



Youth in Action programme "Youth for democracy project"

**JOIN THE CLUB**  
start your business with us

2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting: Băile Tuşnad/Romania, January 9-12, 2013



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# Magazine



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# Introduction

The Youth Entrepreneurs Club is a meeting point for young people who are interested in developing an entrepreneurial project. With this club, we want to support the future young entrepreneurs by giving them useful information.

It started in Lefkada (Greece) in November 2012. We made the first step by creating the networking between the four partner countries. During those days, the group set up the content of the website and the forum, which are the virtual meeting point for the young entrepreneurs.

In order to broaden the network already created and to continue learning from new experiences of young entrepreneurs across Europe, we organised a second meeting.

From 9th to 12th of January 2013, a new group of sixteen young would-be entrepreneurs participated in the second meeting of Young Entrepreneurs Club organised in Baile Tusnad, Romania. During the four days of that meeting, French, Greek, Italian and Romanian participants were informed about the situation of the Romanian entrepreneurship.

They met with staff from local organizations for youth, like 'Green Zone' or 'Saint Anne Youth Center'. The first one is a green association that organises different activities based on volunteering and related with sport or environment. Established

in 2011, the main goals of 'Saint Anne Youth Center' are child rearing, environment protection and promotion of the volunteering.

In addition, the participants met with several local politicians from the region. Melles Maria, the Vice-Mayor of the town of Baile Tusnad, talked with them about the entrepreneurship potential of that area. Moreover, the 27 years old politician explained the numerous difficulties one has to surmount when starting a business in the region. Apart from this meeting, the participants visited the County Council (region) of Harghita where they could know more about the economical, entrepreneurial or demographical conditions of Harghita Council and they were informed about the creation of Szekler product (trademark and quality).

Besides, our youngsters spent one day in the city of Miercurea Ciuc, visiting places like Sapientia University, the Szekler Museum of Ciuc, located on the renaissance Miko Castle and Olommadar Bar. Also, in Miercurea Ciuc, the participants met with Szaboles Ilyes, a very successful Romanian entrepreneur. He shared with them his experience from his business 'RegioConsult'.

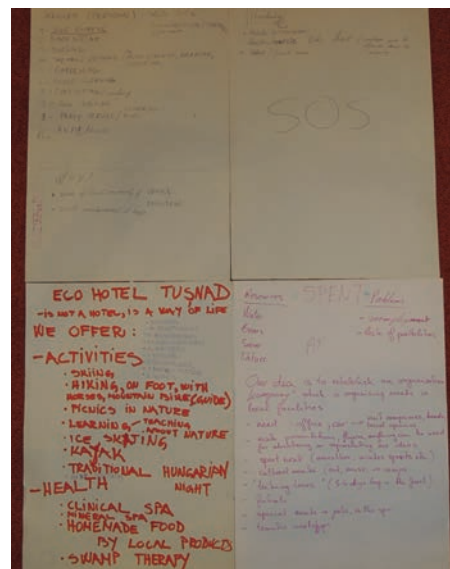
This club is expected to be established as a forum and a nexus linking the future young European entrepreneurs with politicians, entrepreneurs and experts all around Europe.



In general, the participants thought that their contributions for the meeting would be to help in the creations of the final materials (magazine, videos, website...) and, of course, to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences about the entrepreneurial field. On the other hand, their principal hope was to be productive by finishing the tools or cre-

Within one hour every group had to present their idea to the others in only one minute's time. By this limitation the team was urged to put in order the priorities of the plan, because in such a short time they had to convince the other people to invest in their project. First group «SPENT»: The idea was to establish an organization/company, which implies organiz-

They planned offering different services like bike express, baby sitting, nursing, dog walking, gardening, house cleaning,... that is fulfilling all sorts of needs across the local area. They could promote these services by articles in local newspapers, on web site and social media.



Third group «ECO HOTEL TUSNAD»: The idea was to found an eco hotel, which would offer two kinds of possibilities. One pack would comprise activities focusing on nature, like skiing, hiking on foot, mountain bike or with horse riding, picnics in the country side, ice skating,



kayak, traditional Hungarian night... The other pack would focus on healthy activities, like clinical and mineral spa, home-made food by local products, swamp therapy. They could promote the hotel in the mass and social media.

After the presentations, every group had 100 points to share with the other two groups depending on the best or most useful idea.

The benefits from this game were that we were able to learn how to make a plan to create our own business and as well as how we can get ideas from the others.

### How to promote the entrepreneurship:

Another workshop was centred on the subject: 'How to promote entrepreneurship across European countries'.

Three groups were now formed and allotted three different target

groups: young, adults and disabled and disadvantaged people. They had to propose actions to promote the entrepreneurial spirit among people belonging to their specific group.

The first group proposed a game directed to the young who have finished their studies. The idea was to create a competition for youngsters about businesses. The winners would have the opportunity to enrol a mentorship program that would help them to start a business.

The second proposal consisted of steps useful to promote entrepreneurship among adults. A higher taxation for financial capitals should be combined with a lower taxation for capital invested in productive activities and with a program of zero interest loans for new businesses. Other important tools would be a slimmer bureaucracy for companies, hard laws against racket and a net of infor-

mation points (both physical and digital) aimed to explain to interested people how to start a new business.

The third group tried to find outlets for the disabled and disadvantaged people. The goals were, first, to organise meetings and information programs that provide solutions, and, second, to edit a brochure or CD with suggestions on how to create business. Another idea was sharing examples of successful initiatives and visiting to companies. Last but not least, entrepreneurs could well become mentors for disabled people so that they could become entrepreneurs themselves.



## Working groups

In that meeting, we created three working groups in order to be more productive, create the tools and continue with the materials of the club.

The Magazine group worked on the articles destined for publication. They summarised the activities, workshops, visits and presentations and wrote the texts in order to explain all that happened in Baile Tusnad.



The Video group had two tasks. They had to create a making-of video showing the four days of

the participants in Romania. In addition, the video group had to edit an evaluation video where some of the participants explain their impressions and feelings about the project after the second meeting.



Yet the most important work for the club in general is the one related with the forum. Instead of creating another group like in Lefkas, we decided it was better that everyone participate in the construction of the forum. Divided in smaller groups, the participants proposed new topics for

the forum and exchanged ideas about how to support it and to make it active. After the two meetings of 'Youth entrepreneurs club', the forum tackles the following topics:

Sharing experiences (examples of good practices, problems which may arise...), resources and communication with experts (financial information, legal information and human resources), cooperation between businesses (case studies, new ideas, do's & don'ts) and suggestions of books, movies, webs...



# One day of activities in Miercurea Ciuc

Only a few kilometers away from Baile Tusnad is located Miercurea Ciuc, the capital of the County of Harghita.



Sapiientia University



The group went to the Sapiientia University. There, they visited the Faculty of Economics where they learnt about the 'business case study competition', the most important event in this Faculty for twelve years.

This competition is the result of a partnership between the University and several companies. Students from different Romanian and international universities participate in an activity where they have the possibility to simulate the real work in the business world.

Students get the role of business consultants and financial leaders. With the 'Case study competition', they have the opportunity to experience how they can deal

with hard decisions acting as business consultants.

They also have the opportunity to work side by side with successful companies, analyzing and advising the economical situation. The rules are that the students have 24h to know and understand the economical situation of the company.

They receive financial reports, balances, etc and they have to propose what to change for it to develop.

The 'case study competition' is quite welcome for the companies because they receive important feedback, advice and free analysis that they can then use to improve their activities. On the other hand, the program is good for the students because they learn a lot and they can often get hired by the companies.

In this way the "Case Study Competition" is an excellent example of cooperation among Public Institutions and private companies in Transylvania.

At the Sapiientia University the participants also visited the biological laboratories, which are used for teaching.

There, the students can make their practices and carry out research. The labs in hand can have a professional use as well.

Scientists make research and investigations that can lead to important discoveries. These discoveries mean new patents which provide an economical be-



nefit to the scientific companies and institutions.

In addition, the laboratories are used to analyze water and bring innovation in the food industry, the main economical activity of the region.

County Council of Harghita



After the visit to the University, the group went to the County Council of Harghita where they met with political institutions of the region. At this meeting, the representative of the Council explained to the participants the particular characteristics of the county in question, i.e. information about the demography, population, history or cultural and economical activities. The county is integral part of the Szekler community and its principal resources are mineral water springs, woodland, eco-agriculture, active tourism, ecotourism and rural tourism.

Having listened to all that information about the County of Harghita, the participants could know what the activity of the Council is. The Harghita Council is the elected authority of county public administration.

It is based on the principles of local autonomy, decentralization of public services, legality and citizen's consultation regarding local problems of particular interest. Its responsibilities are to coordinate the local council's activities (municipalities, towns



and villages) and the public services and to contribute to the local economic growth by means of development programs.

The principal economic activity of the County is rural and for this reason the Council is working to further the rural and agriculture development of the region. Its strategy is based on five priorities: the improvement of the efficiency of agriculture and forestry, developing the knowledge background related to agriculture, developing local products and offering support for bringing them to the global market, the integration of the viewpoints of society and nature and the balanced development of the functions of the agriculture and rural development. Harghita County Council wishes to promote the products and services made in that region both in Romania and on international level.

An important initiative stemming from the Council in this sense was launched in 2008. It is the protection of the Szekler products through the stamp of the Szekler community trademark. This brand is a distinctive quality label which contributes to competitiveness, assures quality warranty for consumers on product certification and warrants juridical protection for producers against unfair market competition. 'Szekler trademark' covers forty producers and 390 products, divided in four categories: food products, folk art products, intellectual products, industrial products.



## Museum

After the meeting at the county

council, the group went visiting the Szekler Museum of Ciuc, located in the Renaissance Miko Castle which was built by Hidvegi Miko Ferenc, and then it was transformed into a fortified barrack in the year 1716 under the Habsburg rule.



We marvelled at the permanent exhibition of the castle, which shows the history of the first two centuries of the building.

Nowadays the installation comprises three different places:

Fountain room, where you can find some valuable materials from that period. The visitors can understand it better with the help of a short movie. Kitchen room, where we can discover a kitchen recently restored exactly on how it was in the 18th century. We could also have an idea about their gastronomy and the main products and ingredients which they cooked. Tower, to showing the military history, of that period, where you can find weapons, shields, swords, customs and flags.

The castle is being used as a museum, housing periodical exhibitions, festivals and archaeological resources



## Entrepreneurship in Romania

After some time for relaxing, enjoying Romanian food and visi-

ting the Ólommadár coffee (the business of one participant of the seminar), the group came back to Sapientia University to meet with Szabolcs Ilyes, a 33-year-old entrepreneur.



He told us the story of his short life and businesses.

When he was a university student, he was active in the student association and worked with a lot of events, conferences, and training programs organised by the students together with other friends. After graduating, he and his friends set up an association which continued to keep the community together and began to work there. This association organised the Tusvanyos Transylvania Festival, one of the largest event organised for a long time with a lot of experience. During this time he created RegioConsult, which dealt with M & A, project writing and consultancy. This enterprise was sold after 7 years of business, to an international consulting firm (PNO) and this allowed the team to work in the same way as before, but on a corporate level. Besides all this, they also run a hotel which lies on top of the Harghita Mountains, where a lot of tourists bustle throughout the year. Nowadays, RegioConsult got independent again and is one of the largest consulting and project writing businesses in Romania.

At the end of the presentation, the interested participants could ask several questions and discuss with this young entrepreneur. He finished his speech with polite wishes for the club.

# The business of our participants

Some participants at the second meeting of our project in Romania are experimented businessman. They shared with the entire group their experience as entrepreneurs.

## Barna Szocs, Romania



He owns a business consulting agency in the city of Miercurea Ciuc. At his company, he prepares marketing strategies for his clients who are, for example, pharmacies or bowling centers. Barna recommended the use of cheap (or free) promotional tools like the organization of events, the social networks or collateral free services. "To organise events grants you free publicity because mass media talk about them. The social networks are very important for us. They make it possible to promote our products and services among many people. Instead, by providing collateral free services, you have more possibilities to be chosen by future clients", he assured.

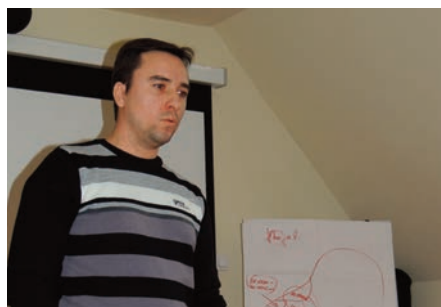
## Zoltan Nemes, Romania



He runs a Real State Agency in Tusnad, a company of selling houses, buildings, castles and land throughout Transylvania. In

this region, there are many castles which are his secondary product in importance, even if it is not an easy market because they are hard to evaluate and to sell. Zoltan started with a very small initial investment and the beginning was very difficult. After two or three years, the business started to grow a lot until approximately 2009 when the profits slumped because of the crisis. Now, it is quite stable situation because Real State Agency is on the market since many years doing a good job.

## Ioannis Batsios, Greece



He manages a hotel in Thassos Island (Greece) with all his family. Thassos is very popular among tourists and Yanis and his family work very hard during six months of the year. The rest of the year, they close their hotel and move to Thessaloniki to rest and prepare for the next working season. For him, one of the most important things explaining his success in his business is to have the knowledge about his subject. "You need to know the tips of your activity" he said. In the tourism sector, you have to try to have a good relationship with tour ope-

rators and travel agencies.

Besides, he thinks that it is very important to have around people with positive mind. "You have to love what you are doing and be happy with your occupation", he explained.

## Fodor Mozes, Romania



He lives in Oradea where he runs his business, BikeXpress. His activity consists in delivering package by bicycle all over the city. Mozes began in 2008 with two friends when they were still students at University.

They realised that in Oradea there was not a service like that, and this in the city with 200.000 inhabitants.

So, they decided to offer bike courier service because they couldn't afford a big initial investment.

Nowadays, Mozes employs three other people: two couriers and one phone operator while he is the manager of the company.

The main clients of BikeXpress are dental clinics and Chinese fast food restaurants who use their services to deliver dental prosthesis or food. Still, Mozes and his partners are thinking about expanding the business to other personal services.



# Meeting politicians

One of the objectives of the project is that the young participants will get involved in the politician institutions of the four countries. That's why our young participants met Romanian authorities. Melles Maria, the Vice Mayor of Baile Tusnad, came to talk and share with the participants of the meeting a traditional Romanian dinner. The 27 years old young politician explained the economical difficulties of the area.

As there are not many activities in the region and she assured that the institutions are doing their best to support new businesses. Young people do have many dif-

ficulties in finding a job or starting a new business, for this reason local institutions are working to make easier the situation.

"The key factor of our work is to help young people to stay connected with the political activities" she admitted.

For her, this is an area where business is based mainly on tourism and environmental factors and where everyone is welcome to invest. "It is actually a very

good place to start a business but it is necessary to show a new kind of attitude, mentality and cooperation between different sectors like: local organization, community and politics" she concluded.



## Recommendation Letter for Municipality of Baile Tusnad

"Dear representative of Municipality of Baile Tusnad,

In January 2013, the Romanian association PIHE, in cooperation with Solidarity Tracks (Greece) and with the support of the Foundation for Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Program, organised the second meeting of "Join the club, start your business with us" project. A group of sixteen youngsters coming from Greece, Romania, Italy and France met in Baile Tusnad to spend four days discussing about entrepreneurship.

This project allowed the participants to have an overview about entrepreneurship in Romania, especially in Harghita County and its area, by getting to know examples of young entrepreneurs and experts in the topic. Processing all the gathered information during these four days the participants came up with new ideas and suggestions to further develop the youth entrepreneurial sector in Romania but more particularly in the area of Baile Tusnad.

Here are some suggestions written by the youngsters:

- Supporting the creation of new businesses through measures like lower taxes for the new enterprises; providing information about funds or laws.
- Promotion of the area: tourist offices open all the year, tourist activities in nature with experienced guides; organising international events in the region, creating professional organizations.
- Developing different services, especially, in the transport sector and focusing in local products.
- Supporting local NGOs and helping in the relations between different organizations and authorities.
- Facilitating the creation of young employments in the area (educational programs, trainings, technical school ...). For instance, giving a bursary to local youngsters to study on condition that after graduating they will come back and create a project in the area.

The Youth Entrepreneur Club wishes both to make clear its support to the Romanian youngsters, and to express its gratitude for the great hospitality. We wish for this wonderful area to progress and keep innovating."

Create association that promote the place  
B.e. hotels, retail sales, offer general services.  
Tourist points for all years  
Experience guides  
Create the ability to  
Professional education in youngsters that can provide help in community in business.  
Focus in local products.  
Natural healing plants (medicinal)

- o Need better promotion
  - welcome
  - tourist information office
  - freebook
  - brochures
- o Services (transport, food, money, etc)
- o Support local NGO's better
- o help entrepreneurs, develop businesses
  - lower taxes
  - provide information about funds, loans, etc.
- o organize trainings, seminars, events
- o organize bigger events which not has only local importance
  - folk festivals for example
- o help youngsters to stay "at home", try to provide possibilities -> make a programme
- o help to have closer relations between NGO's and authorities, tourist organization

- Give a grant to one or two youth from the village to go study training with obligation to come back minimum/industry
- and create a project (with local activities)
- Services -> Small investment at begin
- Develop Technical school (manual jobs)
- Plan to develop tourism (eco-tourism) in connection to promote city (to young)
- 1 year free train or bus to new business

# Local NGO work in Baile Tusnad

Because of the difficult employment situation and the lack of business in the area, it is very important for the region to host organizations which promote activities and supply the community with necessary services.

During the seminar, we could meet two NGOs working in the city of Baile Tusnad.

## ‘Saint Anne Youth Center’



‘Saint Anne Youth Center’ is an organization established in Baile Tusnad since 2011. Its main goals are child rearing, environmental protection and volunteering promotion. Its first priority is to help children with fewer opportunities. They also receive volunteers from all over Europe. Currently, they have one volunteer from Portugal, Pedro.

They are using non-formal learning methods like workshops, discussion or outdoors activities outside, in order to educate people about recycling, languages, human rights, etc.

Their way to keep afloat from financial point of view is through funds from local, national and international Institutions (municipality, Hungarian government and “Youth in action” program), but a very important factor is also the solidarity of the people who help them with materials or volunteer work.

## ‘Green Zone’

The people in «Green zone» declare themselves as a ‘light green’ NGO. It was founded in 2008 by a group of friends and is based on volunteering.

This organization prepares many types of activities, having to do especially with environment and the protection of nature. Besides, they organise sportive events and competitions.

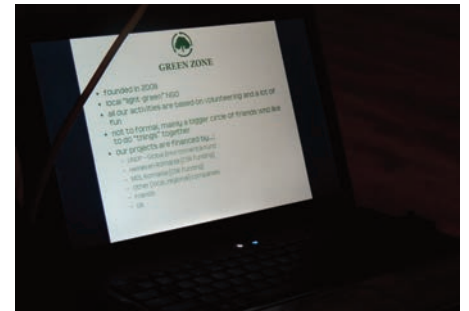
Their biggest success was to have had a touristic monument lit with solar energy. However, they have other important achievements like cleaning activities around a river full of garbage.

Beside these things, they feel very proud because they have positively influenced some local

institutions with their actions.

For example, in 2011 they urged the municipality to respect the Hour of the Earth (an international initiative about staying for 60 minutes without electrical energy consumption). After the great success of that year, the municipality continued respecting and promoting this initiative by themselves.

They all really enjoy these activities because they love their home and the landscape that they live in.



**GREEN ZONE**

# Impact of the project

After four days of learning, discussing and exchanging information, we wanted to share everything we did with the local community. In this sense, we organised a public presentation of the “Youth entrepreneurs Club” at the ‘Saint Anne Youth Center’. Youngsters from the city rushed to meet us and get to know what it is our project about. There, we showed them the results and conclusions of the two meetings we held, especially of our activities in Romania.

Moreover, we invited them to join our club where they will meet with other youngsters interested in this field.

From their part, they related to us their impressions and expressed their will to support the project



## Future steps of the project

We are halfway thru our project. We have already held two meetings where 32 young people participated in workshops and activities referring to Youth's with entrepreneurship.

Everything started in November of last year in Lefkas (Greece). In January, we held this second meeting

in Baile Tusnad (Romania). Subsequent to those two meetings, our club improved on our website and forum where there are registered over new members among youngsters interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, we still have two more meetings ahead which will

keep us in the process of working and growing as club. The next one will be held in March in Palermo (Italy), organised by the partner “Istituto dei Ciechi ‘Florio e Salamone’”. There, we will focus on the entrepreneurship for disabled and people with less opportunities or handicaps.





# Feedback of the participants

## General group conclusion

During these four days, we had the possibility to learn from the experience of some local experts. They gave us tools and knowledge both to develop our own ideas and potential projects and to understand new ways of thinking. Beyond this, the local people invited us to discover new points of view by showing us their realities, and ways to deve-

lop businesses and ideas in this particular environment. Thus we now know more about their culture, habits, local traditions, and gastronomy. Later on, we had some discussions during which we could develop and share between us our new initiative plans based on the experience that they were providing us.



## Personal conclusions from participants

During the seminar I was invited to discover new ways of learning and understanding the real nature of entrepreneurship. This allows me to embrace a new way of thinking and wondering.

In this seminar I found out more about Romania and how business gets along there. I also got more knowledge about business in general.

There is a need for exchanging such initiatives and ideas between each other, due to the rich experiences of several young entrepreneurs living in different countries. It was good to know there is a hotel that works in Greece and what business opportunities exist nowadays in France. I learnt a lot and I know that I'm going to make use of this information.

This seminar gave us the opportunity to know and understand closer the Seckler community and take some good ideas and examples about how to develop an initiative.

It was a superb and worthwhile experience. I learned that before starting a business one has to consider many key factors such as place, time, resources at somebody's disposal, etc.

I think this kind of meetings generate good ideas and justify the foundation of the club, because during the seminars a network is set and gradually spread for helping the people who want to develop their own project or business.

Me for one, from the whole meeting I liked the day that the participants talked about their business, we visited an organization and met the local authorities. I also think that is a great opportunity to discover other cultures.

During this seminar I took in that entrepreneurship implies not only creating a business, but can also incur a social responsibility. I think this project is useful because it gives everybody the possibility to have information about the process of creative businessman ship in each country. Apart from this, this seminar was a great human experience.

In conclusion, this seminar was really useful to me and as I observed it was also for everybody. We got to know a lot of good examples, ideas from this country and community but also from the participants from other countries. Sharing experience and knowledge from different countries is the best solution for innovation and problem solving. We played interesting games, we had fun, meet valuable people, visited small successful companies and we talked with experienced entrepreneurs who were pleased to share with us their knowledge. I learned a lot and I am now willing to start my own business in the near future.

The show must go on.

## Picture memories

Time to relax in Ólommadár



Preparing the public presentation



Group in Miercurea Ciuc



Working in groups



# Partners



Municipality of Lefkas - DEPOKAL (Greece)



Fédération Familles De France Moselle (France)



Together (France)



Istituto dei Ciechi "Florio e Salamone" (Italy)



Work in progress (Italy)



Solidarity Tracks (Greece)



Asociația de Tineri din Ardeal (Romania)



PIHE- Association for Youth and Students in Partium (Romania)

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