

A NEW PAIDEIA PERSPECTIVE IN THE EUROPEAN PROJECTS

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Abstract: *Our article formalizes data of the European project **Connecting generations** where we participate with our non-formal education experience related to the Paideia clubs. Its European stakes lies in valuing the intergenerational culture and higher education involvement in civil society based on the social-cultural concepts of **participation and reification**. Our anthropo-pedagogical concept **Club Paideia** reiterates the learning traditional space (in Romanian, it existed handicraft evening sitting, corvee), and it was generated by our students grouped in the Students Forum of Faculty of Education, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University. Paideia Clubs are such a project to build a local learning community of parents grouped around schools and kindergartens, and also to join public and private sector in order to participate in the building local social cohesion of Romanian society. This Agora form whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from one generation to another one participates as a part of fluid human memory.*

Key words: *Connecting generations, Paideia clubs, learning community, children, parents.*

JEL: I2, I3, I31, Z21.

1. Our article formalizes project data of the transnational *Connecting generations: Paideia clubs*. Global concept of *connecting generations* is related to the need for European solidarity and innovation, offering a common and community sense. The project thus became a **learning community** whose partners are: Eda Forum - Italy; Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd - U.K .; Telos Provider Cultural Partnership - Hungary; Living Value - Greece; Mercan Uluslararası Gönüllüler Derneği - Turkey; The University of the Third Age in Białystok - Poland; Aide Associazione degli di educazione Adults La Spezia - Italy; *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Faculty of Education, Student Forum - Romania.

The stakes of our local project *Paideia Clubs*, within the transnational *Connecting generations*, resides in the context of European valuing intergenerational culture and trends of expanding higher education participation in civil society, so that diversity and social cohesion to become visible. Sociologically, the project approaches involved **a participatory form of shared learning, and a form of reification**, direct and online (web-sites, e-book, e-mail, testimonials, face-book, drop-box). The merger between the two modes of communication, face to face and online, through which evolve and shape learning behaviours, were the main drivers of this transnational project. *Paideia Clubs* reiterate the traditional concept of shared learning space: group work, corvee. This local project was generated by the university, through the Students Forum at Faculty of Education, for building local parents community grouped around schools and kindergartens. Clubs are so different evolutionary mechanisms through which the broad participation of all concerned in learning and discipleship Agora. The discipleship is a useful form for non - formal / informal education of students in today higher education system. Also in our specific way, it is a joint project of public and private sector in building local social cohesion in Romanian society. This concept includes a form of lifelong learning, present in a local and society Agora whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from one generation to another as continue human memory.

Regardless of whether education and lifelong learning is a recognised mission in the assembly as a whole of European higher education, this dimension has a poor and different value in different European countries, including Romania¹. **Form of discipleship** of the Students Forum participates in broadening the European educational traditional space through the connection between academic education and lifelong learning.

In the 21st century, which has become the age of digital culture, seniors who have specific knowledge or expertise in a certain area, they find it more difficult to share purchases and value generation with younger generations. Therefore, the communication tools must be identified and used to facilitate dialogue between those who are digitally literate and those who are not. To learn **the basics of discipleship and (e) local mentoring** of our project is an ideal home for an educator to connect one generation to the virtual world. Several techniques have been explored

¹ *** (April 2012). *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Brussels: European Commission.

mentoring Paideia and have been adapted to make them usable in the context of contemporary education. For this, we have identified the needs of local community clustered around schools and kindergartens. Extended project team (students' Forum) was constituted from different generations so that members' team to jointly investigate the Paideia potential of learning.

2. Terms of reference for the content and activities of Paideia clubs are designed on four levels:

(1) How might that through **the activities, contents and results of Paideia clubs**, kindergartens and schools to participate in the sustainable development of local communities?

(2) How was oriented **students training** in the forum? Some of project support activities are more successful than others that are in use?

(3) What was the **impact** of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?

(4) What are **the added values** that could be attributed to students, kindergartens, schools, local communities?

Contents, activities and results of Paideia Clubs

The five Paideia clubs were involved in exploring new values of European Paideia concept, it expresses, at present, the lifelong learning and learning in community space - *agora* - as a shape memory of humanity. Clubs are supported by students and teachers from the Faculty of Education, both in urban and rural areas, are focused on European values of solidarity, such as the perspective of otherness in future, inter-generational values, transfer, (e-)social economy; and innovation trends, such as social dimension Bologna activities - expanding academic education at a time when the labour market and knowledge economy require diversity in the content learning, cooperative learning between generations, the complementarity between public or private tuition by discovering traditional values in the future.

Achieving brand of the UCDC Paideia Club had the following objectives: (e)transferring ethical, spiritual and cultural values from one generation to another by accessing new information technologies and human capital formation; involving the local community, in particular, parents and children working together and promoting Paideia forms in public agora as continue human memory; (e) dissemination of intergenerational learning to generate knowledge and progress for humanity by sharing innovative ways, through dialogue within and outside the project.

Forum topics analysed by students: the basics of (e)-learning and environments learning; What is (e) mentoring *Paideia*?; abilities and competencies necessary for a mentor; resources and learning tools; potential channels and environments ' learning; motivating children and parents; assessment of children and parents, and also the received feed-back; applying e-mentoring *Paideia* techniques. Students have exchanged knowledge and shared experiences and ideas related to these themes, gave practical advice on how to use specific tools taken from formal and informal situations and how to adapt to non-formal and informal learning. We brought together the **curriculum and the local *Paideia* clubs project indicators**: (a) ***Club of local memory***; School of Ghimpati, Giurgiu county - Lecturer, Ph.D. Marin Tudor; (b) ***Research mysteries of the Universe*** - School no. 168 with preschoolers, district 6, Bucharest - Mihaela Gavan, student; (c) ***World's Pacala*** (ceramic workshop), Goethe German College, district 1, Bucharest - Ingrid Târzioru, student; (d) ***Laboratory of jam and cakes***, Kindergarten no 44, district 1, Bucharest - Ionela Turita, student; (e) ***All about festivals in Romania*** (management and marketing), *Dew Drops* Kindergarten, no. 199, district 4, Bucharest - Elena Râșniță, student.

Activities carried out by members' Forum team: (e-)dialogue and the networking project *Connecting generations* and project partners; mapping needs and available resources in (e-) mentoring *Paideia* clubs; developing key skills required for work e-mentor, updating skills of members team from the university offered to seniors and other vulnerable participants; identification of stages of activity in *Paideia* club, developed jointly by members of the team: identifying needs and learning process; identifying segments and methodology that students need; identifying segments and learning tasks that can be supported by (e-)mentoring; selection of communication channel (e-mail, face-book group, etc.); discussion of the method chosen by students; continuous supply of feed-back from *Paideia* clubs; collection of best practices: testimony and questionnaire analysis of impact; collecting examples of motivational tools suggested by seniors participants and youth members, and highlighting ongoing performance; focusing on topics related to daily life of learners, social interest or hobby, breaking news, current issues of everyday life; frequent use of the Internet and the use of communication channels initiated by representatives of generations 16-20: e-mail; face-book group / google group; skype.

How was oriented training students in the forum? Supporting activities are more successful than others in use?

We had regular meetings in the students Forum, had designed curricula for Paideia clubs, including indicators, assessment and methodology. Some support activities have been more successful than the other ordinary ones, such as: making pottery, preparing cakes, exploring the universe, conducting festivals etc. Successful activities were also practical activities where are involved parents (e.g., pottery, experiments in physics, etc.), and also mobility programs of the European project, especially, for our students – they enjoyed all mobilities.

What was the impact of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?

We applied an impact questionnaire to parents involved in Paideia clubs, analysing their impressions and acquisitions related to the project. The project measured the impact of dissemination / promotion of project *Connecting generations - Paideia Clubs* with reference to opportunities and ways to do better in its development. The area where they spread their project results through non-formal and informal activities is rather familiar and extended to workplaces, to neighbours, to friends. Parents appreciate any project acquisitions, such as to work with children, the mutual exchange of experience, craftsmanship and entrepreneurship. They were felt useful for the school community, proud to share life experiences or hobby. These self-referential perceptions on values based indicate an opening optimum group for volunteering, but important remains the anthropocentric praxiological way to grouping parents around schools and kindergartens. Common European values in this project were participation, volunteering and entrepreneurship education. Parents work fits within the project theme *Connecting generations - Club Paideia* by conducting useful activities for the large local community. On the other hand, we noticed that these Paideia Clubs diversified the extra-curricular activities of involved kindergartens and schools and exceeded the initial curriculum of project. Success factors were related to the practical usefulness of the activities, and the failure ones were related to the time parents to participate in the project - in urban, and in rural areas, lack of experience in mentoring parents.

We add, here, **the invisible impact activities** for the promotion and dissemination of the project - broad access for all interested individuals expectation or its contents, results and products: project web-

site *Connecting generations*; menu on the web site of the Faculty of Education, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University: www.ucdc.ro<http://grundtvig.ucdc.ro/contact>; blog kindergartens and schools involved:

<http://clubulpaideea.blogspot.ro/2013/03/prima-intalnire-cu-membrii-clubului.html>; TV programs (TV Romania of Tomorrow MoneyTV); promotion magazine of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, *Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University*; leaflets made at the International Conference *Education in the future* and International Grundtvig workshop; 15 articles in *Euromentor*. 2 and 3/2013 - <http://euromentor.ucdc.ro/en/arhiva.html>; regular activities with students Forum, Faculty of Education; Grundtvigers group - the National Agency: grundtvigers@yahoo.com; various types of communication with partners: face to face: personal meeting during mobility, public meetings, field trips (local projects and reports); e-group: connectinggenerations@google.com; E-book *CONGENIAL Connecting Generations: intergenerational learning for a more inclusive Europe*; drop-box; face-book; communication within the mobility process.

What are the added values that could be attributed to students, kindergartens, schools, local community?

Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University conducted 16 mobilities in project partners' countries. The taken European values of partnerships were explored in our local projects, such as: learning communities mapping (UK); learning experiential - formal community activities as learning stories (Greece); memories for posterity, food, fashion (Poland); solidarity in social life, hospitality to others (Turkey); old and young know how to live in nature (Slovenia); local history (Italy - Edaforum); research and systematization, activities of international partnerships, joint common generations (Aidea - Italy); respect, work with children and parents in Paideia clubs, reciprocal exchange of knowledge and skills, transfer of values from one another (Romania).

Paideia clubs results achieved in terms of lifelong learning and in all circumstances were **individual and groups cognitive structures**: specific learning new skills, change learning behaviour, personal development and motivation for success; socio-cognitive construction of individuals and groups: elements of e-inclusion and social inclusion, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and marketing techniques, intelligent knowledge based local economy; socio-affective construction of group and individual: practice and self-confidence, self-esteem, social ethics, local enthusiasm and emulation, activity and group solidarity, horizontal management; convergence connecting generations and adherence to

European values through local community projects: freedom and peace, personal expression, property, mutual openness; increasing awareness of collective values: membership, membership of the European social harmony; practice and post-materialist materialistic values: money and productive work projects, social cohesion and local e-inclusion, leisure, volunteering, education for all, e-inclusion and social integration, tolerance and reciprocity, intercultural education; validation of matrix forms of anthropocentric European around educational local community development as a local emerging shape; perpetuating ecosystem through learning: women's empowerment, connecting generations locally, changing learning ethical behavior; forms of validation of comprehensive development based on changing trends: criticism, historiography of concepts, balance between local traditions and modernity; contribution to the social dimension of the Bologna Process; creativity of group associated with socio-emotional and cognitive construction of individual and group, smart and inclusive knowledge-based economy; defining and re-defining the necessary ethos of a local community in relation to competitive market: practice and confidence in oneself and in others, self-esteem and respect for others, social and economic ethics, enthusiasm and emulation versus passivity and inertia, group solidarity, networking; adhesion and aggregation of real values through community projects with funding sources; identifying key success factors in achieving a relevant social impact; equality on grounds of age, sex, level of learning acquisition; identify gender empowerment factors for rural women; intergenerational culture based on the local economy, youth and seniors working together; exchange of experiences and practices; perceptions of growth and complexity in lifelong learning and in many circumstances.

3. In conclusion, the project has become a good European practice where we find the old European values and based on the European current of values and innovation, we have developed a methodology increasingly more close to the individual practices and experiences on intergenerational culture. Our project contributes to developing a culture of lifelong learning in the academic environment. Diachronically, we re-discovered an old European and Romanian dimension of leaning based on an anthropological and pedagogical community structure to transfer fluidly knowledge from one generation to another one for the wellness of humanity future.

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