

CURBA DE CULTURĂ

About, with and for young people



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What we are and why we do what we do

Curba de Cultură is all about reaching out to rural youth. We are an NGO committed to non-formal learning, to culture and to participation opportunities. Our focus is to improve education levels and community engagement for the young people living in rural environment in Romania. We take our work very seriously, yet we do it in a relaxed, witty and humorous spirit. A youthful spirit.

Our main goal is to revitalise rural environment. In our view, change finds its most fertile ground in the ones most aptly equipped for change: YOUTH. Their energy and their desire to set a new way of doing things inspired us to provide for them an organisational framework capable of allowing them to implement this change for themselves and for the community they live in. We believe that our projects function as a pilot initiative addressing the issues of rural development, educational access and better opportunities for the ones who need change and a better life within the rural area.

Our organisation's headquarters are based in Izvoarele, a small rural community near the town of Vălenii-de-Munte, in Prahova county, Romania. The other affiliate organisation we run is located in Roşia Montana, in Alba county, Transylvania.

Curba de Cultură focuses on teenagers and youth development. Our mission is to use non-formal education as a complementary method to the formal educational system for young people. We want to create the premises for a better development of the young people and their more suited integration within their respective communities. We want to make young people aware that they actively belong to their local and national culture.



Our core values define the work we do and the spirit that animates us:

Education: the driving force behind change starts with the opportunity and the access to knowledge. We believe education is the capability to intelligently shape access to opportunities. Therefore, we see education as the *terraferma* for those willing to transform the world they live in.

Participation: Engaging together for a larger purpose other than just the individual gain is the gate to prosperous and harmonious communities. We want to instil the spirit of participation into the young people since they are the ones who will understand that only by getting involved as a common effort in the life of their respective community will they make a difference.

Equality: We promote the spirit of equality among the young ones, since it is the best way to make them aware of their own importance within the larger frame of a functional community. Being equal means being treated with respect. Young people are worth respect since they are equally important for their community and country.

Team work: We value collaborative achievements and we believe that working together is the only way true change has a serious chance of happening. Also, we believe that team work educates young people into becoming responsible individuals, aware of their duties and of their impact for the life of their respective community. Team work builds character.

Life-long learning: Our work extends far beyond the formal implementation of our projects. We want to believe that young people involved with our initiative will benefit their entire life from the skills we provide them. Once good practice is internalised, it becomes a valuable asset young people can always resort to.

Self-awareness: We strive to make young people aware of their great potential impact in the life of their community. Only by making them fully conscious that they matter in a substantial way both for themselves and for the others, will they be able to make a meaningful difference for the well-being of their living environment.

Tolerance: One of the core concepts of our organisation, tolerance is central to our work dedicated to the young people. Youth is dynamic and has a great need for doing things differently. In this process, the chances of success are greatly increased through the exercise of tolerance, mutual understanding and embracing the difference in a peaceful, caring, ultimately human way.



What we have done so far

We started in 2012, as a local initiative, focusing on a core group consisting of 8 young people aged 15-18, in Izvoarele. From July to November 2012, youth research was conducted locally in order to assess the need and the opportunity for setting up a youth association. Following the assessment and the preferences, the core group decided on the first projects to be developed and implemented.

In November 2012, we organised the first **"Youth in Action"** training course for young people and youth workers in the respective region. The "Youth in Action Proposal Writing" stipulated a number of 14 participants, 3 among them originating in the core group.

On the 24th of January 2013, our association, **Curba de Cultură**, gained legal status as an association. The first two projects were developed by the core group and submitted to Youth in Action, a youth initiative aiming to create a space for leisure time activities in Izvoarele and a youth exchange project with the purpose to promote local Roma minority traditional crafts.

February 2013 marked the developing of various partnerships with local authorities, schools and high schools, project development and submission, coaching and training local core group and selecting a steering committee. Also, the process of accreditation procedures and confirmation for European Voluntary Service (EVS) was completed: **Curba de Cultură** EVS accreditation number is 2013-RO-20.



In March 2013, training on non-formal learning methodology for the core group was under way, in order to organise and deliver one week of non-formal learning activities during the national programme "**Școala altfel**" ("**School differently**"), aimed at bringing non-formal education closer to the formal education system. The core group was made up of 8 pupils with ages between 11 and 14 in the local school, at Izvoarele, and they were directly involved in developing activities, logistics preparation and evaluation. The programme targeted trust development, communication and social skills. In April, young people were involved in delivering non-formal learning activities for 44 pupils in the local school and for 30 pupils in the local kindergarten.

The evaluation following the activities showed a positive increase in the group self confidence and communication skills. Also the group had the chance to reflect upon their college choices as skills needed to do specific jobs and preferences for various activities as the choice for college usually does not reflect the interests of young people but rather the interests of their parents.

The activities carried out in the "Școala Altfel" Programme were seen by the local community as a positive initiative of local young people that seem to be interested in other things than computer games and watching TV. The activities were perceived as a breath of fresh air for the local school and the core group started gaining the respect of the community. The association was invited to organize and deliver other different activities



The following programmes and projects have been conducted and implemented by our organisation so far:



“**Tineri Antreprenori pentru Comunitate**” (“**Young Entrepreneurs for Community**”) was aimed at increasing the degree of entrepreneurial initiative of young people in the life of their local community in Izvoarele. The participants were aged from 16 to 26. The project main focus was the creation of a local functional brand, comprising at least two pilot products produced by the young people of the respective community, and promoted in Prahova county with the support of local and county authorities and the private sector. The project was financed through the programme Pact for Community.

“**Context**” was a project financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its main goals were stimulating the social entrepreneurship and promoting voluntary work as a personal opportunity development. Also, it was aimed at increasing the employment rate among young people, in the greater area of Valenii de Munte, Teișani, Izvoarele and Măneciu.



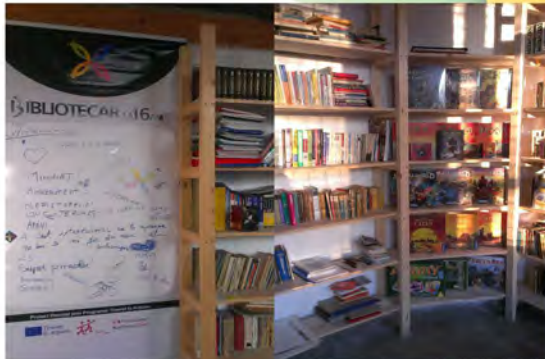


“United in Arts and Crafts” was a project run in 2013, its main focus was the preservation and the continuation of Roma community traditions. It was aimed at increasing the visibility of the traditional Roma crafts within the communities they live and also at preserving them since they are threatened to slowly disappearing in time. The project was financed through the programme "Youth in Action" (Action 1.1).

“The Youth Centre” is a project that enables the creation of a space destined and opened to young people with the ages between 14 and 26. The space was conceived in order to allow the young people to spend leisure time together, make new friends, try out new activities. Also, it is a place for acquiring new abilities such as computer skills or musical skills, as well as organising trips and various activities.

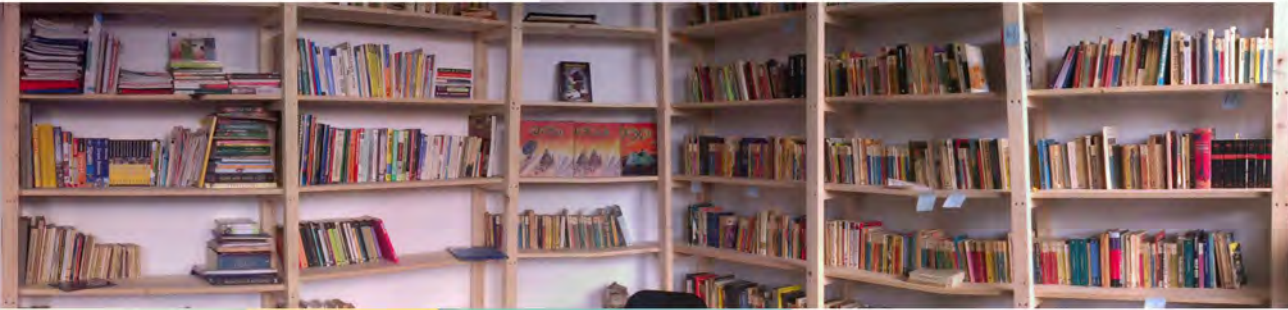


“Juggling Club” consists of an ideal manner to develop manual skills, coordination and creativity among young people. The project increases the focus capabilities, communication and freedom of expression. It combines elements of contemporary dance and theatre with the specific techniques of group dynamics and cooperation and also with the benefits of physical exercise.



A Project Case Study: "Librarian at 16"

Curba de Cultură's soul project, "Librarian at 16" was also the first project to gain financial support and to have won the project contest it was submitted to. During the 4 months of the project, 8 young people aged 16 to 18 from rural Romania, Izvoarele, built awareness on non-formal education and leisure time activities for young people in the extended area (Valenii de Munte town, Teișani, Izvoarele and Maneciu communes) and created an alternative space for educational and leisure time activities in Izvoarele. The project offered juggling workshops for young people, board game championships, stories reading sessions for children and movie projections for the whole community.



More than 50 young people attended the workshops and board game championships and built a strong image of the project team in the community. The project team developed entrepreneurial and communication competencies and managed the space created (library and ludotheque) on their own.



The project main objectives were :

- to increase the number of educational and leisure time programmes for young people aged 15 to 19 in Izvoarele area;
- to create an alternative space for leisure time activities for young people aged 15 - 19 in Izvoarele area;
- to promote non-formal education as an alternate way of leisure time activities for young people in Izvoarele area
- to develop entrepreneurship competences for 8 young people in Izvoarele village, participants to the project.



“Through the high school activities in this project, I have managed to overcome my fear of talking in front of a large audience, to meet new people and to know myself better. At the same time, during this project, I have done things I never saw myself doing or that I never used to do back home: polishing, painting walls and arranging books into a library. Thanks to this project, I managed to make new friends, to spend my free time in a fun and pleasant way, and I also improved my ability to work in a team”— Ionuț Chirobocia, 18 years old project volunteer.

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“The most motivating aspect for me was the bigger picture that I had foreseen for the completion of the project, the final destination. And the most touching moments were when I was looking around and seeing all my colleagues working, when the entire team was engaged in giving shape to a common idea. In the future, having experienced the direct implication in this project, we would probably succeed in organising ourselves in a much more suitable manner and we would mobilise ourselves faster. During this project, we have learned that it takes

perseverance and will. Also, we had first-hand access to the librarian experience and we have completed the challenging task of book management.”— Cristiana Dumitrescu, 16 years old project volunteer and theatre with the specific techniques of group dynamics and cooperation and also with the benefits of physical exercise.



What we plan to do in the future

For 2014-2018, we, at **Curba de Cultură**, have prepared a multi-layered strategy targeting our core objectives.

Strategically, we plan to:

- Extend the youth centres network in rural Romania to all 8 historical regions;
- Extend and develop CdC affiliates in the Balkans and Central Europe, creating a European wide network;
- Become an official partner to the regional youth administrations in Romania related to rural youth development;
- Become an official partner of the Romanian Government regarding general development of the youth sector and specifically to develop professional youth work in Romania.

Operationally, we aim at:

- Increasing international exposure for young people in rural communities through Youth Exchanges developed by young people;
- Hosting EVS volunteers in youth centres in Izvoarele and Rosia Montana in non-formal learning, rural development and personal development related projects;
- Capacity building for rural youth organisations in Europe through participation in trainings, seminars and job shadowing mobilities ;
- Providing residence opportunities for young artists with an interest in studying rural communities;
- Organizing contact making events for establishing relevant partnerships in youth projects in Europe;
- Developing a programme for art residencies in order to create a strong link between performative art and the rural environment, and also to provide the place for reflection and work dedicated to young artists. ation and also with the benefits of physical exercise.

Who we are

Vlad Dumitrescu

Employee, participant, trainer, facilitator, animator, non-actor, evaluator, manager, organiser. Vlad has been involved in the NGO sector for more than 14 years, being active in several national and international nongovernmental youth organisations but also working for public authorities and intergovernmental bodies. Vlad has been with us since the beginning and is responsible for project writing and architecture of learning programs, facilitation and training for youth workers.



Delia Zahareanu

Passionate about good writing, good graphic art and meaningful communication. She has graduated Political Science. Her professional expertise stretches over related fields like journalism, branding and NGO sector. She is currently studying Graphic Arts, at UNArte, Bucharest. She applies all her acquired skills in creative projects and she is a strong supporter of community involvement and civic action.



Daniel Sibiceanu

With an array of talents acquired while working almost 13 years in the advertising field on technical and creative projects and with willingness to put lots of effort into gaining experience in working with young people, he offers his knowledge and expertise in the NGO sector in organising events, art direction, marketing/PR, & fund-raising. Daniel is responsible for creating training materials, concept art for various projects and the NGO corporate design and key visuals, facilitation and training.



Miruna Bohâlța

Entrepreneur, trainer, facilitator, evaluator, manager, organiser. Miruna has been involved in establishing the Romanian legal framework in European Funds field for 9 years, creating tools, guidelines and training programmes in order to improve and ease the implementation process of the projects. She had been managing her own company since 2011 in the European projects consultancy field.



Mihai Ștefănescu

Programme officer with extensive expertise in managing funding programmes and projects, with a special interest in green projects and green education projects, passionate about mountain biking and adrenaline related sports, Mihai is responsible with procedures and entrepreneurial education projects.



Mihaela Buculescu

Discovering the NGO world shortly after finishing her economic studies, Mihaela says that this forever changed her view on the world around her and the true meaning of being a successful person. In the last four years she has been involved with various national and international NGOs helping with everything from doing the bookkeeping and preparing the financial reports to writing youth projects, coordinating activities and volunteers. Her interest in working with and for young people and her devotion to help people with fewer opportunities goes to prove that even accountants have a heart.



Cosmin Catană

Hands-on, strong hearted, hard-headed dreamer, youth worker, trainer, facilitator, coach, project architect, manager, juggler, organiser. Involved in the national and international NGO scene for over 17 years, loves to take on new endeavours. He is responsible for nagging the team, volunteers/ beneficiaries and the public authorities, organisational development and keeping it all together.





Who are our partners

- Prahova county Youth Administration
- Local Cultural Centre part of the Local Administration
- Asociazione EURO – Italy
- Europejskie Forum Młodzieży – Poland
- Dobosari Coka Association – Serbia
- DACIA Resources Centre – Moldova, Republic of
- A.D.I.C.E. – France
- Mladinski center Zagorje ob Savi – Slovenia
- RCP, Razvojni center Ptuj - Slovenia
- G.E.O. – Turkey
- JaMA – Jaunimo mainų agentūra – Lithuania
- La Vibria Intercultural – Spain
- European Confederation of Youth Clubs



What are our main founding sources

- European Commission through the Youth in Action & Erasmus+ programmes
- Romanian Youth and Sports Ministry
- PACT Foundation
- Various sponsors
- Individual donors

CONTACT US

www.facebook.com/curbadecultura

info@curbadecultura.org

www.curbadecultura.org