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## Campaign Against Underage Drinking Begins in Buzau Libraries

Ursus breweries is one of the largest brewers in Romania, and no stranger to the dangers of teenage drinking. Seeking to open up dialogue on the issue between parents, community leaders and teens, Ursus found the perfect venue: local libraries. The space available at the library offers an opportunity to have frank conversations about social issues and connect outreach campaigns with rural communities hoping to help the children that may be struggling with alcohol.



Presenters share facts and personal stories about teenage drinking at the Gheraseni library

The library in Gheraseni, in Buzau County has kicked off a series of these meetings with a forum hosted by TV personality Cabral Ibacka and child psychologist Daniela Gheorghe, who used personal examples and statistical data to illustrate a difficult truth: led by their friends or as an act of rebellion

against their parents, influenced by their wish to stand out and be seen, teenagers start drinking and jeopardize their future while the adults around them seem powerless.

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## Cluj County Library Helps Patrons Search for Jobs

Many Romanians are surprised when they step inside a modern library. In Cluj County, not only are computers and books ready to be used and checked out, but one can actually search for a job. Today, the library is a place where people learn how to develop a resume, how to write a cover letter and even how to find positions and deal with interviews with the aid of a librarian and the internet.

"How to Find a Job?" is a six-month project implemented by the Cluj County Library in partnership with 20 rural and urban libraries in the county, and a winning Community Participation Contest project from last December. The idea came about after a year of librarians looking closely at what new services would be useful for patrons. The staff at the Cluj County Library first identified the age groups and the level of knowledge of the users who were asking for help in using a computer and the Internet. Then, they correlated the data with the number of people looking for

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## A Long Line at the Library: Librarians Host Contest for Children

For those who have long left their childhood behind, lining up in front of a store is just a sad memory of the hardships of the communist era. For the children in Târgu Jiu, lining up in front of the library is an enjoyable activity. Their enthusiasm surprised even their librarians Carmen, Fabiola, and Luiza, who designed and organized a 200-question quiz at the Children's Branch of "Christian Tell" Gorj County Library in February.

Our young users were challenged to answer one trivia question a day, with three points awarded for each correct answer. If they missed a question, they could try again, and we used the opportunity to model how to find accurate information in the books and at the computers in the public library.

The contest went on for 15 weeks with 329 participants. Local businesses sponsored the contest by providing books and candy as prizes. Out of all 329 children, 136 were recognized for their efforts on June 1, in an awards ceremony scheduled to coincide with International Children's Day. The first place winner collected 219 points in 67 visits to the library, and many won prizes for scores above 200 points. The contest had another major target: it taught children the rewards of coming to the library often and made them loyal users, during and after the competition.

The library was happy to see that the children have become the best promoters of the library and the services it offers, while our dearest users were also the best promoters of what the public library does. Many recruited classmates and friends to come to the library and join the contest.

The contest was designed to help the community rediscover the children's branch after its 2010 relocation to a new space. The results surpassed expectations. Children made friends with each other and with their librarians. They have started to enjoy visiting the library for new activities like completing their homework, taking part in discussions, and organizing contests of their own. For many the library is their second home. This is what we aimed for and the reason why *they did actually line up in front of the library*.

The prizes awarded on June 1 were a fun recognition of everyone's efforts to make the contest a success, but we believe that the real prize were the relationships built and stories shared between participants, and today the library is much richer for its new users.

*Olimpia Bratu, Targu Jiu County Library Director*

## Campaign Against Underage Drinking Begins in Buzau

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"The main difference between us standing here and our friends who died as teenagers is that our parents chose the right words in warning us about the dangers of drinking," Cabral started his presentation. "Because," he continued, "the habit of drinking starts with the child who sips a little every day, and becomes addicted to the pleasure alcohol gives you."

When teenagers make mistakes, they are often more afraid of the adults' reaction than of the consequences for their own health. "Parents should not scold or blame their children for drinking. You won't sit down every day and ask them how much they had to drink and so on. But you can't ignore this behavior, either, as it is your duty to protect your child. The best solution is to talk about the subject as a fact of life" Ms. Gheorghe advised.

Local police chief Ionel Dinu was among the 70 people present at the event, and happy to get some help from the specialists: "We have seen alcohol-induced bad behavior around here, mostly domestic violence and thefts. I like the idea of the library organizing such meetings; it is the only institution that can educate people outside of

school." Elena Tudorache, one of the farmers who came to listen to the explanations, recalled: "When my daughter was young, I was ashamed to talk to her about such things. Luckily, she was a good child, but now there are so many temptations", and Viorica Ene added: "The library should organize more such events, about other issues, like tobacco or drug abuse. It's so important for children to see and hear about these things from specialists, because they would not listen to their parents otherwise".

The Campaign against Underage Drinking, also called the PreMature Campaign, was organized as a pilot initiative in three Biblionet libraries in Buzau County. Librarians worked together with the campaign staff to invite the local community and get support from the authorities. In Magura, Gheraseni and Ramnicu Sarat, more than 200 people attended the meetings and received information materials about underage drinking, drunk driving, and other effects of alcohol abuse. The project is planned to continue in two other counties, Cluj and Timis, starting in the fall. ■

**"We have seen alcohol-induced bad behavior around here, mostly domestic violence and thefts. I like the idea of the library organizing such meetings; it is the only institution that can educate people outside of school."**  
Local police chief Ionel Dinu

## Library Hosts After School Program for Roma Children

In the current economic climate, many libraries are living the old adage of, “do more with less.” In Onesti, Bacau County, the Radu Rosetti library is awaiting the arrival of Biblionet computers and equipment, but found a creative way to use their older computers as an educational tool during a recent pilot project working with Roma children.

Librarian Doina Dumitriu and Calin Trandafir, vice-president of the Pro-Europe Roma Party in Bacau, saw an opportunity to design an after-school program for a group of 13 children aged 5-9. They worked with several partners, including two schools in Onesti and the ONESTIN Youth Association, who provided meals for the participants. The main objective of the program was to give the children the chance and space to learn new things, such as playing and working with computers, in a friendly atmosphere. “It was the first time I had ever seen a computer, and I didn’t know what to do with it,” said Cosmin, one of the participants.

Dumitriu was surprised to find new uses for the old computers. “We thought initially to help 13 children with their homework, but we realized they didn’t know how to read and write. So, we used the old keyboards to teach them.” Many of the letters on the keys had faded, but the children were enthusiastic about learning how to type and used them as part of regular literacy lessons.



**Children come to Radu Rosetti library in Onesti for help with homework, technology training, and fun activities**



**After school club meets at Radu Rosetti library**

The librarians at Radu Rosetti focus on praising and encouraging their young patrons, an approach they have found to work well. Under the care and guidance of the librarians, the participants have flourished. Although the initial program started in March and ended in mid-May, some of the Roma children have continued to volunteer at the library, helping others use the computers and keeping the books in order. Two Romanian families who appreciated the library’s efforts also enrolled their children in the program, contributing to better integration of the community. Dumitriu looks forward to the next steps. “Our pilot project was really appreciated by our all users, and we can hardly wait for school to begin so that we can resume the classes.”

While it won’t be long before the old computers are replaced with updated models, the creativity and dedication of the library to provide a warm and welcoming space for all children to learn and explore has already drawn in community members with an exciting new service. ■

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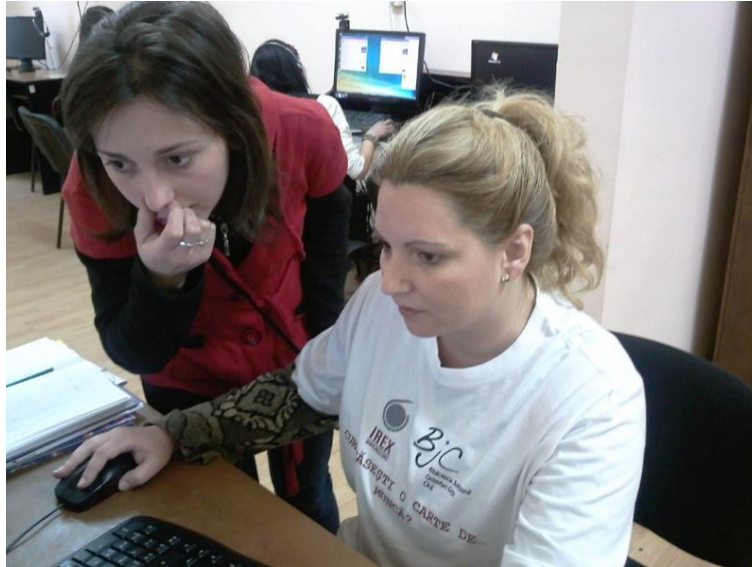
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## Cluj County Library Helps Patrons Find Jobs



**Cluj librarians offer help navigating the job search process**

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jobs in the newspapers and those who wanted to borrow books in order to further their careers.

Once they knew that career help was an important service for their community, they set about developing their own skills. By the end of April, 30 librarians from partner libraries had attended a training course and learned to structure and organize their knowledge and share it with users. These librarians have started to provide the new service in their respective libraries. Each library offers training and maintain resources on job searching. Meanwhile, a county-wide promotion campaign was launched to support the initiative, including a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/pag...7204612137>) where photos of the activities are posted .

The final stage of the project is expanding the training sessions to reach users in all 21 libraries involved. In May and June, 65 training sessions were organized at the county level and

attended by 248 people. "This course is very effective because it gives those without experience precisely what information must be written, how to write and what is to be avoided in the drafting of official documents" explained Stefana, a young unemployed user attending the course in the Dej municipal library, while another user, Iulia added that

she considered this course "a great opportunity (that has come up at a good time) to learn some new things or to update previous information. I want to thank the librarian for all her hard work on this project."

Some libraries have found value in partnerships with NGOs and others interested in getting involved. In one case, the Turda municipal library was happy to work together with the Ratiu Foundation for Democracy on a similar project in parallel with the "How to Find a Job" project. In addition to the 21 training sessions held in the library, the Ratiu Foundation has committed to both promote the basic skills training among their beneficiaries and provide follow-up sessions on negotiation skills, time management and improved communication for the newly-trained users, as part of their professional and personal development programs.

These efforts to reach out to patrons at their moment of need with targeted advice and resources show one way that libraries in Romania are working to build bridges between people and information. ■