

# GLOBAL LIBRARIES ROMANIA

MONTHLY UPDATE

APRIL 2009

## Librarians Showcase New Skills at Planning Phase Closing Conference

On February 26, the Bucharest Metropolitan Library hosted “Our Journey from Books to the Internet,” the final conference of the pilot phase of the Global Libraries – Romania program. The conference brought together pilot site librarians, local mayors affiliated with the pilot sites, Community Participation Contest (CPC) winners, and select dignitaries from the National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians in Romania (ANBPR). Showcasing the professional and institutional changes that have transpired during the program, pilot site librarians presented examples of how training and technology have impacted their local libraries. Some offered statistics, while others shared anecdotal stories describing how new users have made the library a second home. Following are highlights from the presentations and testimonials delivered during the final program.

### Baru – Hunedoara County

Librarian Narcisa Sorescu reported that the library has experienced significant growth in users, and now offers daily basic computer and internet classes along with updated weekly community information and cultural events.

Baru Mayor Daniel Raducanu said “I know I was a difficult partner in the beginning, but I wanted the best for my community... Streets, water and sewerage are important, but none of these projects could give us what Biblionet brings: a better hope for our children. When I understood that, together with Narcisa, I got closer to the spirit of Global Libraries. Mayors all over the region are asking me about Biblionet and I do everything in my power to support it and will continue to do so. They can come and us ask for our help, and be sure that we’ll be available for this.”

### Hunedoara County Library

Library director Gabriela March quoted Eugen Coveianu, a participant in the basic computer courses: “My children gave me a laptop as a present, but I was afraid to open it. I kept it in a box for two years. After only a couple of days in this course, I’m curious to learn more and now brave enough to use the computer.”



Visitors enter the Iasi County Library. The library was one of the pilot sites that presented at the final conference.

### Cehu Silvaniei – Salaj

After computers were installed, the number of library users in Cehu Silvaniei doubled and librarians were enthusiastic. “We learned so many new things we forget about going home,” said librarian Iuliana Balint. “Everybody comes in looking for information, for a solution to their problems. It’s hard to keep your door locked after hours.”

### Salaj County Library

Florica Pop, Salaj County library director, remarked, “If I were asked why Biblionet is important for our library, I would give a very short answer: it brought our users closer to us, even those who had no idea what a library looks like. Yes, we did have public internet access before, but when patrons

*Continued on Page 4*

## Inside this issue:

- FINAL PILOT SITE CONFERENCE SHOWCASES LIBRARIAN SKILLS 1
- GRAPHIC: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CONTEST WINNERS 2—3
- GOVERNMENTS SEE IMPACT OF FREE PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS 4



**IREX**  
WWW.IREX.ORG

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CONTEST (CPC) WINNERS

Libraries from around Romania designed innovative community technology projects during the Planning Grant.



**ONLINE LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER:** Sandominic Commune Public Library, Harghita County, June 2008  
The library developed an online journal of community events. The online news service helps older members of the community become familiar with new technologies and younger members become more involved in the community.

**THE LIBRARY FOR ALL:** The "Ionita Scipione Badescu" County Library in Zalau, July 2008  
The library opened a new branch in the county hospital, which provides new electronic and print resources. The library is open to patients, visitors of the hospital, and people from the neighborhood.

**INFOPITICI:** Simian Commune Library, December 2007  
The public library of Simian Commune worked to increase the use of new technologies by creating a small group of local volunteers to provide instruction on basic computer skills and assist school children, residents, and tourists in accessing information on the internet at the local public library.

**TALES OF SASCHIZ:** Saschiz Commune Library, December 2007  
The public library of Saschiz Commune in Mures County developed a local database which organized information regarding funds and grants from the Romanian government and European Union along with information on rural, agricultural, and small- and medium-sized business development.



**BIBLIOTECARADIO:** The "Octavian Goga" County Library in Cluj, February 2008  
The "Octavian Goga" County Library in Cluj created an online radio station with a strong emphasis on encouraging cultural revitalization and community information. The online station is available at <http://www.bibliotecaradio.ro>.

**THE "0" KILOMETER OF THE COMMUNITY:** Public Library of Filiasi, Dolj county, November 2008  
The project will create a partnership between local institutions to develop a database on local cultural tourism. Thirty students and teachers will take documentary visits to four monasteries in the area to collect information on local history and culture. With the help of teachers and librarians, children will then use computers in the library to produce a cooking book presenting traditional dishes. They will also organize an exhibition of glass icons they create along with photos taken during the visits at the monasteries.



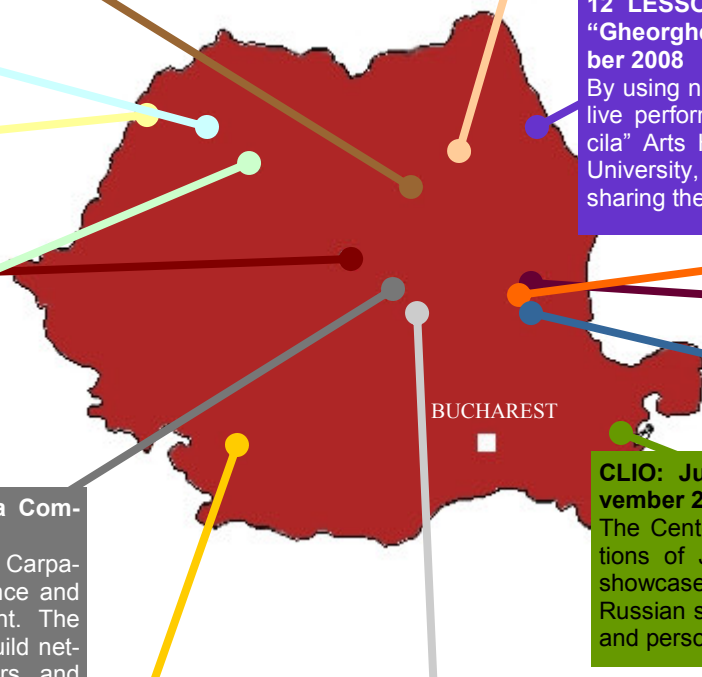
**THE RIGHT TO STORIES:** CCD Library, Neamt County, January 2008  
Through the project the CCD Library in Neamt County is addressing a specific local problem of children with parents working abroad. As a solution to the lack of parental guidance, children's rights are taught by examples from selected stories rewritten and illustrated by teams of children.

**12 LESSONS FOR THE HISTORY OF MUSIC:** "Gheorghe Asachi" Iasi County Library, November 2008  
By using new technology, the library will record the live performances of the students of "Octav Bancila" Arts High school and "George Enescu" Arts University, and upload them on the library website, sharing them to a greater audience.



**EFOTOGRAFI@MEA:** "Duiuiu Zamfirescu" County Library in Focsani, October 2008  
The library created a photography club offering photography courses and hosting photography contests for children. The library reached out to the community with new services and attracted new users through these services.

**GATES OPENED TO THE FUTURE:** Tepeu Public Library, March 2008  
The project created an educational and career counseling resource center at the Tepeu public library in Galați County and organized a course that taught participants job skills. Several community members have found jobs as a result.



**CLIO:** Jurilovca Commune Public Library, November 2007  
The Center for Promoting Local Culture and Traditions of Jurilovca (<http://www.bibliotecajurilovca.ro>) showcases the rich cultural heritage of the local Russian speakers by archiving documents, pictures and personal stories.

**EDUCERO:** Sacele Town Public Library, Brasov County, August 2008  
The library created an information kit that explains the right to citizenship, the importance of having official identity papers, and the legal rights of ethnic minorities living in Romania. Eight Roma volunteers were trained in IT skills, and they will then train other Roma citizens to access local library resources.



**THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY:** Focsani South District branch of Vrancea County Library, April 2008  
The project increased awareness through an information campaign about bullying in city schools in Focsani and provided support for children confronting this problem.

**IREX Romania Global  
Libraries Office**

15 Dr. Staicovici Nicolae  
050556 Bucharest  
Sector 5, Romania

Phone: +40 21 410-2563  
Email: gl@irex.ro

IREX Headquarters Office  
2121 K Street NW #700  
Washington DC 20037

Phone: 202-628-8188  
Fax: 202-628-8189  
E-mail: gl@irex.org

**biblionet.ro**



**IREX**

WWW.IREX.ORG

*IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing leadership and innovative programs to improve the quality of education, strengthen independent media, and foster pluralistic civil society development. Founded in 1968, IREX works in more than 50 countries.*

## Final Conference

*Continued from Page 1*

started coming in large numbers, we realized that some of them needed more help than others. Roma children, for instance, were very glad that they, too, can learn how to use computers and that somebody will have patience and explain things so they can understand.”

### Scanteia, Iasi

Librarian Lenuta Baltag partnered with International NGO World Vision and local eighth graders to secure financial support for students’ high school studies. Together, they created an online database of highly motivated students involved in cultural and academic activities. Local businesspeople use the database to select a student to sponsor. So far nine children from Scanteia are receiving funds that allow them to continue their education through high school.

### Tulcea County Library

Marinela Mihalcioiu, Tulcea County Library Director, reported that the library was able to reach a wider audience by placing computers in adult- and children-specific areas.

The new equipment was initially installed in one room; the number of library users increased, but their average age was below 16. After collecting feedback from the few adult users, the librarians realized they could increase adult usage by putting computers in both the adult and children’s sections. After rearranging the equipment, children’s usage continued at a steady pace and adult use increased from three to five users per day to 25 to 30 users per day.



Baru Mayor Raducana presents what investments in access to information have meant for his community.

## Governments See Impact of Free Public Internet Access

Romanian public officials have taken advantage of the Biblionet program to bring modern technologies to their communities. This partnership has allowed officials to promote community development by instituting a vital service that allows community members access to fast and inexpensive communication methods and resources that will improve their daily lives.

Early in the project, Sulina Mayor Aurel Dimitriu commented, “Sulina knows about the internet. There are three providers in town and about 500 subscribers. But Sulina has 1600 families and many of them cannot afford to have internet at home. For them, for tourists, and for all those who need support in finding information we have opened this center.”

As the program progressed, authorities discovered that their constituents were accessing the internet for a variety of purposes. One of the most common uses so far has been communication via free services such as Skype and email. An 83-year old library patron in Scanteia now uses a library computer and webcam to communicate with her daughter and nephew living abroad.

Business entrepreneurs are able to search the internet for information about EU and Romanian regulations and funding opportunities, and those looking for jobs can access job boards and get assistance preparing their CVs.

One library patron in Salaj County worked with the librarian to search online for a kidney specialist. Locating an appropriate specialist is a process that normally takes a week or longer, but this patron was able to do so in a single day and received necessary treatment shortly thereafter.

Access to educational materials is another major use of library computers. Baru librarian Narcisa Sorescu reports, “Children come for books recommended by their teachers, but sometimes I don’t have as many copies as they need. So I use virtual libraries, e-books, audio books, and other resources I find on the internet to help them.”

Over the last year, Romanian authorities have found that providing free public internet access at libraries augments existing services—such as education—while generating new community-oriented information services.