



Diana Ciobanu - Eisenhower Youth Leader – Project Presentation

In 2017, when I started my Eisenhower Youth Leaders journey, I was just half a year into a very promising project that has since solidified my faith in its importance and reach. At the beginning of that year, three other people and I started Asociatia Grup de Actiune Locala Berceni, with the intention to raise the standard of living for the inhabitants of our village.

In September of that year, the association already boasted several successful events and was looking toward taking on larger-scale projects, with the potential to create effective change in the lives of their beneficiaries. As such, the team decided to apply for financing for various projects, each one tackling a different issue facing the people from our local area.

In the process of selecting the issues we were going to target with our projects, we expanded our area of activity to the entire local county and managed to build fruitful collaborations with the local county authorities.

We started writing various projects in late 2017 and in March of 2018, the association was awarded its first grant.

Our first project aims to improve the thermal insulation of the dwellings in our local rural area by informing the inhabitants about efficient thermal insulation systems, energy losses of their house and promoting responsible behavior of the energy user.

The ways to achieve the objectives set out in the project are an intense publicity campaign in the entire county and the thermal scanning of 200 of its selected houses in the winter season.

The project is best carried out during the winter months because the contrast in temperature between the inside and the outside of the scanned houses needs to be as high as possible for the best results.

The beneficiaries of this project are the inhabitants of my local county, in particular the 200 house owners who opted to have their houses scanned free of charge by the association's volunteers, as well as the local companies who offer thermal insulation services.

The first stage of the project – the publicity campaign – starts on October 1st, with flyers being delivered to each household in the county via mail.

The second stage of the project will be carried out starting November 1st by a team of 10 volunteers, led by myself. Together, we are going to scan the 200 selected houses using two high-definition thermal scanners and round up information about the structure of each of the houses from the homeowners.

The results of the scans will be x-rays of the houses, showing whether any energy losses are taking place and where in the structure they originate.

Specialized engineers will analyze the x-rays, creating energy reports for the house owners. The reports will contain recommendations for thermal systems and the improvement of the thermal insulation of the house.

Using the x-rays and reports in question we will be able put the house owners in contact with local companies who render the services required by the former in order to become energy efficient.

As such, the finality of this project is also to create business opportunities for the companies in the region, as well as raise awareness of how a few simple steps taken for improving the insulation of a house can drastically cut back the energy bill by up to 50%.

Our second project consists of creating and developing a mobile application aimed at reducing food waste rates in our local area, and eventually, in the whole country. For this project the association was awarded a grant in April of 2018.

The purpose of the application is to help users create recipes out of the leftover ingredients they have in their kitchen, using the apparel they already own.

The way the application works is simple. First, users write-in the name of the ingredients they have in their kitchen or they take a picture of each ingredient in the application. Then the application generates recipes easy to make using just those ingredients or those plus one or two more ingredients. In total, there are 100 in-built recipes in the application, but users can add their own to the roster.

The project is aimed at 15 to 50-year-olds, living in urban or sub-urban areas, where commercial centers such as supermarkets exist, single people with no culinary expertise, the family members responsible for grocery shopping, as well as people who have limited financial resources and want to reduce the amount of money spent of wasted food.

In May of this year we started working on the application, together with a talented developer who lives in our town. Thus, the project also creates job opportunities for the inhabitants of the county and stimulates the local economy through investments in the local companies.

The project advocates for buying fewer products and demonstrates how easy it can be to use the ones we already have in our fridge to create tasty meals from scratch, using the mobile application.

At the beginning of September, the publicity spot for the application was finalized and deals were secured with the financier to promote the application on their national channels, once it is launched.

The launch date for the mobile application and the accompanying web-site is the middle of October.

Through this platform, people in the region will learn that they can eat well while wasting less food and spending less on their meals.

A third project we are dedicated to is the creation of an air pollution measurement system that will allow citizens to know when they are in an area that is overly polluted and take immediate action, such as wearing face masks or leaving the area.

For this project to succeed, we have joined forces with the County Council and other county officials, so that we may obtain permission to install measuring devices (mini-laboratories) on public transportation vehicles and important administrative buildings.

These devices announce the level of air pollution every other five minutes and passers-by are to be informed of the pollution levels at any one point, live, through screens placed in bus stations and other intensely trafficked locations.

Should a certain admitted level of air pollution be surpassed, the citizens walking past the screens are informed of the increased health risks and the measures they may wish to take to mitigate them.

This project has solicited a significant amount of research and planning, and it is currently in an advanced state of discussions between representatives of the association, the County Council and the Health Ministry, to allow for a transparent conversation on the topic of air pollution nationwide.

The fourth project we became involved in over the course of the year is the creation of a science program for school-aged children and high school students, to enable their access to physics and chemistry experiments and applied courses following the school curricula, in a clean environment, under professional supervision.

For this project we have once more partnered up with the City Council, who has lent us ample space in a building close to the National Institute for Research and Development for Earth Physics, in our local county.

The program is manned by three members of the association and three researchers from the National Institute for Research and Development for Earth Physics, who plan and guide the experiments carried out by the pupils, in accordance with the school curricula.

Our association ensures the free transportation of all the students and their teachers by bus to the premises of the science park where the courses and experiments take place.

The science program opens its doors on December 1st, and in its first phase will run until February of 2019. Following a round of evaluations at that point in time, we hope to continue the activity until the end of the school year and the following years as well, turning the program into

a regional attraction for teachers wishing to make physics and chemistry more applied for their pupils, and thus generating a greater interest among students in the STEM fields.

Through these four projects and a few others developed and promoted by the association throughout the year, its members, myself included, are making an impact on the livelihood of the inhabitants of our town and local county, as our hope from the beginning has been that sustainable change will help the local population thrive.

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30.09.2018