

# AN EYE ON YOUTH BANK-CLUJ

The Youth Bank in Cluj like any Youth Bank in other parts of the world is simply a youth-led grant making programme which supports youth-led activities which consists of young people aged 14-25 years whose aim is to encourage positive community-based activities and projects amongst their peers by awarding young people, mostly high school students, and encouraging their voluntary actions with small amounts of financial support to enable them transform their creative ideas into realistic projects for the benefit of their local communities.

Amazingly, Youth Bank-Cluj is an offspring of the Community Foundation in Romania, The Association for Cluj Community Foundation (ARC), an Non Governmental Association is the umbrella Organization that anchors this noble team of youths.

This year, Youth Bank Cluj, consisting of an 11 member team with a volunteer went on a camping activity from the 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> July, led by the Youth Bank Cluj coordinator-Simona Serban, to a country side located at the city of Alba Iulia. This is about 120km/hr from Cluj-Napoca. The purpose of the camping apart from socializing and relaxation was to review the last years' programme following the first years' pilot phase activities and to highlight the success and problems encountered during the previous year as well as to plan for the next years' programme.

A review of the pilot phase was quite a success as many projects executed by the youths were analyzed, assessed and commended, remarks were made concerning the ways of making it better and bigger, thus expanding the programme activities and membership to other counties and cities of Romania.

Amongst some projects that were reviewed during the pilot phase were activities ranging from social events for the disabled, gifted and talented children. Ice cream events to done by the youths to express creativity, and other cultural displays.

The next year's plan of activities tagged "Youth Bank 2007-2008" has already began in August. At the two day camp, it was a greed that on the basis of progress made a calendar for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year activities were drawn to be executed by the youths for the youths.

The first quarter will take the following form

August - package of visual identity  
- media partnerships  
- strategic partnerships

September - preparation of the recruiting campaign  
- recruiting campaign  
- selection of the new members  
- planning of the release  
- planning of the trainings

It is the task or the duty of the present youth members to carry take the mantle of leadership and hence carry execute the plan of activities, as propellers, they are called the bank managers who will adopt peers from the various high schools to become the next years Youth Bank managers as a result putting in practice the leadership training they acquired during the first phase of the project.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the year shall include the following activities:

October – Release of the second edition

- preparation of the new members
- Fund raising training
- planning of the raising money campaign

November – December– Fund raising campaign

- Team-building
- planning of the local research

January – Research

- planning of the applications contest release

The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the project is design as follows:

February – Release of the applications contest

March – Promotion of the applications contest

- Receiving the applications
- Selection of the applications

April – Implementation of the chosen applications/projects

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the project will be as follows:

MAY – The final event

JUNE – Reporting/ Evaluation

The second phase project promises to be better and fulfilling as the youths are geared towards contributing more to the Cluj community. The possibility of expansion of course now lies on the ability of the youths to adopt more youths from some selected high schools which follows a formal procedure outlined at the three-day camp at Alba Iulia.

In terms of partnership and participation, the Romanian Development Bank (BRD) will be the major sponsor and partner for the selected projects, although it has always been partnering with the Association for Community Development (ARC), the mother Community Association for Youth Bank-Cluj. Other partners include Sora super market, Orange Company as well as individual partners who are experts with rich experience in recruitment and training to help the youths with motivational speech during the third and fourth quarter of the project.

It is hoped that the awareness that these youths will create and the benefits which the Cluj community will derive from practicable projects transformed from Youths Bank innovative ideas will be of great impact and hence nurture a future community leadership of tomorrow's leaders who are interested in social, educative and innovative community involvement opportunities.

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