lifelong learning, offering opportunities for individuals to explore folklore through dance, music, and storytelling. By bridging traditional and contemporary cultural expressions, the celebration cultivates creativity and critical thinking, ensuring that heritage remains dynamic and adaptive. Ultimately, the event exemplifies the transformative power of culture.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

Numerous partners have contributed to the success of Noaptea de Sânziene over the years, enhancing its cultural and educational impact. Renowned cultural institutions have supported the event by organising exhibitions that highlight its historical and folkloric significance.

Educational NGOs have played a key role by conducting interactive workshops, helping participants of all ages explore the celebration's traditions through storytelling, crafts, and performances.

Additionally, local and national organisations have provided logistical support, while artists and performers have enriched the experience with music and dance rooted in Romanian heritage.

OUTCOMES:

-Competencies developed according to

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning

- Cultural Awareness and Expression
- Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn
- Civic Competence

-Other Competencies

- Creativity and Innovation
- Historical Awareness
- Sustainability
- Intercultural
- Communication
- Aesthetic Appreciation

-Social added value & impacts (e.g., inclusion, cultural awareness).

Noaptea de Sânziene holds significant social added value, bringing forward cultural awareness, inclusion, and community cohesion. By revitalising rural traditions and making them accessible to the urban audiences, the celebration bridges generational and social divides. Its inclusive approach allows people from diverse backgrounds to participate in rituals, creating a sense of belonging. This inclusivity supports efforts to eliminate barriers to cultural participation, promoting equality and representation.

The event enhances cultural awareness by showcasing Romania's intangible heritage, connecting individuals with their roots while emphasising the universal values of folklore. Through exhibitions, workshops, and performances, it encourages participants to appreciate cultural diversity and understand its relevance to contemporary society.

Educationally, Noaptea de Sânziene inspires lifelong learning, offering opportunities to explore history, art, and nature through engaging activities. It strengthens social bonds by creating collaborative spaces where communities can reconnect with tradition, express creativity, and celebrate shared values.

Moreover, the event contributes to sustainable cultural preservation by integrating traditional practices into modern contexts, ensuring their transmission to future generations.

Challenges and Solutions:

Barriers to Noaptea de Sânziene's accessibility include limited awareness of its cultural significance, especially among urban populations, and a lack of resources in rural areas to support participation. Additionally, some may perceive folklore as outdated, reducing engagement. In the future, strategies to overcome these challenges might include organising awareness campaigns in schools and cultural institutions, providing grants or partnerships to rural communities for participation, and utilising further digital tools with multilingual content to promote inclusivity. Lastly, engaging influencers and modern artists can also reframe the tradition's relevance for contemporary audiences.



BIGGER PICTURE

EDUCATION

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

"A fost odată" is an online educational platform designed for children, both with and without hearing impairments. It offers a variety of stories, fairy tales, and narratives in audio and video formats, including sign language, to provide accessible educational content tailored to the diverse needs of children. The platform also includes worksheets and interactive quizzes to enhance understanding and encourage active participation among users.

Since February 2020, "A fost odată" has been approved by the Ministry of Education and Research as a learning tool for primary and secondary education, both special and mainstream, under approval number 25.894/I/12.03.2020. This official recognition highlights the platform's educational value and its relevance in the learning process.

The platform's content is accessible for free, available for both streaming and download, making it usable even without an internet connection. Additionally, audio materials are available as podcasts on platforms like iTunes and Spotify, offering flexibility in accessing educational resources. Through these resources, "A fost odată" supports inclusive education and facilitates equal access to high-quality educational materials for all children. Among its notable initiatives are "Români de poveste" (Famous Romanians) and "EDUboost," each with specific goals and content.

"Români de poveste" is a collection of audio stories showcasing prominent Romanian personalities from both the past and present. These stories are designed to familiarize children with historical and contemporary figures who have made significant contributions to Romanian culture and science. Each story is accompanied by an interactive quiz, allowing children to review and consolidate what they've learned. Additionally, the platform has organized online workshops, bringing together children from across the country to discuss and learn about these remarkable personalities.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

Ministry of Education - collaboration protocol 11674/31.08.2023

School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest - partnership agreement 25289/09.09.2024

Romania's National Commission for UNESCO - Patronage Agreement - 279/13.02.2024

OUTCOMES:

-Competencies developed according to

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning

The educational platform afostodata.ro aligns with several of these competences:

- Literacy Competence: Through its diverse collection of stories and educational materials, the platform enhances reading and comprehension skills, fostering a love for literature among children.
- Multilingual Competence: By offering content in multiple languages and formats, including sign language, it promotes language learning and appreciation of linguistic diversity.
- Digital Competence: As an online resource, it encourages the development of digital literacy by engaging children with interactive content and familiarizing them with digital tools.
- Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Competence: The platform's interactive quizzes and workshops cultivate critical thinking, self-reflection, and collaborative learning, essential for personal and social development.
- Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence: Initiatives like "Români de poveste" introduce children to significant cultural figures, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

OTHER COMPETENCIES:

- supports holistic development and lifelong learning for children

SOCIAL ADDED VALUE & IMPACTS :

The educational platform afostodata.ro generates significant social value by promoting inclusion, cultural awareness, and accessibility in learning. Key social impacts include:

1. Inclusion:

- **Accessibility for All:** By providing stories in multiple formats, including audio, video, and sign language, the platform ensures that children with and without hearing impairments can access educational content equally. This inclusivity encourages social equity and breaks down barriers in learning access.
- **Engaging Diverse Learners:** Through its interactive features, quizzes, and workshops, afostodata.ro actively engages children from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.

2. Cultural Awareness:

- **Celebrating National Heritage:** Initiatives such as *Români de poveste* introduce children to important figures and events in Romanian history and culture. This builds cultural pride and helps children develop an appreciation for their national heritage, connecting them to their roots in a meaningful way.
- **Encouraging Open-mindedness:** By presenting stories of diverse individuals from history, the platform broadens children's perspectives and teaches respect and empathy for different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences.

3. Educational and Social Engagement:

- **Community Involvement:** Workshops and interactive events on afostodata.ro bring children and families together, fostering a sense of shared purpose and mutual support. This community-centered approach helps create a supportive learning environment and encourages family involvement in children's education.
- **Promoting Lifelong Learning:** The platform emphasizes key competences that align with lifelong learning goals, such as personal development and social skills. By nurturing curiosity and a love for learning, afostodata.ro equips children with tools for continuous growth and social engagement.

In summary, afostodata.ro enhances social value by fostering inclusion, strengthening cultural connections, and encouraging lifelong learning, making it a meaningful educational resource for children and families.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

1. Barrier: Limited Access to Technology and Internet:

- Challenge: Not all children have access to the necessary devices (computers, tablets, smartphones) or reliable internet connections to use the platform.
- Strategies: Partnerships with Schools and Libraries to provide access to devices and internet, allowing children to use the platform in a supportive environment and Downloadable Content: offline access to stories, worksheets, and quizzes so users can download materials at school or public Wi-Fi locations and access them at home without needing continuous internet.

2. Barrier: Limited Awareness and Parental Support:

- Challenge: Parents or guardians may not be aware of the platform's resources or might not understand the value of digital learning for their children.
- Strategies: Community Outreach: events, workshops, and informational sessions to introduce families to the platform, explaining its benefits and demonstrating how to use it and Social Media Campaigns: Use social media to reach a broader audience, showcasing success stories, educational benefits, and testimonials from other parents and educators.

3. Limited Funding Opportunities:

- Educational initiatives often face challenges in identifying and securing adequate funding sources. Also numerous organizations vie for the same grants, making it difficult to obtain necessary funds.
- Strategies - Apply for grants from governmental bodies, educational foundations, and international organizations that support digital education and inclusion, Corporate Partnerships, Collaborate with companies interested in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, especially those focusing on education and technology.



THE NATIONAL CHAMBER CHOIR „MADRIGAL - MARIN CONSTANTIN”

MUSIC EDUCATION

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

“The Cantus Mundi National Program is Romania's largest social integration program through music for children, initiated by the renowned conductor Ion Marin and implemented by the National Chamber Choir “Madrigal – Marin Constantin”, an internationally renowned ensemble based in Romania, with a history spanning over 60 years. Launched in 2011 and officially recognized by the Romanian Government in 2014, the Cantus Mundi National Program has brought together 2,039 choirs under its umbrella, until 2024. Over 72,000 children from Romania and the diaspora, along with their conductors, participate in promoting choral singing throughout Romania, transcending barriers related to ethnicity, social status, and physical or mental abilities. This initiative builds complex cultural hubs, which are essential for the revitalization of our society.

Cantus Mundi aims to break down all barriers through music, forming a cultural community accessible to all children and young people. At the heart of the program is the goal of promoting free access to music education for every child and youngster in Romania.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION - Choral singing, as a group activity, supports the harmonious integration of children and young people, beyond ethnicity, religion, social background, or geographical or economic constraints.

CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTIVITY - Through choral singing, children and young people from various cultures in Romania and the diaspora build bridges of communication, relationships, and multicultural understanding.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT - Promoting choral movement in disadvantaged areas revitalizes communities culturally and encourages children and young people to participate in shared activities.

The Cantus Mundi National Program is a complex socio-cultural awareness initiative. Teachers and conductors benefit from choral education and teaching resources provided by the program. Therefore, diverse children and youth ensembles emerge and develop at local level and collaborate within the program for large-scale joint events: Earth Hour, Christmas Fairs, Cantus Mundi & Madrigal productions on major stages, and more.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

MINISTRY OF CULTURE:

Cantus Mundi is supported at the government level by the Ministry of Culture of Romania as a nationally significant program of the Madrigal Choir.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES:

Local institutions, school inspectorates, kindergartens, schools, and high schools allocate resources to implement the Cantus Mundi model at the local level.

LOCAL MUSIC EDUCATORS:

Conductors and music teachers dedicate time and energy to creating and developing music ensembles in their towns and villages, ensuring free access for children to music education activities, both within the school curriculum and as an extracurricular activity.

OUTCOMES:

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION COMPETENCE is the key competence developed through the Cantus Mundi National Program.

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS AND CONDUCTORS:

The Cantus Mundi online platform offers teachers and conductors of over 2,000 member choirs, free access to a vast digital library with over 2,500 music scores, advanced learning and choral management tools, and nationwide coordination features. Also, free choral conducting and management courses, are delivered by Madrigal and Cantus Mundi specialists.

CULTURAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Free educational workshops for children and youth are organized regularly within Cantus Mundi National Program. From choral, percussion, or blockflute workshops to summer schools and concerts, children and youth participate in a wide range of cultural projects. Over 13 years of Cantus Mundi experience demonstrate that future adults acquire essential life skills through music, especially when practiced collectively in choirs or instrumental ensembles. Children learn to work in a team and understand the needs of a group, they learn to breathe correctly, to listen, to socialize, to be creative and disciplined, to react quickly, to manage potential conflicts, they develop critical thinking and learn to express their emotions. They become culturally literate adults, and engaged participants in civic life.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

NO MUSIC CLASSES MOVEMENT – The initiative to remove music classes from the school curriculum was discouraged through the largest public campaign ever organized by Cantus Mundi, endorsed by artistic and academic personalities in Romania.

THE POOR FUNDING OF CULTURAL EDUCATION – Cantus Mundi team's efforts are focused both on carefully managing the existing resources, and creatively diversifying funding sources and engaging new stakeholders. The Cantus Mundi Forum, the largest event in Romania dedicated to cultural education, hosted by the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, periodically bringing together professionals and decision-makers from across Romania.



MARIN SORESCU NATIONAL THEATER OF CRAIOVA & SHAKESPEARE FOUNDATION

THEATRE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The 2024 Craiova International Shakespeare Festival celebrated its 30th anniversary since its founding in 1994, marking Romania's first international theatre event. Built on four pillars - international performances, scholarly conferences, student workshops, and literary initiatives - it has secured global recognition. Recent additions like educational theatre have increased community engagement, showcasing international performances for young audience. The 14th edition (May 16-26) featured 380 events from over 30 countries, with highlights like the "Shakespeare Village." This anniversary edition pays tribute to the festival's supporters while looking forward to inspiring and educating future generations and creating a solid bond between culture and education.

OBJECTIVES:

Global Cultural Exchange: Foster international dialogue by showcasing world-class performances that draw artists and audiences globally.

Fostering Theatre Excellence: Highlight diverse, exceptional productions, focusing on rare and iconic works seldom seen in Eastern Europe.

Educational Development: Provide skill-building workshops and masterclasses for students and young professionals in acting, directing, and criticism.

Intellectual Enrichment: Promote scholarly exchange through academic conferences, enhancing global understanding of Shakespearean and related theatre studies.

Community Engagement and Cultural Inclusion: Connect with local communities through inclusive programming like street theatre, ensuring the festival's status as a cultural cornerstone with international acclaim.

Celebration of Literary Culture: Enrich Craiova's cultural scene with exhibitions, book launches, and a focus on Shakespeare and classical literature.

Enhancing Romania's Global Theatre Reputation: Elevate Romania's global standing by positioning the festival as a benchmark for international theatre events.

Legacy Building: Honor 30 years of the festival's history, ensuring its lasting cultural impact while planning for future generations.

Cultural Tourism Promotion: Boost Craiova's economy and cultural prestige by attracting international visitors through the festival.

Innovation in Theatre Presentation: Experiment with immersive formats like the Shakespeare Village to offer modern, dynamic experiences of Shakespeare's works.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

University of Craiova: Supports young talent, student involvement, and provides academic resources, strengthening ties with the festival.

National University of Theatre Arts and Cinematography, Bucharest: Offers specialized training, contributing skilled performers and directors, thus elevating the festival's standards and promoting cultural exchange.

Dolj County Schools Administration: Bridges cultural institutions and the educational system, integrating theatre into curricula to enrich students' cultural education.

BRITISH COUNCIL: CONNECTS BRITISH AND ROMANIAN EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS, OFFERING ACCESS TO BRITISH CULTURAL RESOURCES AND FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND EXPOSURE.

OUTCOMES:

Since its debut in 1994, the festival has brought globally acclaimed performances to Romania, introducing audiences to diverse interpretations of Shakespeare and bridging cultural divides. Cultural inclusion is central to the festival's mission. By hosting artists, directors, and theater companies from around the world, it offers Romanian audiences access to international theater seldom seen locally. The festival's collaborations with institutions like the International Association of Theatre Critics enhance its reach and credibility, bringing distinguished scholars, critics, and students into an inclusive cultural dialogue. Programs such as youth workshops foster cross-cultural learning, inspiring young talent to explore global theatrical traditions. Community engagement has grown with events like street theater and "Shakespeare Village," which bring Shakespeare's world into public spaces, making it accessible and relevant to diverse audiences.

The Shakespeare International Festival in Craiova significantly contributes to the cultural and social development of the community, aligning with the European Union Council's recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning. It promotes intercultural education, stimulates critical thinking, and encourages artistic expression, creating an accessible and inclusive space for various social groups, thereby strengthening community cohesion.

A key aspect of the festival is the stimulation of entrepreneurial and collaborative skills by encouraging the participation of the independent artistic sector. Thus, the festival provides a valuable platform for artists and cultural companies, fostering collaboration and innovation in the theatrical field. Additionally, cultural education is enhanced through a partnership with the National University of Theatre and Film "I. L. Caragiale," contributing to the training of the new generation of performing arts professionals.

Through these initiatives, the festival enriches participants' competences, both in terms of cultural expression and in developing the skills needed for success in the modern labor market. Its impact goes beyond the cultural sphere, becoming a catalyst for social inclusion as well as personal and professional development.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

Barriers: Limited resources for independent artists; lack of community awareness and engagement, especially in rural areas; educational gaps among young performers; language barriers in international collaborations; and resistance from traditional institutions to involve emerging artists.

Strategies: Provide grants and sponsorships to support smaller artistic groups; run outreach campaigns with free tickets and transport for underrepresented communities; enhance partnerships with the National University of Theatre and Film for training; offer translation services for international participants; and promote joint projects between established institutions and new artists to foster inclusivity and innovation. These measures can broaden the festival's impact, promoting cultural inclusivity and professional growth.



EDUCAB

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION COMPETENCE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The goal of the project is to promote to public librarians in Romania a new methodology for the engagement of citizens into democratic practices and behaviors in rural and small urban communities in Romania. The idea of the project, initiated and developed by EduCaB (educab.org) is to strengthen democracy in local communities by promoting civic engagement, citizenship competence, and providing access to information and resources through public libraries, ultimately contributing to the development of a more inclusive and resilient society. The methodology we use is called 'Democracy within all policies / nurturing democracy ecosystems through public libraries'. Our approach in EduCaB, towards democracy in small communities is rather centered on breaking the concept of democracy into operational indicators, to which citizens can easily relate, in their recurrent practices. We then can see what resources are available to be used that we can build on; also, we can more easily see what is of higher importance to the inhabitants of that particular place. We have looked at 47 indices, and over 350 specific indicators, as captured in the research work on democracy of V-Dem Institute, the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden (<https://www.v-dem.net/>).

OBJECTIVES:

1. Train 20 public librarians into the methodology: The first objective of the project is to provide training to 20 public librarians in Romania on the 'Democracy within all policies / nurturing democracy ecosystems through public libraries' methodology. The training covers the key principles, concepts, and practices of the methodology, as well as providing hands-on experience in its application. The goal is to equip librarians with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively implement the methodology in their respective communities.

2. Prepare 20 matrices using the methodology, tailored on local realities: The second objective of the project is to develop 38 matrices using the methodology, which are tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of each community. These matrices serve as a framework for assessing the current level of democracy and civic engagement in each community, and provide guidance for developing effective action plans.

3. Elaborate 60 action plans (three projects per community): The third objective of the project is to develop 114 action plans (three per community) based on the matrices. The action plans are developed in collaboration with local stakeholders, including community members, leaders, and organizations. The goal is to identify specific projects and initiatives that can be implemented to enhance democratic practices and civic engagement in each community.

4. Start implementing 20 projects in 20 communities: The final objective of the project is to implement 76 projects in 38 communities based on the action plans developed. These projects focus on a range of activities, including community organizing, education and awareness-raising, cultural events, and infrastructure development. The goal is to strengthen democratic practices and civic engagement in each community, and to create a network of communities across Romania that are committed to promoting democracy and civic engagement. Overall, the scope of the project is to equip public librarians with the knowledge and skills needed to implement a new methodology for promoting democracy and civic engagement in communities across Romania, and to develop and implement effective action plans that will enhance democratic practices and civic engagement in each community.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

EduCaB – initiator and program lead EduCaB is an international inter-institutional, interdisciplinary program, methodology and platform, focused on nurturing non-formal educational, cultural and knowledge focused ecosystems in hundreds of small communities in various countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Central America.

Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) – partner Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) is an international community of scholars and researchers working to confront the rules and practices that perpetuate global poverty and advocate for targeted, evidence-based reforms. In a “post-truth”, “alternative facts” world, never has our work been more important.

Yale Global Justice Program – partner Launched in 2008, the Global Justice Program unites an interdisciplinary group of scholars with the aim of taking morality seriously in shaping foreign policy and in negotiating transnational institutional arrangements. The program has a special interest in the evolution of severe poverty and its relationship with public health.

Kettering Foundation – partner

Kettering Foundation - partner 3 The Charles F. Kettering Foundation advances inclusive democracies by empowering people with the knowledge and tools to build and preserve resilient democratic systems.

The network of public libraries in Romania - partner The network of public libraries in Romania spans both urban and rural areas, covering over 1,500 communities. It plays an essential role not only in cultural, educational, and social development but also in fostering connections within and between communities, whether geographical or based on shared practices.

OUTCOMES:

Citizenship competence is tackled with priority by our methodology and program, but also cultural awareness and expression competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, and entrepreneurship competence. -Other Competencies Expected Outcomes and Impact Outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge of democratic practices and civic engagement in small communities.
- Improved access to resources on democracy through public libraries.
- Increased community participation in local decision-making processes and public forums.
- Strengthened social and civic infrastructure to support democratic habits.
- Improved transparency and accountability in local governance through public scrutiny.

Results:

- Launch of 20 democracy programs at public libraries in target communities.
- Creation of educational materials on democratic practices for residents.
- Participation of 300-400 citizens in decision-making processes across 20 communities.
- Implementation of 20 community-led initiatives addressing local issues.
- Strengthened collaboration between local governments, communities, and external stakeholders.

Impact:

- Elevated civic engagement and democratic participation.
- Improved governance through public involvement and scrutiny.
- Recognition of local customs as democratic practices, reducing the "democracy distance."
- Sustainable community-led solutions for local challenges.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

Barriers: 1. Perception Gap: Democracy often seen as abstract, focused on institutions, voting, and media, disconnected from daily life. 2. Insufficient Civic Education: Focus on theoretical concepts, failing to translate democratic principles into relatable habits and behaviors. 3. Financial Constraints: Limited NGO funding to support democracy-promotion initiatives. 4. Global Democratic Setbacks: Authoritarian trends and extremist movements undermining civic values. Strategies: 1. Localized Programs: Use public libraries as "miniature Agoras" to host workshops and activities linking democracy to daily behaviors and rights. 2. Innovative Civic Education: Shift from theory to practical, community-driven civic engagement programs. 3. Collaborative Funding: Partner with local and international stakeholders to secure funding. 4. Community Hubs: Strengthen libraries as trusted spaces for fostering dialogue and inclusivity.

COMIC OPERA FOR CHILDREN

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION COMPETENCE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

"Behind the Curtain" Tours immerse participants in the vibrant world of theatre by offering guided visits to backstage areas, including dressing rooms, technical spaces, and the stage itself. This initiative demystifies the production process, highlighting the collaborative efforts of artists, technicians, and the audience. The objective is to foster a deeper appreciation of performing arts, encouraging cultural literacy and engagement. Interactive elements allow participants to witness live demonstrations of theatrical technologies, such as lighting and set design, and to engage with professionals about their roles and experiences. This programme makes opera and theatre accessible, inspiring interest and understanding of these art forms among all age groups.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

This program involves the active participation of theatre professionals, including directors, performers, and technical staff, who contribute their expertise and insights to create an authentic experience. External partnerships with local schools and cultural organizations help reach a broader audience, ensuring the program is inclusive and impactful.

OUTCOMES:

Our methodology and program prioritise citizenship competence, cultural awareness and expression competence, personal, social, and learning to learn competence, and entrepreneurship competence.

- Cultural Awareness and Expression: Participants gain an appreciation for the intricate processes behind theatrical productions, enriching their understanding of cultural heritage.

- Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Competence: Interactive engagement fosters adaptability, curiosity, and a proactive attitude towards cultural learning.

-Other Competencies

- Enhanced communication and critical thinking skills through dialogue and observation.

- Broadened perspective on teamwork and problem-solving in artistic contexts.

-Social added value & impacts (e.g., inclusion, cultural awareness).

- Promotes inclusion by making theatrical knowledge accessible to diverse audiences.

Strengthens community ties with cultural institutions, encouraging lifelong engagement with the arts.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

A key challenge is coordinating tours around the operational needs of the theatre. This is mitigated by scheduling tours during non-peak times and maintaining clear communication with production teams. Another challenge is ensuring accessibility for underserved groups, addressed by offering subsidized tours and collaboration with community organizations to promote participation.

THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM TIMISOARA

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION COMPETENCE

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION:

The National Art Museum Timisoara has hosted an extraordinary exhibition of Victor Brauner's work, entitled *Victor Brauner, Inventions and Magic*, between February 17th and May 28th, 2023. The painter, a surrealist from the interwar period, was not very familiar to the Romanian public, let alone to school children. Nevertheless, groups of students were brought to see the exhibition, most of them having little or no knowledge of art, surrealism, or Victor Brauner's life and career in a profoundly antisemitic Europe.

While the initiative of bringing young people to the museum is, in principle, commendable, without prior preparation such visits risk having limited impact — or even a counterproductive effect — by alienating young audiences from culture. Repeated experiences of this kind can gradually foster indifference or even rejection towards art, which is precisely the opposite of what such initiatives intend to achieve.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT:

The main partner was the Art Museum in Timisoara, who hosted the exhibition and invited people to visit. As for logistics, the main voice was the French Institute who brokered the borrowing of the works of art and offered a moral guarantee for the external owners of the pictures/ photos. Last but not least, the schools who brought their pupils to the museum, during the "Different kind of School" weeks. But there were too many groups and an incredible lack of space to have the children sit and listen the eventual introduction and familiarize them with the topic. Rather, they were showed all in a run and with some stories, not always understood, they took pictures and left.

OUTCOMES:

Competencies developed according to

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning

A. literacy in the field of art as well as in the atmosphere existing in interwar Europe.

B. Cultural awareness of the style, main questions in the epoch, reasons to pain in a certain way

-Other Competencies

A good taste for qualitative art and for the artistic movements that had marked the European culture. How to ask questions in this field, and how answers are prepared or provided. The literacy in using an artistic language to seek and formulate opinions, positions, arguments.

-Social added value & impacts (e.g., inclusion, cultural awareness).

With the works of such great personalities as Victor Brauner, any kind of education might be possible if properly unfold. Unfortunately, even the persons in charge from the museum were not really aware of the details, of their consequences, and thus, the impact of their presence was almost void. WE are still unprepared to openly speak about the tragedies and traumas in the interwar Romania or Europe, how they had shaped lives and art or what is to keep in mind from their entire spiritual turmoil. All was seen as if Victor Brauner was our contemporary or lived in any possible era, that is out of context, out of the aesthetic debates of that time. As a consequence, children (of all ages) took pictures with naked bodies or exotic animals without being aware what the message was meant to be.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS:

A more rigorous selection of museum “cultural educators,” combined with mandatory ongoing training and periodic evaluations; the involvement of academics with expertise relevant to each exhibition; the production of age-appropriate educational materials; and the inclusion of introductory art courses in middle school curricula.





