

## Iasi Romania - steps towards a learning community

### Intro

The key players from the Iasi community in Xploit - Iasi County Inspectorate and FEG - describe their Xploit experience.



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Local learning centers and partnership are yet to be built into a coherent lifelong learning policy. Despite the numerous partnership and network initiatives of recent years, they remain occasional, interest-driven and short-lived. Policy development and local implementation are still lacking.  
*The European Association for the Education of Adults, 2006*



The IASI EDU community structures existed when the Xploit project started as well as the part of it responsible with the exploitation of European resources. What the Xploit project has done was to back up their functionality, making sure they work properly serving the community's best interest, keeping them active and updated and supporting them growing into a network of partners, motivated by the same wish to contribute to the development of the community.

The key word for the period in which the Xploit project was running is growth. As a pretext, the project has brought to the same "table" professionals and institutions working disparately in EU cooperation (or not being involved in it at all), pupils and parents, teachers and representatives of NGOs.

It was among the first initiatives to promote the idea of sharing resources, making them available and at hand at local level.

It was and it is not easy to have people and institutions working together when they "compete" with each other in the community, but the Xploit project was a good opportunity to start working together, making connections work and have people talking about what and how they could do to improve cooperation at both local and EU level, how to open up new horizons for those not involved.

It is difficult to pronounce on the impact of the project since it created a web-like construction. The results are to be more visible in time. However, at local level the partnership tried to measure the extent to which the information circulates and to which the results are consistent with the expectations. The results of the questionnaires applied for this purpose showed us that the members of the community who answered it considered the network functional, useful and they were willing to contribute to it. But, in the same time, the questionnaires revealed that there are still many steps to be taken towards the point where we could speak about our city as a "learning city".

We realised along the way that we needed to share the results of our work because it helps us go further, seek for more and try to find new ways of increasing quality and quantity of EU projects and cooperation.

We could, at this moment, talk about premises for the next steps into involving the rest of the community in the process of working together, openly, at the community level.



We are positive that the future community initiatives and perspectives are alive and on-going. Most of the project results will continue working after the project is over because of two reasons: they exist and they are needed. It can be comparable with a one-way road. The community will continue its way to development with a deep understanding that working isolated in a Europe working together will never be a solution. So far, we experimented the European taste in our EDU community as a

great success for those who have tried it and quite accessible for those who haven't. Supporting and linking local community initiatives and then exploiting them so that most of its members are aware of the benefits seems to be a good source of inspiration and motivation, as well.



The exploitation, being the key word of the entire project, was, of course our focus point. The tools we used in Iasi EDU community were:  
The Xploit project local web- site, with two different sections: Database of results from EU projects, available in our community, to be disseminated at the community level and a Resource Centre with information about our city, places and institutions of interest for visitors but also for our members;  
2 exploitation events organized by the County School Inspectorate of Iasi (ISJ) where representatives from the majority of schools took part in;  
The yahoo group entitled "proiecteisi", group to which all the educational institutions at pre-university level in the county of Iasi are linked to and through which the most important information about EU projects circulate within the community;  
Presentations of the project made in several occasions at both local and EU level, in partner meetings and when presenting the institutional portfolio of European activities and partnerships.

We consider the infrastructure strong enough to support itself since most of it existed when the project started. However, the volume as well as the quality of the work to be done is very much dependent on the policy guidance made by the local authorities.

Since important things take time and changing mentality and way of work cannot be done in 2 or 3 years at a community level, it will take us some more years of experimenting and developing local projects. This will shape the infrastructure the Xploit project defined so well so far.

