

Annual Report

2008

Who we are:

“Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21” is a Romanian non-governmental association, of national interest, not-for-profit and politically or religiously unaffiliated. The association was established in February 2003.

The fundamental goal of APSD - Agenda 21 is to support Romanian policies and efforts to promote and implement in Romania the objectives of Sustainable Development.

In order to achieve this goal, the organization’s mission is:

- To develop partnerships with local authorities in order to valorize local initiatives and to increase efficiency of local governance;
- To promote human rights education activities, focused on civic education and democratic citizenship;
- To strengthen the role of social actors with high potential in enforcement of sustainable development: children and young people, local communities, private sector and business community, scientific community, mass media;
- To provide assistance and support for marginalized groups or groups at risk of social exclusion.

The key concept of APSD is the Sustainable Development. A secure and prosperous future can’t be built without sustainable development.

The privileged *target groups* are children and young people. The education and development opportunities offered to children and young people are the guarantee of a sustainable society.

Volunteer activities in the benefit of the community are one of the association’s *fundamental values*.



“I know that the door to progress can only be opened from the inside. That is why, together with the team of our organization, we look carefully upon every project we implement. Each accomplishment requires initiative, creativity, courage and perseverance. We walk down unbeaten paths. We follow our mission and we are not afraid of obstacles. We dream to develop our agenda as much as possible.

By the projects we have implemented, especially in the fields of education and public administration, we are convinced that the economical, social, political and institutional environment has become friendlier. Having as purpose a sustainable life, we believe that our

work can be found in the coordinates of this country.

This is us: a team that moves on under the motto once stated by a wise man: «We don't conquer the mountains, but ourselves».” (PhD Alexandru Taşnadi – Economics Faculty within Economic Studies Academy, Bucharest, President of the association)”

2008 – Figures and achievements

- **in May 2009 we celebrated 6 years of existence**

In the **Argument** presented to the founder members in the first General Assembly, I was trying to define the association by those characteristics that made it a distinct entity in the Romanian civil society. I will mention a couple of the statements I made then and I will let the present Report to prove if they are sustained by the achieved results.

Nina Cugler, Executive President

“Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21” **aims:**

- **To implement projects** that respond to the real development needs on local level. Assistance programs to prepare the local communities for handling the new tasks related to their economic and social development, and especially for strengthening the institutional capacity and for developing citizens' participative skills. Implementation programs to efficiently valorize the local resources and **to identify and obtain internal and external financing sources.**
- **To bring together experts** trained in projects' management and elaboration that work professional and honest and are a credible and trustworthy proof for those financing us concerning the use of the funds exclusively for fulfilling the objectives proposed by the project.
- **To pay a special attention to educating and training citizens** in order for them to understand the importance of their involvement, so they could be themselves the main actors of their town, village or community development process.

Speaking about the association, **Florina Pavel**, coordinator of young volunteers projects within the organization, stated:

“The success of this organization lies in the wish of changing the habit, still present in numerous communities, of complaining in stead of taking action. The association's image and brand are based exclusively on the team's capacity to elaborate projects and strategies meant to give viable solutions to the local communities' problems. Volunteers' work, and especially encouraging the youngest of them to express themselves and participate in the projects' implementation, is one of the issues that gives to the association the openness towards beneficiaries and credibility.”

- **The association continued its partnership with the National Agency of Civil Servants in the field of ethic policies, public institutions' transparency and involving citizens in the decision making process.**
- **The association was represented, by its Executive President, at the 5th European Council Conference on the quality of public services, organized in Paris, in November 2008**
- The association was elected **to participate in the elaboration of the NGOs alternative Report** for the Third Country Report of Romania regarding the promotion and respect for children rights, in accordance with the UN Convention on children's rights.
- **APSD – Agenda 21 supported the activity of the Sustainable Development Promotion Network**, which aims, as stated by the 24 founder members, “to create a favorable context for making partnerships between the network's members, to share

experiences and to provide support and expertise in the fields of sustainable development. The network has an informal and open character. The network's members can be non-governmental organizations, local authorities and public institutions.

- **APSD – Agenda 21 became a member of the Romania ENAR group (European Network Against Racism)**, part of Europe ENAR Network, a network of NGOs that promotes the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, the equal treatment of European citizens and that connects the local, regional and national initiatives with the European ones.

At national level, the network aims at facilitating the exchange of information, experience and good practices, the information process regarding the European policies on development, at encouraging the dialogue between civil society and the EU Member States regarding the political agenda on racism and anti-discrimination.

- The collaboration with partners from Member States of the European Union was extended.

The association became a partner of Arciragazzi Liguria Association for the implementation of "ABC – Youth Participation" project.

Two project proposals were submitted to the European Commission's "Development Education" Program, the association being partner together with another 7 associations from European countries and from in development countries. The "Education for social justice" project was approved and it will be implemented starting June 2009.

16 representatives of the Association's Volunteers Group participated in a youth exchange in Italy, Genoa, and four young people participated in a training on human rights in Germany.

A training on education for sustainable development took place in Chieti, Italy and it reunited 6 youngsters that coordinated activities within "Pupils' education for a sustainable lifestyle" project.

Important figures:

- Over 8000 beneficiaries of the implemented projects;
- The make up of a support group for the association that includes 30 young volunteers, pupils and students;
- Over 40 mass media reports;
- The elaboration of the indicators system for monitoring children's rights in schools and of a Strategy project regarding the education for human rights in schools;
- The continuation of the partnerships for promoting human rights and for the democratic development of society with the National Agency of Civil Servants, Romanian Radio Society, UNICEF, the Federation of NGOs active in the field of Protecting Children's Rights, Romania e-Gateway;
- Partnerships with 18 public institutions and authorities from Cluj, Mehedinți, Tulcea, Vaslui and Bucharest for the elaboration of Citizen's Charter, document that establishes quality standards for the services offered to the citizens;
- The continuation of the partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation for developing in common education projects for children and youngsters;
- The development of volunteer work in the benefit of the community, by making up a group of 30 monitors of public services from 18 public institutions and authorities.

Projects

1. Transparency and participation in public administration

Phare 2005 Project – Strengthening democracy in Romania, developed in partnership by Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21 and the National Agency of Civil Servants.

Media partners: RRS and the Local Administration and Economy Magazine, published by the Economic Tribune.

Locations: Bucharest and Bacău, Hunedoara, Sibiu and Teleorman counties.

Project description

Finalized in September 2008, the project aimed at improving the organization of the participative democracy exercise on local level by involving the citizens in the decision making process and by increasing the transparency level.

For this purpose, the project took over and applied the C.L.E.A.R. European methodology (Can, Like, Enabled, Asked, Responsive), a diagnosis tool focused on participative activities initiated or supported by the municipality. The project was implemented in its pilot phase in Bacău, Hunedoara, Sibiu and Teleorman counties and in Bucharest, and it involved citizens, civil servants, NGOs representatives and mass media (approximately 10.000 people, direct and indirect beneficiaries).

The main activities consisted of the evaluation of 18 institutions involved in the project regarding the institutional transparency level and the increase level related to the involvement of citizens in the local decision making process and it also consisted of implementing a coherent series of information activities targeting citizens, regarding the most efficient means of participation in public life, realizing the information campaign within Citizen's Day organized in each location, interviews, surveys, radio shows, training 13 new NGOs, presenting European models that at the end of the project constituted a sum of proposals meant to ensure, by generalization, the reach of the European standards in the Romanian public administration. The project was disseminated in another 10 counties. The main partner was the National Agency of Civil Servants.

Period: December 2007 – September 2008



Results:

Some conclusions of the monitoring activities, included in the report elaborated within the project: *“The transparency of public institutions and citizens’ participation in the decision making process” and in the good practices guide.*

Participation in voting

Participation in voting is not very high, the lowest level being registered in Bucharest, the city with the highest number of inhabitants and the most economically developed. The higher levels of participation in the elections process are registered in the poorer counties. Also, the elders are voting in a much bigger percentage than the young people.

Except for the participation in voting (to which most often more than half of the electors participate in), other forms of participation are rather the appanage of some minority interested groups, as the pre-elections period is the most intense from the information point of view: both by the authorities through electoral campaigns, as well as by citizens through mass media in order to make a choice.

Forms of involvement in the decision making process

The most probable form of involvement in the decision making process at local level is submitting a petition, both in the citizens’ view (23%) and in the civil servants’ view (58%). There is a low level of involving the citizens in the decision making process (in over half of the reports the public participation is estimated as low or very low) and an almost exclusive interest for solving the personal problems when interacting with the public administration.

In the institutions’ view, among the least involved in public life there are young people, elderly people, religious and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. These persons have less resource and they aim first of all at satisfying some basic needs, fact that influences the period of time dedicated to social activities.

Elements that determine the involvement

In the civil servants’ view, the main elements that contribute to a low involvement of citizens are the lack of time (most of them, 38%, believe that citizens have little spare time) and their belief that their opinions are not taken into consideration by the local administration representatives (two thirds of the respondents).

Citizens feel rather part of the local community they belong to (neighborhood or locality), than of the county or country in general. However, the differences aren’t big, and the percentages are pretty low, indicating the existence of a weak, confuse feeling of local identity.

The initiatives that the local administration could implement for increasing the level of citizen involvement in the decision making process are rather unknown for the majority of citizens.

Most of the civil servants that were interviewed (33%) stated that citizens’ views matter only to a small extent in the decision making process.



The report was multiplied in 300 copies and it was disseminated within the seminar for NGOs and within the final Conference, as well as by NACS to other local public institutions interested. The report was also disseminated in an electronic form to the participants in the final Conference and to other partners of the association that requested the document. It was also posted on the association's and NACS' websites. Plus, **the report was translated in English and presented by NACS in the autumn meeting of the Office for Democratic Institutions Directorate within the European Council.**

Also, the English version of the report was multiplied and presented within the **5Q Conference - The Citizens in the Heart of Public Administration** of the European Council, organized in Paris, during October 19th – 21st. The report, together with the *Guide to good practices* developed within the project, were documents included in the materials package presented by Romania at the Conference. The conference was attended by 1200 representatives from all Member States of CoE.

As a consequence of the projects' results, the project manager, Mrs. Nina Cugler, was invited as facilitator in one of the section activities of the **CoE Conference – Agora**, dedicated to debating the problem of citizens' rights and responsibilities for improving the services offered by the public institutions.

Opinions of the volunteers involved in the project

"The response to the initiative was generally positive, the citizens wanted to know more about the current project, about the previous ones and about Citizen's Day, the distribution of leaflets was also appreciated, as they offered more credibility ... The institution is identified with the man, but citizens, especially the youngsters, started to look at the institutional change and transparency as issues that are under the responsibility of the institution and not just under the intervention of a person acting as a savor.", Cătălina Neagu, monitor, Bucharest

"In conclusion, I think that for starters education is a very important chapter, where we should inform and counsel more, to inform citizens about their opportunities and even more, to resort to NGOs in order for them to organize training sessions both for citizens and young people from the rural environment and perhaps certainly from the urban areas.

If there is no knowledge on a subject and without readiness nothing is possible, unity, honesty, will are some of the basic characteristics each of us should have, to choose the hard way in order to learn, to get involved in order to know and relate.", George Cune, monitor, Sibiu

"The most important issues underlined in the observations were the citizens' interest in public administration and the time they stated they are willing to spend for contributing to the good development of the public administration.", Alexandru Savin, monitor, Bucharest.

2. Public Ethics – mechanisms and instruments, project financed from European Council funds

Aim: to adapt the European model of ethic policies to the present conditions in Romania in order to strengthen the capacity of the local public institutions and authorities, to evaluate the way in which the ethic principles and standards are respected in their own policies and to elaborate strategies meant to ensure the improvement of public ethics.

Partners:

European Council, Expertise Center for Public Administration Reform
National Agency of Civil Servants
Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21

Objectives:

- To identify a national public ethics level as a compare system for local public authorities;
- To provide assistance to local authorities in order to raise their standards to optimal ones;
- To provide an opportunity for local authorities to take responsibility for their own improvement;

Locations:

Prahova and Timiș Local County Councils
 Bacău and Pucioasa Local Councils
 Teleorman Prefecture

Period:

October 2007 – June 2008

Results:

Finalized in June 2008, the project aimed at adapting the European model of ethic policies to the present conditions in Romania and to lead to the elaboration of a national evaluation system of the public institutions in what concerns respecting the ethic standards and principles. The participant institutions were: Prahova and Timiș Local County Councils, Bacău and Pucioasa City Halls and Teleorman Prefecture. The main partner was the traditional partner for public administration projects: the National Agency of Civil Servants.

In this respect, a standard compendium was created within the project for the evaluation and self-evaluation of the public institutions partners in the project. The activities developed aimed at adapting the European model to the local background, at realizing a workshop for analyzing the European tools, at training 15 peer-reviewers within a training session that would pay visits at local level for identifying the good practices and disseminating the information, the final conference.



The results of these activities were evaluation reports, activity plans for each institution involved in the project, 3 national cards adapted for each type of local institution / authority, printed in 300 copies, examples of good practices that were included in the Local Level Ethic Initiatives Handbook.

The score-cards were disseminated by NACS, Romanian Municipalities Association and Local County Councils, to the local institutions and authorities, both in a printed form, as well as in an electronic form.

3. Citizens' Charter, PHARE 2006 project – Increasing the civil society's role in Romania's integration process



Description:

The aim of the project is to increase the civil society's role in promoting the principles of good governance and the citizens' participation in the elaboration process of local level policies. 1200 citizens, 30 volunteers and 1000 civil servants from 10 local public institutions and authorities from Cluj, Mehedinți, Tulcea, Vaslui Counties and from Bucharest will be involved in the elaboration of Citizens' Charter and in the constitution of a Prizing System for good practices concerning the involvement of citizens in the institutional reform and decisional transparency process. The initiative will be based on and it will adapt European models in the field. In this respect, the project will ensure the transfer of expertise and know-how from two EU Member States: UK and Holland. The experience will also be disseminated in another 15 counties through NACS and the Romanian Municipalities and Cities Associations. The main partner in the project will be the National Agency of Civil Servants. RRS is the media partner in the project.

Period:

December 2008 – October 2009

Activities:

The activities are built on a series of successive steps necessary for the elaboration of Citizens' Charter. They have a progressive character, starting with the conference for launching the project, local level launches, selecting and preparing the target groups: volunteers and public servants in order to elaborate the charters.

The project was launched within a **press conference**, a major part in its promotion being played by the promotion materials elaborated within the project, namely **the flyer** and **the poster**. The project team traveled to each location for organizing together with the local partners the launch of the project at local level.

The 30 **volunteers**, selected through the Volunteer bulletin, of the local level partner organizations, including through the NGOs with which the beneficiary was partner in previous projects, benefited from a **training session** on the specific laws body on the reform of the administration, focusing on the transparency laws in the administration act and on the statute of civil servants, basic elements of an efficient communication, the methodology for elaborating the

Citizens' Charter and monitoring procedures. An expert from Holland was also invited to the training, as Holland is a country where the Citizens' Charter is already operational.



A **training session** on the methodology and phases for the elaboration of Citizens' Charter was organized in Azuga, for a period of three days. 30 **civil servants** (two representatives from each institution involved in the project) were invited to the training. A lecturer from UK was invited for training the civil servants, as UK is the first country that elaborated and already applies the Citizens' Charter.

On the latter training the first radio show on Citizens' Charter was also realized within the European Integration Files show, to which the guests were NACS president, Mr. Andras Szakal and the foreign expert, Mr. Roy Stephenson, Policy Project Team, Cabinet Office of Great Britain.

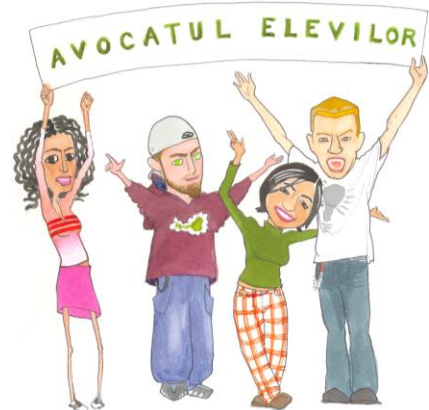
Expected results:

- Citizens' Charter elaborated by 18 public authorities and institutions from Cluj, Mehedinți, Tulcea, Vaslui Counties and from Bucharest;
- 1000 civil servants included in the self-evaluation process;
- 5 shows included in the European Integration Files radio show, realized by RRS;
- 2.000 flyers and 1.000 posters used for the project dissemination and for informing the citizens;
- 2 reports elaborated based on the interviews with the citizens and on the self-evaluation realized by the civil servants, printed in 500 copies each;
- Setting up a system for identifying and promoting the good practices in the field of good governance at local level, where citizens and civil society are included, disseminated at national level;
- Producing an interactive data base for promoting and exchanging good practices;
- Promoting the good practices through the Good Practices Handbook, produced in electronic format and disseminated through 300 DVDs;
- 3 prizes awarded to the best good practices projects;
- Presenting within the final Conference the experience gained through the project to 15 new local institutions and authorities, with the aim of multiplying it;
- 2 press conferences aiming at ensuring the visibility of the project.

4. Student's Ombudsman (4th year of implementation), August 2008 – February 2009

Student's Ombudsman is a pilot project that aims to create and implement in schools an institution capable to assure the knowledge, promotion and respect for children and youth rights. The project is co-financed by UNICEF Office in Romania.

In its fourth year of implementation, 2008, the project focused on ensuring a sustainable development by creating a series of monitoring indicators for four of the children's rights.



Objectives

- Identifying the vulnerable areas in what concerns respecting children's rights in schools;
- The harmonization of *The Organization and Operating Regulations of the Pre-University Education Institutions* with the provisions of UN Convention and the specific objectives of the Student's Ombudsman project;
- The elaboration of a series of monitoring indicators for children's rights in schools;
- Establishing the relations between Students' Councils and Student's Ombudsman and agreeing upon the specific responsibilities.

The **main activities** consisted of meetings with the experts group and realizing workshops with all the important actors involved in order to strengthen the partnerships and the dialogue among the teachers and pupils, as well as to present the project's stage of development at local level.

In the first workshop in Bucharest (November 14th), Mrs. **Rodica Cherciu**, general inspector within MERI, stated that the Student's Ombudsman project was well received by an important number of schools. So far, at county level, there are 300 schools that are implementing the project, and in Bucharest it is implemented in 71 schools.

Also, she stated that the structures could function also as initiative centers that would draw the school's attention on prevention activities, alternative solutions for the prevention and decrease of the infringement cases of children rights in schools. She pointed out the potential of the project to ensure in schools the educational democratic environment that would lead to a conduct based on respect for all parties involved.

Viorica Petre and Paula Mihai presented two models of activities for multiplying the project in Buzău and Tulcea Counties.

Viorica Petre – inspector on educative work for Tulcea County, presented the way she disseminated the information on Student's Ombudsman project at county level, the monitoring process of all the schools on the implementation of the Student's Ombudsman project and a good practice example from Topolog School.

Paula Mihai - inspector on educative work for Buzău County presented the Student's Ombudsman Caravan Action Plan and the way the project was presented within the "**Building a Europe for and with children**" Conference, **organized in Stockholm by the European Council**, during October 8th – 10th.



The conference was attended by 30 delegations from the Member States. The Student's Ombudsman project was selected out of 70 applications submitted under the category projects regarding the child's opinion and participation. The conference was opened by Her Majesty, Queen Silvia of Sweden, and **one of the conclusions of the European Council's conference was to encourage all governments to set up Children's Ombudsman**, and in this context, we consider that Student's Ombudsman is a commendable initiative at European level.

In Bucharest, the Student's Ombudsman was introduced in the SIBM's (School Inspectorate of Bucharest Municipality) Education Strategy and it was included as an evaluation indicator in the evaluation and control activities within schools. A Student's Ombudsman Commission is functioning as well within the Municipal Students Council.

The second workshop was held in Cluj (February 13th - 14th) and it resulted in significant proposals for a better basis of the papers that regulate the organization and functioning of schools in what concerns human / children rights.



It was established that Student's Ombudsman is a structure that operates at school level and that has a convergent object of activity, but different from the responsibilities of the pupils council. Student's Ombudsman has the mission to promote pupil's rights in schools and to identify the necessary solutions for preventing their infringement, namely respecting them. At city, county or national level, the pupils councils can set up commissions to ensure the exchange of good practices, information sessions, training the members, elaborating the analysis materials that would present the situation at city/county/national level, cases that have a higher incidence of infringing the pupils rights in schools, methods for preventing them and solving them.

Proposals were made in reference to:

- The elaboration of the project's expansion methodology to the secondary school
- The elaboration of an Education Strategy for human / child rights in schools

Participants' opinions:

"For more than three years the Student's Ombudsman has represented a challenging, but also a rewarding source for me. The reasons can be: the platform created that allowed the progressive development of the project in live, interactive, creative ways. The project itself is a model for communication, non-discrimination, involvement, responsibility."

Ioan Sterea, teacher

"The Student's Ombudsman project is an absolute incredible experience, beneficent both for us, the ombudsmen, as well as for the students. Besides the fact that we protected pupils and human rights in the school, we all gained experience and confidence, we had the opportunity to interact with the education inspectors and UNICEF representatives. Also, this activity made us feel encouraged and privileged for being listened to in such a well organized framework."

Daală Mihaela, N.C. Mihai Eminescu, Buzău

"In my opinion, Student's Ombudsman is a daring project that tries to build up a human rights culture in schools. Student's Ombudsman aimed to transform an ideal in reality: namely to go from a stale mentality that limits the youngsters' freedom of expression to a democratic one that unconditionally supports the young people in their attempt to express their opinion. SO reaches another sensible and maximum interest area, namely the reports established in the educational trinomial, focusing on the manner in which these can be improved. The ombudsman must be

perceived as a democratization tool for the Romanian educational system, a method for educating the young people. It is, in his essence, a school of life, meant to form the tomorrow society, a responsible and aware one."

Moga Ana – Daria, CNE Vice-president

5. The project: INCREASING THE YOUNGSTERS LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, financed by European Council, through HRE – D Program

The project **aims** at involving the young people in education activities on human rights (HRE), by introducing the new Manual on Human Rights Education - Compasito to multipliers, facilitators and young people from the formal and the non-formal education system.

The objectives of the projects are the following:

1. To introduce Compasito as a tool for working on human rights education with young people, adapting it to formal and non-formal educational Romanian contexts and realities;
2. To develop the participants' knowledge and competences in key concepts of human rights, human rights education and human rights education with children;
3. To apply with children the activities in Compasito and to develop based on this the Compasito type publication;
4. To enable participants to develop programs for further working on human rights education with children;
5. To use Compasito potential in the formal education with children, either by teachers/educators or by young professionals / volunteers or by youth associations working with children in schools.

Period: September 2008 – July 2009

The target group consists of 5 elementary schools in Bucharest, 225 children and young adolescents, 20 multipliers, teachers and young volunteers, 10 school principals and teachers responsible with educational projects.

The project tackles formal education environments, mainly schools, and the participants are school teachers, educators and young volunteers from youth associations that develop educational projects on human rights, by using non-formal methods of education. In this respect, the main activities include trainings, activities with children, evaluation sessions, adaptation and analysis of Compasito and the elaboration of the Companion to Compasito with the active involvement of children themselves.

The innovative aspects of the project are related to its participants, a mixed group of teachers and youth professionals and to a new manual on human rights education – Compasito. The training for teachers and applying Compasito with children and young people is another innovation element and it allows a long term usage of the Manual.

Results

The main result of the project consists in its potential in what concerns networking, the Compasito type publication that includes general suggestions for adapting the Compasito manual, can be a starting point for debates and training the teachers and youngsters that develop activities of education on human rights with children and young people.

The preparation phase included the selection of the target groups' members, the meeting of the preparation team and the training team, the logistics, the training preparation.

The training of trainers took place in January in Bucharest. The training targeted teachers / elementary school teachers and young professionals / educators, whom will apply in the five selected schools the activities in Compasito.

The project continued with workshops with children realized by young people in the five selected schools and feedback from the multipliers / facilitators for the project team in accordance with a standard module of feedback.

The project will end with the elaboration and launch of the Companion publication by evaluating the project and developing the follow-up activities.



The participants' opinion:

“People make differences between boys and girls ... girls are more sensitive, and boys are more fightable. We understood that each person has rights and that we mustn't make differences.” (Răzvan, 4th grade)

“What I liked most was to speak with the team colleagues, to see what decisions we will make, if we accept or not the proposal of the other team”. (Andrei)

“I think that all people have the right to own a house, to go to school, to be part of a family ...” (Mario)

“The activity was interesting, I recommend it to the other colleagues, I think that I achieved the expected objectives, and the positive response of children was above my expectations.” (Cora Zaharia – teacher, School no 64)

Youth Program of the European Commission

Teams of our organization participated in 2008 in international events realized under this European Commission program. Participation in this type of manifestations was regarded as well as a reward for the volunteer work of our most dedicated young partners.

6. TC Right on Time: Action for Europe's Future

During **September 20th – 27th**, the Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21 Association participated in **Germany** in the *Right on time: Action for Europe's Future – Training Course on Human Rights Education with children and young people*, financed by the European Union through Youth in Action program.

The training was organized by CISV – Mainz – Wiesbaden, Germany, in partnership with the International Foundation for Education, Rota Joven (Portugal), APSD – Agenda 21 (Romania), ESPLAC (Spain) and CISV (Germany).

The aim of the training was to increase the quality of the local and international projects for educating children and young people in the field of human rights and citizenship by training some youngsters and educators / teachers that work with children in these fields and by facilitating an experience exchange between the countries and participants.

The training **was attended** by 16 representatives from Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Germany, who, by realizing the experience exchange in the field, had the opportunity to increase their knowledge in the field of human rights education, citizenship and participation, the non-formal education methods used with children and young people.

The APSD – Agenda 21 Association **was represented** by a team of four youngsters: a teacher (Nicoleta Crăciun), two youngsters that work within the association (Camelia Badea and Florina Pavel) and a volunteer, three of them were involved in the **follow-up activity** of the training of trainers, in the Compasito project developed in Romania. This project aims at adapting and applying to the Romanian context the activities in Compasito manual of the European Union. During the seven days of training, the participants were involved both in dynamic activities, in groups: discussions and team work, games and movie projections on human rights themes, citizenship and participation, international evenings, as well as individual self-evaluation activities regarding the awareness and introspection level of human rights using the tools offered by the trainers.

7. Take Action! A European ABC to Youth Participation , October 2007 – December 2008

The Take Action! A European ABC to Youth Participation program was launched on October 10th, 2007 and ended on December 31st, 2008.

It was a Youth in Action Program, initiated in partnership with Arciragazzi Liguria – Italy, and it aimed to identify and support youngsters' activities, as well as their participation in activities developed both at regional level and at local level in the partner countries.

Within the partnership, **APSD – Agenda 21** and **Arciragazzi Liguria**, together with other two local authorities, aimed to create stronger bounds between the three parts involved in the youth participation process: the youngsters, the associations (civil society in general) and public institutions. The project aimed to encourage youngsters' participation, as well as to underline the important role played by youngsters' participation in their own community.

As the theme of the project is young people's participation, the theoretic framework which the project is based on, is represented by the European Council's "Revised Chapter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life" – 2003, as well as by European Commission's "White Book: New Impulse for the European Youth" – 2001.

The main objectives of this Youth in Action program addressed the promotion of young people's active citizenship, focusing especially on European citizenship. It also promoted European youngsters cooperation, tolerance and communication among them, as well as support provided for the activities initiated by youngsters or the competence of civil societies in what concerns young people.

The activities included the involvement of the most important group of young people's participation, namely the youngsters themselves. Meetings with youngsters groups took place at local level in Romania, as well as in Italy, in order both to analyze good practices and to discuss

the guide's elaboration, thus improving not only the public dialogue, but also the local and the European working network. The project analyzed the problem of youth participation both among high school students and 20 – 30 years old individuals.

The **final result** of this project was publishing a Good Practices Guide regarding young people's involvement in accordance with democracy's principles. The activities developed along the project included meetings with all four partners in order to exchange ideas, experience, as well as methodologies applied previously in various projects.

8. DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS is the name of a training course organized by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, during November 10th – 19th, 2008, at the European Youth Center in Strasbourg, France. The course gathered 30 young people from countries such as: France, Spain, Italy, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Estonia, Romania and many others. One of our volunteers had the chance to be selected to this training and by her participation she helped to strengthen the sustainability capacity of our organization through its democratic leadership structures.

The training gave to the participants actively involved in running youth structures the chance to develop their attitudes, improve their skills and receive additional information and knowledge in order to manage youth organizations in a democratic, efficient and effective manner.

The course on Democratic Leadership and Management of Youth Organizations was indented to serve as a "laboratory" for the educational and political role of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, and its capacity to organize and offer trainings for the young democratic leaders, in the view of the future development of the youth organizations' role and the democratic young leadership.

Democracy, Civil Society, Human Rights, Citizenship and Participation were the key concepts, as well as the basis for this training.

The training's program also gave the participants the chance to develop their ability to contribute to the sustainability of youth organizations, including advocacy, democratic and shared leadership, empowering and motivating volunteers, making democratic and quality decisions, resources' management, conflict management, development of organizational strategies. The training was focused on national and international active organizations.

The **objectives** of the training were the following:

- To develop a common level of understanding the concepts related to democratic leadership, such as: democracy, participation and leadership, civil society, human rights, citizenship.
- To increase the participants' level of awareness and to facilitate the reflection on the values of organizations / youth structures - their role and impact as democratic leaders within the society.
- To develop the participants' abilities to relate the work of their organization with the policies on youth.
- To develop participants' understanding and knowledge of various forms of youth participation.
- To introduce the main European institutions and organizations engaged in youth policies.
- To enhance participants' civic competences, such as critical thinking, democratic decision-making, conflict management, responsibility, thus giving them the chance to reflect upon and partially experiment this issues during the training.
- To define and further develop leadership competences, as well as relevant management skills (conflict management, advocacy, motivation, shared leadership, decision-making, involvement, strategic planning, resources management).

- To support the participants in analyzing and further developing the internal processes and mechanisms of their organizations.

The training was designed as a mutual learning situation, where participants could experience and compare different approaches to democratic leadership and management of youth organizations. The training's phases and content were organized so that to encourage participation, shared leadership and group responsibility, using at the same time participative and active methods.



YOUTH EXCHANGES

9. EUROFEELINGS

During March 21st – 30th, 2008, the Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development – Agenda 21 Association participated in an youth exchange entitled *Eurofeelings*, financed by PHARE, and held in Banká Štiavnica, Slovakia. The coordinating organization was **Ziku** (Slovakia), with Dušan Dobiaš as project manager. Besides APSD – Agenda 21 (Romania), the other participant organizations were the NGOs: **MJA** (Belgium) and **Fonixdance** (Hungary).

The four countries were represented by 18 participants: 6 from Romania, 2 from Hungary, 3 from Belgium, 7 from Slovakia. The Romanian team was coordinated by Ioana Crăescu and it was formed by Camelia Badea, Andrei Boeru, Andreea Bogdan, Andrei Ștefan and Diana Țica-Horvath, volunteers of Agenda 21.

The *Eurofeelings* project approached the following themes:

- basic information regarding the structure of the European Union (history, cultural diversity, symbols, key-events, details about the Member States and their culture);
- sharing experiences and opinions on stereotypes, minorities, multi-linguistics, and European citizenship;
- team work (forming international groups that created their own imaginary countries, with a legislative system, symbols, customs);
- seminars on general concepts of advertising;
- practice on cooperation games, aiming at pointing out the role of the member in the team and to increase the co-players' level of tolerance.

All these were included in a game that simulated during 7 days the socio-economic reality of the European Union and the principles it is based on (cooperation, inter-culture, tolerance, creativity, initiative, adaptability, innovation). The participants were asked to create their own imaginary countries, with a legislative structure similar to the real one, but with internal rules and totally new customs, the product of their creativity. The fictional citizens registered their country in contests and chose a team to represent them, they made decisions regarding the future of their population and they promoted the symbols of their cultural space (anthem, flag, language, customs ...) by audio and video spots, in order to attract as many tourists as possible.

The program focused both on the theoretical issues presented above, as well as on practical activities. The participants had to prove the synergy of the team and the attention to details by participating in a competition regarding exploring the city, by a *board game*, where they accomplished tasks related to the culture of the fictional countries, by making an analogy to the European Union, or by Olympiads, which simulated the competitive character in practical tests.

10. The International Youth Exchange “Sustainable Development: A Concrete Opportunity of Inclusion and Participation for Young People in Europe”, Vasto (Chieti, Italy), June 2008

Participant countries - NGOs:

Poland – PHO

Portugal – Rota Jovem

Greece – GeniUs Mobility

Romania – Agenda 21

Bulgaria – Centre Sustainable Civil Society

Italy – ARCI Nuova Associazione

The Romanian team:

Members: Andrada Stan, Alexandru Petrescu, Alexis Chiriac, Stefan Catana, Victor Mihaila,

Leader: Gabriela Ilie

The project was organized under the framework of the “Youth in Action” Program of the European Commission, aiming at preparing the young people for a sustainable lifestyle, by sharing ideas, experiences and working methods related to the topic, by meeting the local NGOs and finding out about their projects and the way they managed to put into practice the idea of sustainable development.

The whole project aimed at making the work as interactive as possible.

For instance, the contact with the NGOs was more practical than theoretical since the presentations of the 6 organizations took the form of “stands”, thus giving the other participants a view on the materials, projects and general information concerning each particular organization. An even more practical activity consisted in visiting local natural reserves, as well as areas where sustainable development is a life style itself, all as an example of what can and has been done to ensure a more environmentally-friendly human existence on this planet.

An intercultural evening was organized to give everybody the chance to get to know more about the other countries involved in the project and also work on group dynamic and individual interaction, thus enabling the development of a better work environment and increasing the desire to continue the collaboration into future activities, beyond the current project.

The 3 workshops, on Video Awareness, Individual Behavior and Art and Sustainability, focused on promoting sustainable development issues, becoming aware of the environmental problems and learning about recycling, critical consumption or responsible tourism and the possibility of transforming such individual behavior into concrete job opportunities by turning waste into usable objects such as ashtrays or recycling bins.

PREPARING A COUPLE OF EUROPEAN PROJECTS

1. Education for Global Social Justice

The project was submitted under a European Union financing program that addresses education projects for development (education for development). APSD – Agenda 21 is an organization associated with a group of partner NGOs: Leeds Development Education Organization, United Kingdom; Polish Humanitarian Organization, Poland; EPIZ, Germany; CARDET, Cyprus; Institute for African Studies, Slovenia.

The partnership was formed within a seminar organized by Trialog, Austria, which aimed to reunite European organizations in order for them to apply together for European funds. The seminar took place in October, in Vienna, and APSD – Agenda 21 was represented by Mrs. Nina Cugler, Executive President. After this, in December, a training took place in Warsaw, Poland, for facilitating the elaboration of the projects within the groups already formed.

The submitted project aims to raise youngsters' awareness regarding the poverty phenomenon at global level and to motivate them to get involved in the global movement of reducing this phenomenon through their own initiatives, projects.

The project was approved at it will start in June 2009.

Volunteers Network

By the projects it implements, APSD – Agenda 21 aims, among others, to increase the level of civic involvement of Romanian citizens, by offering to all age groups, all social, professional categories, etc., the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the environment they live in. In the "Transparency and Participation in the Public Administration" project, the volunteers teams play a major part, as they are the ones that monitor the activity of the public institutions.

Especially youngsters are encouraged to get involved in the association's projects, this contributing to their personal and professional development. By finding themselves in new situations, by actively participating in the process of transforming the society they live in, by becoming aware of their involvement importance, they become responsible citizens.

Here are some of their statements:

"I think that for starters education is a very important chapter, where we should inform and counsel more, to inform citizens about their opportunities and even more, to resort to NGOs in order for them to organize training sessions both for citizens and young people from the rural environment and perhaps certainly from the urban areas. If there is no knowledge on a subject and without readiness nothing is possible, unity, honesty, will are some of the basic characteristics each of us should have, to choose the hard way in order to learn, to get involved in order to know and relate.", George Cune, monitor, Sibiu

"This project was a chance to interact with the citizens from the city where I live and it gave me the chance to inform myself and afterwards disseminate the information on transparency in public administration." Oana Neagu, monitor, Bucharest

"Young people (aged up to 30 years old), although they are open to the idea of change, still remain indifferent to the idea of getting involved personally. In an analog manner, the same reaction comes from those of middle and third age. Although there is a certain willingness to get involved in civic life (as it results as well from the answers given to question Q10), this is in a vegetative state because it isn't encouraged by the local authorities, and it loses its potential once the time goes by. The citizens noticed that "our opinion, of the majority, doesn't matter", "those

consultations you are telling me about I don't think they are real". In other words, there is a general "belief", a mythic one, accepted, but not verified individually, that is and will be very hard to change for the simple reason that people don't try to see how things happen in reality.

In what concerns the attitude towards the public institutions, this varies from indifference to indignation. This is also fueled by the confusions raised by their responsibilities, for example from the ones of the City Hall and the ones of the Prefecture. Also, the citizens think that the City Hall is the main responsible, whose authority reaches indirectly, in their view, the general council. People condemn the "superior" attitude of the civil servants, their lack of interest, the bureaucracy, the corruption (but the distinction between small and big corruption is not very clear) and the lack of transparency in what concerns the granting of social houses, for example. Also, the institution is identified with the man, but citizens, especially the young ones, started to look at the institutional change and transparency as issues that are managed by the institution, and not just by one person playing a "saver" role."

Cătălina Neagu, monitor, Bucharest

Partnerships

In 2008, APSD – Agenda 21 developed or continued successful partnerships with:

- The National Agency of Civil Servants
- The Romanian Radio Society
- The Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation
- UNICEF Office in Romania
- Bucharest School Inspectorate, Bazău and Ilfov County School Inspectorates
- The National School of Political and Administrative Studies
- Bucharest City Hall
- Bacău, Deva, Sibiu and Alexandria City Halls
- Bucharest Prefecture
- ARCI Officine Culturali, Italy
- Arciragazzi Liguria, Italy
- Union of Parents Association of the First Thessaloniki Area (UPAFTA), Greece

Financing sources

APSD – Agenda 21 was financed in 2008 by:

- The European Union under the programs PHARE – Strengthening Civil Society and PHARE - Democracy Development in Romania
- UNICEF Office in Romania
- The European Council

The association's main sponsors are:

Dezna Consulting SRL

Dezna Consulting SRL is an importer, distributor and producer active on four distinctive departments:

- the materials and accessories department for wood industry (adhesives, varnishes, mordant, abrasives, etc.), the materials department for constructions (varnishes, paints, paint thinners, pigments, etc.)

- machineries and installations department for roads (producing and spraying bituminous emulsion, vibrant-finisher for asphalt, road marking machineries, digging machineries for ditches in continuous flux, etc.)
- production department for furniture accessories (rigid tie band, springs and nets, etc.)

The chain of stores sells: varnishes and paints, colors at request, through a computerized system, on the spot in 4 minutes.

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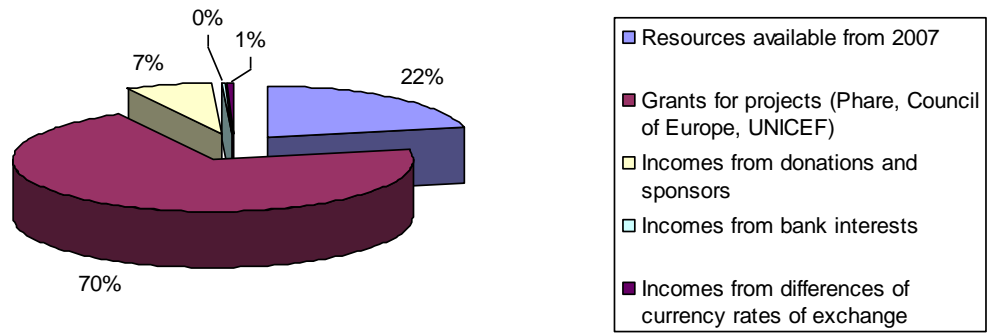
Financial report

Available resources	RON	EURO
Resources available from 2007	94,090.81	26,157.41
Grants for projects (Phare, Council of Europe, UNICEF)	295,150.80	74,046.86
Incomes from donations and sponsors	29,101.68	7,300.97
Incomes from bank interests	1,319.80	331.11
Incomes from differences of currency rates of exchange	2,517.58	631.61
TOTAL	422,400.20	82,310.55

Used Resources	RON	EURO
Resources available at the end of 2008	180,685.87	45,330.12
Expenditures made within projects	287,103.65	72,028.01
Expenditures with bank commissions	1,751.08	439.31
Expenditures from differences of currency rates of exchange	2,438.15	611.68
Allowance for depreciation	2,282.32	572.58
TOTAL	474,261.07	73,651.58

Cash available	RON	EURO
Balance at 31.12.2008 RON	31,071.04	7,795.04
Balance at 31.12.2008 EURO	149,614.83	37,535.08
TOTAL	180,685.87	45,330.12

Available resources



Used resources

