



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Media training transforms library's reputation 'Alexandru D. Xenopol' Arad County Library, Romania

IMPACT CASE STUDY

The 'App Library' service, which builds teenagers' media literacy and digital technology skills, has transformed the role of the library and its reputation in the community. The service –

- Led to development of a comprehensive eight-module media education and media skills curriculum that can be used in schools and libraries across the country.
- Trained, and awarded certificates to 199 young people.
- Demonstrated the ability of public libraries to supplement the school curriculum by providing extramural activities in a non-formal setting.
- Changed perceptions of the library in the community – partner organizations, teachers and students now see the library as a dynamic space offering knowledge and skills of immediate value in daily life.

In 2009, European Union research showed that media education was not adequately addressed by the Romanian education system. In 2013 further research found that although children learnt about information technology at school, there was no policy or strategy for teaching media education. In addition, teachers did not have training or confidence to tackle this subject (MEDIANet / ActiveWatch 2013).

Supported by a small grant (up to US\$20,000) from the EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), Arad County Library's 'App Library' project addressed these problems. Technicians and librarians created a training room in the library, with nine laptop and 11 tablet computers. Working with the Arad County School Inspectorate, the library selected three teachers and two librarians to become media educators. This five-member team developed an eight-module course, including media and e-literacy theory, and practical media, publishing and communications skills. To raise awareness about software choices, and to encourage curiosity, the library chose to use free and open source software, which is available online at no cost and comes with free online tutorials and community support.



'App Library' logo.

"My opinion about the library has changed. Before the workshop, I believed that the library was just a place where people read a lot and borrow books. But I was wrong!" – Male student, aged 15

Software used for the course includes text processing, graphic design, and photo and video editing software. The library's media education curriculum is delivered face-to-face and through the free e-learning platform, Moodle.

In just eight months, the library –

- Established close relationships with the education inspectorate and schools, laying the ground for future collaboration in e-learning programmes;
- Created an e-learning Moodle platform in the library which can be used for other non-formal education courses;
- Disseminated their experience at three local and national library events, reaching almost 300 librarians from Romania and Hungary, and presented a paper to the annual congress of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA);
- Attracted 1,663 new library users.

The future

The library has set in motion plans to continue their training for another school year, targeting 100 students, and is also designing advanced training for students who completed the first course. To further develop critical thinking skills, the library is expanding the curriculum to include a session on writing structured, encyclopedic articles to enrich the Romanian version of Wikipedia. This will be done in partnership with the Wikipedia project in Romania. The library is also seeking to address the wider issue of educational change in Romania by encouraging inclusion of media education and media literacy in the national school curriculum, and, through training, to build teachers' skills and confidence to teach media literacy.

The EIFL-PLIP grant was awarded in May 2014. A year later, the library assessed the impact of the service. Information presented here is based on the library's impact assessment. For further information, contact project manager, Marius Stoica: mariustoicea@gmail.com.

[EIFL](http://www.eifl.net) (Electronic Information for Libraries) works with libraries to enable access to knowledge in developing and transition economy countries in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and Latin America. The EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) supports libraries to implement community development projects. The EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Teenagers learn media literacy and critical thinking skills in the library.

“For me this has been an extraordinary experience. I have learnt to work with Linux, which is an undiscovered treasure. I now want to go further with information technology studies.” – Female student, aged 16

“The most important change I observed was the ways in which the students viewed communicating online. Because we emphasized licensing, construction of identity and publishing online, the students became more aware of their actions online.” – Nicoleta Stoica, teacher and trainer in the ‘App Library’ project