

Report on Romanian Local Workshops Educational Programmes for Seniors

The **two local workshops**, entitled “Educational programmes for seniors”, were organized by the **Centre of Professional Training in Culture (CPPC)** in **March and April 2012** within the ASLECT project. Both workshops served a common **purpose**: to develop the knowledge and skills of cultural and educational professionals working or willing to work with seniors. By introducing them to methods and tools framed within 15 good practice projects implemented at the European level, the participants had the opportunity to build new skills which will enable them to further facilitate the seniors’ involvement in cultural and educational activities and in society as a whole. The approaches presented during the two training sessions fostered a learning and communication environment suitable for the needs of senior citizens, encouraging them to become both receivers and transmitters of knowledge within their organizations.

The first workshop took place at the Centre of Professional Training in Culture in Bucharest on the 8th and 9th of March 2012. The event gathered around 20 participants: seniors, cultural professionals from libraries and from the Bucharest National Opera, as well as members of NGOs working with seniors. Using interactive methods, the trainers sought to valorize the educational experience of each participant. During the training sessions the participants tackled **topics** such as:

- the context of cultural organizations and their educational activities;
- profiles of seniors;
- the characteristics of the seniors’ learning process.

The participants, together with the trainers, analyzed and assessed some of the 15 good practice cases identified by the ASLECT partners in an earlier stage of the project. The discussions focused also on methods and instruments to increase the engagement of seniors in educational activities and in the training processes. More **practical activities** involved:

- stakeholders mapping;
- describing the relationship between a mentor and a mentee;
- identifying the necessary skills of a trainer working with seniors;
- developing drafts for programmes targeting seniors that could be implemented subsequently for the beneficiaries presented by organizations in the workshops.

The second workshop was organized at “George Barițiu” Public Library in Brașov, on the 23rd and 24th of April 2012. The participants attending the training sessions were seniors, employees of the Brașov Public Library, librarians, social workers, museum educators and geriatricians. The **analysis and discussions** followed a structure similar to the structure of the first workshop:

- the context of cultural and educational organizations;
- characteristics of the activities developed within the participants’ organizations;
- assessment of good practice cases;

- identifying means and channels to transfer knowledge from the good practice cases analyzed to new programs designed by the participants' organizations;
- identifying means to mentor seniors in order to develop activities for other seniors or for other target groups during an educational process;
- creating impact and sustainability of the educational programmes by developing an action plan;
- identifying the skills necessary for a good mentor to organize this type of activities.

When working with the participants, the trainers involved in the two local workshops used **interactive methods** such as stakeholders mapping, aquarium group, personal learning plans, didactic games, debates, case studies, spaced lectures and work groups. At the end of the workshops, the participants made a few **suggestions** for a better involvement of seniors in the community life both as learners and educators. Some of the suggestions collected will be included in the set of recommendations addressed to cultural and educational organizations:

- empowering more stakeholders responsible for implementing programmes for and with seniors;
- a proper development of programmes with seniors is facilitated by their socialization during the meetings;
- developing long-term sustainable programmes for seniors;
- identifying best ways to promote such programmes;
- in rural areas, programmes on subjects such as identity values can be developed by organizations or by the Church;
- developing a partnership with the war veterans' NGO and the County Union of Pensioners, part of the Brasov County Council, in order to better promote educational programmes;
- building partnerships among those organizations which develop programmes for seniors;
- facilitating interactive group activities;
- helping seniors identify their own skills;
- offering seniors a real motivation to participate in educational programmes.

All the participants in the Bucharest and Braşov training sessions were encouraged to build educational activities targeting seniors within their organizations; the starting point of such activities should be the knowledge and skills gathered during the workshops. Out of these organizations, two will receive also financial support from the ASLECT project in order to develop a three-month programme with seniors in the very near future.