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Luiza Barbu has been the librarian in Vulcana Pandele, Dambovita County for eight years. She regularly attends meetings at the county library to discuss new developments, but the meeting in February was special. A fellow librarian, Georgiana Barbu from Raci, shared her experiences in the Library Service Development course organized by the ANBPR in November, 2010. Part of her presentation focused on what a modern library should look like, in terms of positioning furniture and the



Librarian Luiza Barbu and Mayor Constantin Olteanu build new library in Vulcana Pandele

“My goal is to develop the commune . . . We had some projects for a bigger library, but we couldn’t fit it in the budget. Still, I knew something must be done for the children and youth of our community. I see them come to the little library every day and this gives me hope for the future.”

Mayor Constantin Olteanu

various services and dividing the space for activities and age groups.

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Iasi County Libraries Lead First Aid Education

First aid knowledge is information everyone needs, from how to treat a cut to CPR training that can save lives. In Iasi County, libraries are taking the lead by establishing first aid information centers and equipping librarians to provide basic first aid training to patrons.

The program kicked off in May, when the County Library set up ten regional centers and ten librarians were taught to become trainers for their colleagues in neighboring communities. Each of the 100 librarians trained will go on to share this information with members of their communities, starting with the public servants and teachers. “First aid knowledge is vital. You should learn about saving lives the same way you learn maths, grammar and history, it broadens your horizon and defines who you are as a person”, librarian Mihaela Cojocaru from the Pascani Municipal Library told participants at an August training.

The project is called “First Aid – Your Knowledge Kit,” and has been developed

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An Idea Brought to Life by Community Involvement in Dambrovita

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Luiza was inspired, and knew that she had an unique opportunity to build on what she was hearing. Both Raciú and Vulcana Pandeale are newly-founded communes and both Georgiana and Luiza were able to create their libraries from scratch.

In the first days of spring, Luiza began her plan. She knew the location of the library had to change, especially because she was trying hard to persuade the local council to join Biblionet. However, the library was crammed in a tiny space with no room for computers. She explained her strategy: "I went to all council meetings and asked them to give me space for a new library, so we can join Biblionet. They must have been fed up with me at some point, because they accepted to pay rent for a bigger location. We have about 40 square meters (400 square feet) now and I'm eager to fill them up with computers and books."

Luiza took photos of modern library furniture from Georgiana's presentation and showed them to the mayor. He agreed to have the furniture ordered, but raw materials were still needed. A local councilor volunteered to provide lumber, and the mayor found a carpenter.

What motivated the mayor and local council to fund rent, furniture, and renovation for the library? "I showed them that the library is worth investing in. Every time they come by, they see the children lined up in front of the library. I also organize birthday parties, in school, where I project movies and do party activities" Luiza explained. And mayor Constantin Olteanu added: "My goal is to develop the commune, which means also funding cultural activities. We had some projects for a bigger library, but we couldn't fit it in the budget. Still, I knew something must be done for the children and youth of our community. I see them come to the little library every day and this gives me hope for the future."

The new library will be organized to combine computers and books and also has a space for community activities. "I hope, when computers come, to attract more adults to the library. People don't read and they are not interested in what I have here, although every year I got money for books and the collection is pretty new. But what can you expect? For 30 years, there was no library in this community. People need time to learn about the benefits of reading" Luiza Barbu shared.

The two librarians expect that traffic in their library will increase once they join Biblionet. All the children who will grow up in the library will secure the future of the institution while their parents support its activities. ■

Children Build Electronic Portfolios at Brasov Library

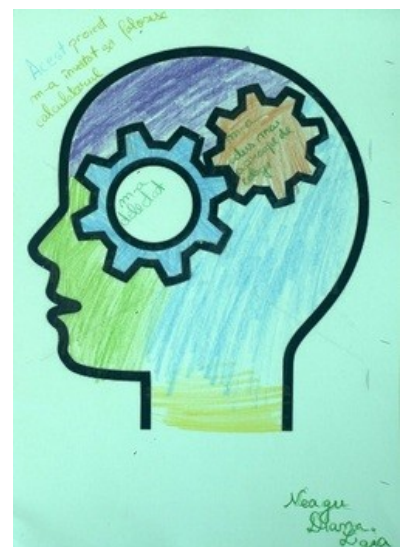
While children like using computers and libraries in Romania are used to working with children, few have developed programs to combine work and play for education. *Digifolio* is a project created by the Brasov County Library to pilot a "public library - school" partnership model that will develop students' digital skills.

The library is helping children create electronic portfolios, a collection of student work, through showing them how electronic folders are created, develops multimedia communication skills, and teaches a new way to present their work.

Over the course of three months, 32 2nd grade and 30 6th grade children learned the process of creating portfolios, how to use web 2.0 instruments like Weebly, Voki, Prezi, Wikispaces, and YouTube, and various equipment, including cameras, digital recorders, and scanners. As the program came to an end, the participants took real pride in their newly acquired knowledge and the chance to exercise their creativity. "This project made me think clearly." says Teodor Neagu, one of the 6th grade students. A classmate added, "This is an interesting project that teaches you new things and stimulates your creativity."

"I consider this project to be very attractive for the students, as my daughter was so eager to get to school in the morning to attend the library project, and she was motivated in the afternoon as well to search the internet . . . she had homework for Digifolio" - Bianca Co-man confesses. Parents praised the library: "We have to congratulate those who came up with the idea of this project, because it managed to handle and include even the most mischievous kids with absolutely no desire to do anything at all, and thank you so much for this once again, we hope for it to continue next year," declared Nicoleta Orzan, mother of 6th grader Rares.

This was the pilot year of the project, which means that it will be continued and developed in the following years as well. The project organizers hope to repeat the project in other schools by training teachers and involving the school libraries and computer labs. Check out the project site at <http://digifolio.weebly.com/> ■



Student work from Digifolio

Digital Stories Help Seniors Remember

Helping to close digital divides and offer programs that ensure e-inclusion is a critical service for libraries. Recognizing this need, a group of 14 librarian trainers represented Romania in a partnership created with the Grundtvig European initiative for lifelong learning. The project works to improve the digital inclusion of senior citizens through teaching them digital storytelling. It started last year and is implemented by a consortium made up of Goldsmith College and the Centre for Urban Sociology in England, the Bistrita Progress Foundation in Romania, the Mitra Foundation in Slovenia, and Laurea in Finland.

After attending a training course in London this spring, the first group of seven librarian trainers set out to choose their future trainees and conducted courses. So far, 36 senior citizens have attended a two-week course on basic IT skills and movie editing and created their own digital story.

“When we started to select participants, we contacted several seniors who come to the county library on a weekly

“I lost my husband a couple of years ago and my children live far away from me. At some point, I couldn’t dream of anything interesting happening to me anymore and nothing seemed to motivate me. Then, one day, a friend invited me to the theatre, at the county library. I thought we were going to see a play, but it was, actually the beginning of the drama club for me. It’s been more than two years and I can’t imagine my life without the theatre now.”

Elena Ivan, DigiTales participant

herself and for others: “I lost my husband a couple of years ago and my children live far away from me. At some point, I couldn’t dream of anything interesting happening to me anymore and nothing seemed to motivate me. Then, one day, a friend invited me to the theatre, at the county library. I thought we were going to see a play, but it was, actually the beginning of the drama club for me. It’s been more than two years and I can’t imagine my life without the theatre now.”

Similar trainings were held at the county libraries in Dambovita, Valcea and Dolj, with more to come in the fall. In October 2011 the second group of seven librarian trainers will participate in the ToT course to promote the digital storytelling method and another cascade of training events will follow, creating more personal, creative, digital stories told by the elders.

As part of their participation in this event, the involved librarians will also do their own version of Train the Trainers for their fellow librarian trainers in all of the county libraries in Romania, giving the method a chance to grow and involve more and more senior citizens. Check out one example of the stories created at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljB_XaXoq2k ■



Seniors learn how to edit multimedia and create digital stories about their lives through DigiTales

basis for other various activities (auditions, viewing, etc.) Four of them are also members of the county library drama club, so their stories relate mainly to this experience. The other six have stories on their everyday life since retirement, taking part in charity work and the activities of the county library,” explains Virgil Cojocaru, trainer and Biblionet coordinator for the Neamt County Library. Courses in Piatra Neamt were attended by two groups of senior participants, ten persons aged 60 to 85. Elena Ivan is one of the participants with an emotional life story that she recorded for



Virgil Cojocaru shows trainees how to use MovieMaker software



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Iasi County Libraries Lead First Aid Education



Volunteer Alexandra Bostan helps users practice first aid measures

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with a grant from the Community Participation Contest. Each library will create a First Aid Club, with monthly meetings offering members an opportunity to discuss topics in-depth and practice. For Mihaela Podariu, a user in Targu Frumos, the library “is a good place to start such courses; it would be great to also have first aid trainings in school, because you never know when accidents happen.”

Gheorghe Tataru, mayor of Targu Frumos was pleasantly surprised: “I wouldn’t have thought that the library could organize such courses. This shows that they are involved in social activities as well as cultural, and gives a new dimension to an old institution.”

The main partner in the project, the local branch of the Red Cross, provided trainings free of charge for the librarians in the regional centers. However, training materials provided by the Red Cross were costly, so the County Library decided to create a brand new

course. The materials consist of two textbooks, one paired with the presentation shown to the participants and one trainer’s manual with notes and for the librarians who deliver the training. For each of the practical exercises there are photos and in-depth explanations. Thanks to a partnership with the County Ambulance Service, the librarians taking charge of the regional centers were trained at a well-equipped facility where emergency medical staff are trained.

The first two meetings in Targu Frumos and Pascani have generated excitement over this collaboration and its potential to improve first aid across Iasi County. Pascani teacher Lucia Toma explained her own ideas for using her new knowledge: “I want to teach my students how to give first aid and I’m also thinking about setting up a first aid club in school. The partnership with the municipal library and the Red Cross is essential.” ■