



*Creating an Observatory for Raising
Awareness on the EU Social Inclusion Policy
in the South-West Region of Romania*

- CLOSING CONFERENCE -

Craiova, June 11th-12th



DG Employment and Social Affairs
Grant VP/2004/04/05 – 10112



Promoter: University of Craiova, Romania



Self Introduction



- **The University of Craiova is an institution of higher education, founded in 1947 and has been functioning ever since, gaining experience and importance every year.**







- **The number of the academic staff and students ranks the University of Craiova among the first five largest state universities in Romania. At this moment 968 members of academic staff work within the University from which about 40% are Full- and Associate Professors.**
- **Located in the very center of the historical region of Oltenia, the University of Craiova has developed and increased the number of profiles and study programs in order to meet the requirements of a modern higher education institution and the social expectations as well.**



- **The University of Craiova comprises 16 faculties, offering a wide filed of study programs in humanities, polytechnics, history, economics, agriculture, law, theology, arts, and so on (33 profiles), at BSc, MSc and PhD levels.**
- **There are over 30,000 students.**
- **The University of Craiova handled a budget of over EURO 24 million in 2005, which makes it the largest budgetary institution in the South-West of Romania.**



The Project



“We build too many walls and not enough bridges”

Isaac Newton (1643-1727)



- **Implementation Area**



- **Implementation period: 18 months, starting December 14th, 2004**



Partnership

- **The University of Craiova;**
- **The Ministry of Health - Department for Public Health – Dolj;**
- **The National House for Health Insurance - Department Dolj;**
- **The Ministry of European Integration, Regional Development Agency South-West Oltenia;**
- **The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Sapard - Regional Branch Dolj;**
- **The Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, National Agency for Employment, Regional Branch of Oltenia;**



- **The City Hall of Craiova;**
- **The Government of Romania, Dolj Prefecture;**
- **The Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, The Direction for Dialogue, Family and Social Solidarity;**
- **Oltenia TV Broadcasting Station;**
- **Real Inter-Press Media Agency;**
- **The Archdiocese of Craiova (Metropolis of Oltenia);**
- **Craiova Youth Penitentiary;**
- **The Regional Body for Pensions and Social Insurance Rights;**
- **The Regional Centre for Professional Guidance and Reconversion.**



Strengths

- **The Observatory network has the managerial and technical abilities to promote this project;**
- **The action brings together representatives from different bodies and representatives of the chosen target groups;**
- **A a well structured managerial team for the project;**
- **A good connection with local and some of the central bodies and previous collaboration in the specific field, namely in developing common projects within different financing schemes.**



Weaknesses

- **Most of the participants come from fields which imply a sort of inhibitory behaviour and the communication process with them could be delicate;**
- **The information about the JIM is not known in Romania as it should;**
- **Potential bureaucratic adverse effects;**
- **People do not realize the real importance of increasing awareness on social inclusion as part of the accession process;**
- **Only few studies on the level of social exclusion in the SWR were developed and those related only to a specific target group.**



Opportunities

- **The permanent interface between different local, regional and national bodies, the University, the Church;**
- **The permanent interface with mass-media;**
- **The network of institutions that is set up on the occasion of this event, which can be used in order to implement similar actions in future.**



Threats

- **Weak cooperation with the operational levels;**
- **Cultural and mental barriers between participants;**
- **Dissipation of efforts at the end of the EU financing and the disappearance of the action.**



Target groups

- **Those directly experiencing poverty and social exclusion**
 - **Poor people in general**
 - **Poor people in rural areas**
 - **Unemployed people**
 - **Low-educated people**
 - **Young people**
 - **Roma population**



Activities (1)

- **ORGANIZING SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS**
 - **Workshop on Poverty and Unemployment in Oltenia**
 - **Seminar “Does Social Spending Increase Social Security?”**
 - **Workshop “Education System Reform as an Engine for Social Inclusion”**
 - **Seminar “Rural population endangered by social exclusion”**



Activities (2)

- **DEVELOPING RESEARCH AND STUDIES**
 - **Elaborating specific studies on the identified key-issues**
 - **Developing Surveys and Score Boards for socially excluded groups in the region (questionnaires)**
 - **Modelling and Forecasting**



Activities (3)

- **EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION OUTSIDE THE NETWORK**
 - **Activity C1 – Publication of the Initial and Final Report of the project**
 - **Activity C2 - Publication of the Proceedings of the Seminars and Workshops**
 - **Activity C3 - Presentation Publications of the Observatory**
 - **Activity C4 - Press Releases and Media Campaigns**
 - **Activity C5 - Publication of the Results of the Research Projects and Studies**
 - **Activity C6 – Designing and updating of the Internet site**



Giugea Nicolae

Dolj County, Prefect

“... the project touches very sensitive aspects in our county as well as at regional level. In my opinion it has brought a valuable contribution to raising awareness for us, the authorities, on what has been done and must be further on done for improving the inclusion of poor people, ethnic minorities and people from rural areas in the economic and social life of our county...”

Stanescu Dana

**Regional Unit for Implementing Human Resources Development Programs,
Coordinator**

“...the need of such programs is more than welcomed in the Oltenia Region, especially that the phenomenon of social exclusion is one of the problems which can be encountered here. Among the reasons which lead to social exclusion I can mention the unemployment and ethnic exclusion. The project contributes in an active way to a deep understanding of this phenomenon and it brought a stimulation of the public concern in this respect...”



Caldararu Ramona

School Inspectorate, Valcea County, Counselor on Roma issues

“...as a roma population representative, as well as in my position of counselor in the Valcea unit dealing with PHARE projects for ensuring access to education for the ethnic minorities, I was very happy to take benefit from the project developed by the University of Craiova, the Observatory for Raising Awareness on the EU Social Inclusion Policy in the South-West Region of Romania. I appreciate the particular attention that has been paid for including the roma population and the roma representatives in the actions developed as well as the attention for including the roma people on a larger scale in the dialogue at regional level and in the educational system.”



Neagoe Bacanu Daniel

“Forever for Europe” Association, NGO

“... what the project brought new to the regional landscape is the fact that the Observatory has involved in its meetings and discussions the voice and opinions of the representatives of Civil Society. We have developed a common action in the eve of the winter holidays for the poor children in one village affected by the floods in our county and we think this could be a good starting point for future actions aimed at fighting against the social exclusion of poor children in the region...”

Marinas Laura

**Ministry of Education and Research, Bucharest, Director, Human Resources
Development Program**

“...as a director dealing with the European Social Fund within the Ministry of Education and Research from Romania, in view of successfully implementing this Fund in Romania, the Observatory built by the University of Craiova already proved to be a good incubator for social partnerships in the region, that we can value for future actions and programs ... ”



Iliescu Victor

National Council for Adults' Professional Training, Bucharest, President

“... the problem of social exclusion is one of the most acute problems of the Romanian society and not only. Regarding the Observatory, I was personally involved in elaborating some of the reports and I appreciate the high degree of concern of the project team. I also appreciate the strong regional insertion of the project, at least from educational point of view...”



Cismaru Valentin

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Valcea County, President

“... the University of Craiova acts as major provider for educational services in the Region of Oltenia. During the last period we developed together many actions. What was surprising for me was the very pragmatic and precise character of their actions, the activities related to this project (as I know) being an example in this respect...”

Chiriac Cristian

Oltenia Archdioceses, Social Counselor

“... the University of Craiova is one of our traditional partners in projects pointing to social problems. The Archdioceses of Craiova took very serious its role in the partnership developed by the project and tried to fulfill its tasks, according to the project's scheduled activities. Acting as a major dissemination vector especially in the rural areas and being able to produce feed-back on the reality seen there (in connection to other projects, also), we are really glad that we contributed to shade new light on this very worrying problem of our society...”



Roy Colin Ackerley


Expert Human Resources Development for the Ministry of Labour

“... I had the opportunity to visit Craiova and to meet Prof. Rinderu and Assist. Prof. Gherghinescu. Despite the fact that the project was not directly introduced to me, I was able to remark at that moment and to comment now that there is built a strong partnership between different representative stakeholders in the area...”

Mitica Mihai

National Agency for Roma People, Dolj Branch, Counselor

“...roma community representatives have been invited and consulted on equal basis in the Observatory activities; we have felt like equal partners of dialogue and action; we have seen future ways of cooperation especially in the field of education – which is one of the biggest needs and problems of our community. I trust a fruitful impact of the Observatory in the future on our level of social inclusion in the Oltenia community...”



“+”S

- Raising awareness in the major regional and national public institutions **on the topic of the grant;**
- Filling the gap between institutions involved in the education and training processes **at regional and national level;**
- Enlarging the initial target groups **with Roma population from the targeted area;**
- Direct contact **with sensitive categories to social exclusion such as: youth, poor people, people from the rural areas;**
- Intensive travel **in order to cover as well as possible the target area of the project and not to limit it to the urban areas;**



- **High visual impact via TV spots and video production;**
- **Fruitful exchange of ideas between the participants to the workshop and getting a clear, non-filtered image of what is really happening in the region in what social inclusion is concerned;**
- **Promoting the social inclusion policy of the EU in the South-West Region of Romania in view of the next EU enlargement;**
- **Over-passing the formal degree of co-operation between the actors involved and generating the spirit of *de facto* co-operation and understanding on social matters.**



“-”S

- **Participation from the rural areas in the workshop not satisfactory;**
- **Lack of confidence in the efficiency and effectiveness of this kind of actions;**
- **Difficulties in reaching remote rural areas, especially given the unfavourable weather conditions;**



- **Changing mentalities of the people in some peculiar respects;**
- **Rather difficult to manage the Roma issues due to the fact that there is a large variety of Roma organisations;**
- **Divergence/overlapping of several regional/national projects/programs;**
- **Weak involvement of some of the members of the Partnership.**



Action - Policy

- **Major contribution in reactivating the efficiency of the Regional Anti-Poverty Committee;**
- **Contribution to include in the Regional Development Plan some lines of actions based on the findings of this project;**
- **Contribution to include Roma population actions and desires in the Regional and National Strategies;**



- **Developing the Local Protocol for Roma;**
- **Developing strategic partnerships in the area for a better absorption of the ESF (in connection to another EU Project of the MoLSSF);**
- **Setting-up the basis for a Juridical Person (constituted with members of the developed Partnership) in order to increase the efficiency of the Partnerships in the region.**



“We all live under the same sky, but we do not have the same horizon”

Konrad Adenauer



Thank you!