

## How did I experience working with Learning Communities in the Xploit?

### Intro

Irina Stanciu works for FEG, an educational institution located in Iasi, Romania. She was involved in Xploit ever since it was designed, as a natural further step of City Learning Net.

Irina Stanciu, Iasi RO



### Contact

Irina Stanciu  
fundatia\_feg@yahoo.com



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*

I work for FEG, an educational institution located in Iasi, Romania, being responsible for the Program Department.



I was involved in Xploit ever since it was designed, as a natural further step of City Learning Net, so I was quite excited to work with it. When it started I thought I knew well what it was about, but the truth is that during the last 3 years I've found out a lot of information about our community and I discovered a lot of ideas and initiatives that could be put in practice to improve our lives and work.

The community I work in is a very specific one, an educational network of various types of schools, professionals and inspectors, a live community in our city and county, Iasi. To be more specific Iasi EDU community is an educational one, comprising all institutions involved in pre-university education. They are coordinated by our "political" partner in the project - The County School Inspectorate of Iasi.

Personally, it was my first experience as to working with public institutions and I discovered interested and very committed people to the idea of developing the community, by contributing with their own expertise and knowledge.



From the technical point of view the project was a difficult one, not only because it was something new, but because this time we had to share and not to compete with each other. Did we manage to change things? Yes, to some extent. But we are still quite far from working as one engine. Changing people's mentality is very difficult. We started by finding out what was needed in our community or what could be improved in terms of communication, sharing EU resources and events organized in partnership with the large public. Communication among our members was ensured in a centralized way but very encouraging at the same time. Most institutions used a yahoo group- proiecte.jsj to read the news, share information and find out more about projects and events.

During the project lifetime we applied a questionnaire in an attempt to measure the efficiency of the group as a communication channel and not only. The results that came back showed a large availability to put information, resources and personal experiences in common as well as willingness to participate in EU cooperation activities. It also presented the interest of the community members in the idea of "learning communities". Too little has been said so far on this issue, mainly due to the past years' loading - both politically and socially. But we are positive about the road we have taken.



Along the way, we also discovered that our colleagues in the community needed a more local approach to the results of EU projects. There are many data basis with resources from EU projects but none of them is available in the national language, nor are they at hand, when it comes about personal contacts or further information and materials. That is why we created our own data base with examples of projects that can be appreciated as examples of good practices. We are decided to take it further, even after the project has ended.

The most important result, visible so far, is the amount of activities organized together within the community. It has taken various forms and names, such as : The national festival of your chances, The week of Adult education, the National contests: Made for Europe and European School Award, destined to recognize the quality and quantity of EU cooperation activities run in schools and the list could go on.



Schools, kindergartens and NGOs are more and more willing to share resources, to assume their social role, as pillars of community and open up towards the community.

What's happening now within the community is motivating and encouraging. I personally believe that in the next few years schools and teachers will represent one of the most important assets in lasi community, because once we have learnt to work together, the benefits will come back in a more evident way and in an extended number.

