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**Evaluation results of University of Craiova**

1. **Academic Day concept and vision**

The University of Craiova is one of the largest educational and research institutions from Romania and one of the most important aims is adult education, and in particular – seniors education. Also the University intends to build partnerships between the institutions that are actively involved in working with seniors and geragogy. The university constantly tries to address seniors needs by developing educational programs and networks in the local (and national) community. The Academic Day is a part of the vast educational project, with the cooperation of the NGO Window Romania and other interested parties and stakeholders. The leaders of the University are also very interested to involve seniors in all the educational activities, building bridges between people from different educational areas and interests.

1. **Motto**

*“Seniors and University: together for successful education”*

1. **Event’s aims and objectives**

* To assimilate knowledge from the field of Seniors Psychology and Arts and Applied Physical Education
* To identify the context and concrete life situation in which they can apply the learned methods
* To use the methods for improving active aging

1. **Location and date**

University of Craiova, Room 321 & 322; 14.06.2011, 10:00–15:00

1. **Target group**

50 seniors from *Window* Romania Association with support from *C. Brâncuși* Association, Craiova Branch

1. **Evaluation**
2. **Participants involved in the project**

We included almost 50 seniors in the project directly by collaborating with ‘Window Romania’ Association from Craiova, Romania. However when the Academic Day was organized we also had young participants, especially from the Department of Education Sciences, University of Craiova. Included in the group of seniors were also several persons with disabilities. The group was well balanced from the gender viewpoint as well.

1. **General description of activities**

The project consisted in organizing, implementing and evaluation of an adult education (and more particularly seniors education) program called Academy Days that was already used by ZAWiW in Ulm, Germany. At the University of Craiova we organized a series of lectures held by the following professors: Corneliu Novac, Associate Professor of Psychology and Education Psychology; Remus Mogonea, Junior Professor, Junior Professor of Education Psychology; Claudiu Bunăiaşu, Junior Professor of Education Sciences; Alexandru Strungă, Teaching Assistant in Education Sciences. We established a very good communication with the NGO and before the implementation of the program we organized a round table to discuss our perspectives of the Academy Day and to apply a survey in order to address seniors’ learning needs. This information was further used to configure the curriculum of the Academic Day.

1. **Achievements**

The most important achievement was that the seniors became aware of the necessity of learning at an older age. They were highly interested in the lectures’ topics and were also very active i.e. putting questions and collaborating. They even requested to continue this program after the completion of the project which was our intention as well. Let aside this exciting atmosphere of learning and enjoyment, the universities’ leaders were also receptive: the Rector and vice-rector are becoming more and more interested in seniors’ education encouraging us to establish the European Institute of Geragogy. The number of seniors who want to take part in the following Academic Day is also growing. The European dimension of collaboration and communication between seniors living in Danube Region was highlighted as well in the lecture of Professor Novac and we think that it is important to use topic with European (and Regional) relevance in the future events.

1. **Impact, visibility and follow up**

In our opinion the event was a success, creating a new tradition at the University of Craiova. The feedback from the seniors was very encouraging and the professors were also proud to make a contribution to this very important subject, neglected in our country for so long – seniors’ education. At the meeting we also established to organize the event again in Craiova and also to develop this idea in other city i.e. Timisoara (with the help of Cultural Association ‘C. Brancusi’) and in Drobeta Tunu - Severin (that is a university center subordinated to the University of Craiova). Also, an article about DASUN will be soon published in the next number of our journal – Annals of the University of Craiova, Psychology and Pedagogy series. Finally, the posters we used helped our seniors a lot in getting to know more information about the event. We also consider that our professors and collaborators from the NGO will serve as multiplicators for the project, making this method known to the general public.

1. **Additional informational and best practices**

The main obstacle was that there aren’t many NGOs specialized in seniors’ education in Craiova and pensioner’s associations is not so well organized so it was sometimes difficult to get in contact with the target group. But we’ve managed to overcome this with the help of ZAWiW (which has a lot of expertise in this field) and with the support of Cultural Association ‘C. Brancusi’ from Timisoara.

1. **SWOT analysis**

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| *Strong Points*   * We have the experts we need * We have didactical infrastructure (room, didactical materials) * Prestige of the University and NGO * Qualification | *Weaknesses*   * Lack of funding from University * University’s structures are very slow responsive and rigid * We don’t have a network focused on seniors education yet * Seniors education competences |
| *Opportunities*   * Use the experience with the European Projects to build up the educational infrastructure * Funding from European Union * Partnerships with other EU institutions interested in seniors education | *Threats*   * Economic problems can affect interests of both professors and seniors * Lack of educational policies addressing seniors education |

1. **Conclusions**

* In our opinion, the Academic Day was a great success, because we accomplished all our objectives, creating in the same time an efficient network for seniors education.
* The majority of seniors (82% from our feedback mini-survey) suggested to continue the event next year, being very interested in the topics (74%). We used a questionnaire with a Likert scale for measuring satisfaction and interest for the next event.
* The Academic Day was the first event centered on a partnership between UCV, NGO and seniors from the municipality of Craiova. We hope we will organize other events of this kind as well.
* We received positive feedback from the TSTD’s Director, Professor Viorel Ionel and from a UCV’s vice-rector. Also other partner NGOs like ACB encouraged us to continue, offering their support and experience.
* As drawbacks we observed that some seniors were reserved, not being so much interested in workshops.
* This passive attitude reflects, in our opinion, a certain mentality of the Romanian seniors, that after you retire you can’t really continue your education or bring substantial contribution to the society. It’s a mental representation that must be challenged!
* Also the communist regime had a big influence in terms of seniors not being organized and without initiatives for their own interests.

1. **Recommendations**

* Continue building up a seniors education network in Craiova with the help of the University, ACB and Window Associations.
* Workshop with UCV’s (and other) professors with the topic of didactical methods used in geragogy (especially on how to activate seniors, raise their interest in academic-based education)
* Continuing the project searching for new ways of self-financing and in the same time gathering additional funding and support from EU and Romanian (local, regional and national) authorities.
* Doing further research in the field by our experts (books, articles, DVDs)
* To bring contributions / lobbying in creating educational policies for seniors.