



**European Approaches  
to Inter-Generational  
Lifelong Learning**

**The Local Council of Youth:  
The Municipality of Timisoara**

**ROMANIA**  
**Case Study Identity Card**  
**2007**



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## EAGLE CASE STUDY

# ROMANIA

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Executive Summary*

The Local Council of Youth is a project that functions within the Municipality of Timisoara and it was initiated by a public-private partnership in 2005: the Municipality of Timisoara, the Timisoara branch of the Pro-Democracy Association and the Inter Cultural Institute in Timisoara have decided that the creation of the Local Council of Youth was needed to respond to two major community needs: the education for democratic citizenship and the social and political activation of youth on one hand, and the need of the local policy and decision makers to consult the young population of the community.

The initiative can be traced back to a 1992 Resolution of the Permanent Conference of the Local and Regional Leaders in EU which adopted 'The Charter of Youth Participation in the Life of Municipalities and regions' and to a project initiated in Romania in by Master Forum (Romanian UNESCO club) and through which support was given for the creation of a number of Local Youth Councils. However, the project described here can be defined as a local initiative: the framing of the project and the learning activities have been designed to respond to local needs in a specific manner.

The Local Council of Youth interacts with and is supported by the (adult) Local Council. The adults act as models and as mentors for the young people and all the democratic procedures and practices underpinning the activity of the Local Council are transferred to the Local Youth Council, both through theoretical and methodological input and through practice that mirrors the real political and democratic processes.

The Local Council of Youth is involved in intergenerational learning activities together with the Local Council, but, at the same time, it has its own, independent projects and activities through which they apply what they have learnt from the mentoring exercise.

The two layered framework of the Local Council of Youth project is transferable to other contexts: the framework has a mentoring/modelling level, i.e. a component through which the young people can observe and work together with the Local Council (how to organise elections, how to campaign, how to structure and to assign roles in the Council, etc); In addition the young people can initiate and participate in projects and activities independently: the members of the CLT have participated in training sessions, in partnerships and networking events, in fundraising and in social action; thus, they could use their learning in the Local Council to develop their own activities.



## 2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

<b>Title</b>	The Local Council of Youth: The Municipality of Timisoara
<b>Country</b>	Timisoara, Romania <u>Comments:</u> There are other Local Councils of Youth that function in Romanian towns and villages; Master Forum, an NGO that initially functioned as a UNESCO Club, has created the first ones in 1994. In 2006 all the existing CLTs in Romania have participated in a National conference. However, different bodies and organisations support the creation of each CLT locally.
<b>Duration</b>	Starting Year: 2005 End Year: n/a <u>Comments:</u> The CLT that functions within the Municipality of Timisoara has been created in 2005 through elections in which all secondary school pupils in Timisoara (the schools representing all constituencies of Timisoara). Elections are organised every two years, so they are due in 2007.
<b>Status</b>	Running
<b>Managing institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public organisation (i.e. Mayor's office)</li> <li>▪ Voluntary/social sector/foundation</li> </ul> <u>Comments:</u> The project is managed by the Municipality of Timisoara (through one of the vice-mayors), a public administration institution, and the Inter Cultural Institute and the Pro-Democracy Association, two NGO's that aim to support democratic citizenship and intercultural education.
<b>Contact details</b>	Last Name: ORZA First Name: Adrian Title: Mr. Position/Role: Vice Mayor Institution: The Municipality of Timisoara Street: Bd. C.D. Loga no 1 Town: Timisoara Post Code: 300030 Phone: 0040 256 408 300 Fax: 0040 256 490635 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:orza@primariatm.ro">orza@primariatm.ro</a> URL: <a href="http://www.primaratm.ro">http://www.primaratm.ro</a>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP)</li> </ul> <u>Comments:</u> The Local Council of Youth (CLT) is partly sustained through the budget of the Municipality of Timisoara for the business as usual activities; the participation of the CLT members in different national and international conferences is supported through public funding coming from national and international organisations (e.g. the Romanian Ministry of Education or EC). For other initiatives and projects that the CLT develops, it applies for funding from private sources.
<b>Partnership arrangement/organisational form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bottom-up, grass root initiative</li> </ul> <u>Comments:</u> Although the framework for youth participation in community life has been created at the level of EU in 1992 (Resolution 237 issued by the Permanent Conference of the Local and Regional Leaders in EU that adopted the 'charter of Youth Participation in the Life of Municipalities and Regions') and in Romania in 1994 (three NGOs have created the first CLT's through the 'PALTIN' project: the initiative belongs to Master Forum, the Pro-Democracy Association and the Timisoara branch of the Soros Foundation), the creation of each CLT is a bottom up initiative.

*Scale*

- Community based
- Local

Comments/Description: The CLT under study represents the youth of Timisoara and its members shadow the Local Council that concentrates on the policies and practices concerning the Municipality of Timisoara. The case of intergenerational learning studied involves the Local Council of Youth and the Local Council. However, there are other activities when the members of the CLT participate in regional, national and international events.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<i>Collaborating Group I</i>	Local Council of Youth: Pupils in their 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade who study in secondary and VET schools in Timisoara. Each member of the group was designated by the pupils in his/her school to represent these pupils of the school( a constituency) in the Local Council of Youth.
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i>	30 <u>Comments:</u> This is the number of members of the (adult, elected) Local Council, and the Local Council of Youth shadows the Local Council.
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i>	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 15 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 17 <u>Description:</u> Pupils in the 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade are elected in CLT, because they have a 2 year mandate, and during this mandate they should be pupils in order to be part of the Council.
<i>Collaborating Group II</i>	Local Council: Citizens of Timisoara elected (on lists proposed by political parties) to represent the citizens in taking political and practical decisions concerning the life of the city and its citizens. The members have different ages, different professions and different occupations and they are members in the Council for four years after they have been elected.
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i>	30
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i>	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 25 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 70

## 4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

### *Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice*

The aim of the Local Council of Youth (CLT) is to represent the young people who live in Timisoara in the democratic processes and with the democratic elected bodies in the community. The young people who are members in the CLT learn participative democracy and active citizenship through experiencing the democratic practices and procedures (elections, the functioning of the council, taking decisions, etc) and through interacting with the main social actors that are active on the public scene in the community (other organisations, groups and bodies).

The Local Council of Youth acts as an interface between young people and the elected bodies of the local public administration: the Local Council, the Mayor and the Vice-Mayors and different agencies and bodies who represent the Central administration at a local level.

In the case of CLT, intergenerational learning occurs both in the direct interaction between CLT and the Local Council, and in the independent activities the CLT develops and implements.

The members of the Local Council of Youth participate in the meetings of the Local Council, they observe how these meetings are organised and how democratic processes function, what the issues on the agenda of the Local Council are and how decisions are reached. The members of the CLT voice the needs and the opinions of the younger generation and present the perspective of young people of Timisoara in the debates of the Local Council; on the other hand, the members of the CLT take the issues discussed and debated upon in the Local Council and put these on the agenda to be discussed with their young colleagues in school.

Besides the learning activities that emerge from the interaction between the Local Council and the Local Council of Youth, the latter also has 'independent' activities and projects that are meant to give its members the opportunity to practice democratic mechanisms and active citizenship independently; the CLT members acquire knowledge and information in their direct interaction with the Local Council and then they apply these in activities of their own. The activities of the CLT include the development of projects that promote young people and integrate young people in the social and cultural life of the city, the organisation of fundraising events, the initiation of national and international partnerships.

CLT members are active through four committees: Social Issues, Arts and Culture, Sports and Leisure and Culture and Civilisation.

### *Location of the learning activity*

*Formal settings i.e. public (town hall) building*

*Informal settings i.e. community facility/building and social settings*

Comments: The learning activities in which the Local Council and the Local Council of Youth work together take place in the town hall, in a formal setting. However, the CLT initiates and participates in activities that have a social, cultural or educational dimension, independently or in partnership with other organisations. Generally these activities are organised in informal settings.

<b>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community development, living &amp; safety incl. intergenerational living and meeting places</li> <li>▪ Mentoring i.e. intergenerational support, services and consultancy</li> <li>▪ Mediation incl. problem/conflict solving, prevention of violent behaviour</li> <li>▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship</li> <li>▪ History and reminiscence</li> </ul>
<b>Fields of Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development and continuity of societal values;</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge &amp; Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)</b>	Predominantly 'downstream' i.e. older to young, but, in some cases, balanced and/or bi-directional e.g. exchange of knowledge, culture, sports, living communities, learning)
<b>Interactions between the target group(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ group based</li> <li>▪ many-to-many</li> <li>▪ physical/offline interaction;</li> </ul>
<b>Categories of the learning activity</b>	Informal
<b>OECD/DeSeCo Competences</b>	<p>1 = Competence Category 1: Using Tools Interactively</p> <p>1.1 = The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively</p> <p>2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p> <p>2.3 = The ability to manage and resolve conflicts</p> <p>3 = Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously</p> <p>3.1 = The ability to act within the big picture</p> <p>3.2 = The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal project</p> <p>3.3 = The ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs</p>
<b>EC Key Competences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication in the mother tongue</li> <li>▪ Learning-to-learn</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal and civic competences</li> </ul>
<b>Success factors and barriers</b>	<p>It is a known fact that the participation of the young people in the social and political life of communities is situated on a decreasing level; young people find that public administration and the political structures are disconnected from the real life and from the issues found relevant by the young people. Other young people are not self confident to voice their opinion and needs and believe that their opinion is not interesting for other social actors.</p> <p>The intergenerational learning that takes place in this project leads to successful participation of young people in social and political life: the Local Council offers a framework for the Local Council of Youth to function and the group of adults become models and mentors for the young people. In this case intergenerational learning facilitates the exercise in participation; the young people can observe the adults and they can act or be-</p>

come productive only when they feel they are ready to act and only with the aspects or issues they consider relevant and digested.

The CLT works closely with the Local Council, but at the same time its members can access many other material and human resources: CLT is part of a regional, national and international network; in addition, a number of institutions, local, national and European support the development of the members of CLT through training courses that cover a wide range of topics (citizenship, project management, leadership). So, the members of CLT learn both through input of a more theoretical and methodological nature, and through practical, hand on learning.

Another success factor is the fact that, although in most cases the flow of knowledge and information is 'down-stream', there are constant opportunities for an 'up-stream' flow, too. Young people present their perspective and their point of view, they are the ones who can introduce issues on the agenda discussed by the adults in the Local Council.

The cycle of intergenerational learning is structured by the election moments, both in the case of the Local Council (every four years) and in the case of the Local Council of Youth (every two years). The composition of the two interacting groups changes and when these changes occur, time is needed for the two groups to adjust and for intergenerational learning to occur successfully. The interaction depends to a great extent on the openness and responsibility of the members of the two groups.

Sometimes when the project is presented in schools before elections for a new Council, there are cases when not all the relevant information is presented so as to prepare the pupils for the activities and for the roles and tasks they are expected to take. There are cases then, after being elected on the CLT, the young people are not committed to fully participate in the learning activities.

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## *Results*

The intergenerational learning activities underpinning the CLT project are complementary to the formal general education and civic education that takes place through the formal system of education.

The young participants in the intergenerational learning activities – the members of the CLT, have benefited from their participation in the project: they have developed personally and professionally both through theoretical input (courses on different aspects of EU citizenship, project management, intercultural education, team building, etc) and through participative practice. Some of these young people have decided to formally study different subjects within the social and political field in the universities; others have participated in a number of international events and have been invited to represent their city/country in a number of conferences. However, only informal evaluation of the impact of these learning activities has been carried out.

Clearly, the impact of the learning activities is measurable through the material results of the activities carried out by the members of the CLT as active citizens of their community; the young people have initiated a number of projects to support the marginalised children and the elderly people: the members of CLT have organised awareness raising activities and fundraising activities and with the sums collected they have bought a number of objects and devices for the Centres for marginalised children and for a treatment facility for elderly people. In addition, a number of issues on the agenda of the Local Council benefited from the input or from the reaction given by the CLT.