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Computer Club for Children launched at School no. 113 in Bucharest



Ribbon cutting ceremony: Mayor Vasile Mihalache, Soknan Han Jung, and Parviz Fartash, UNDP

On 27 June 2003, UNDP opened the ninth computer club for children in Romania. The project emerged in 2000 from a broad partnership: UNDP provides technical assistance and funding along with the Government of The Netherlands and the Government of the United Kingdom, MobiFon Connex sponsors computers, while in-kind contributions from the Ministry of Education and Research, the local authorities and NGOs make possible the establishment of the clubs in schools and residential institutions across Romania. Thanks to their support and dedication, more than 1600 children in 6 cities benefit by the computer training in the 13 club network that will be operational by the end of the year.

Computers and the Internet are essential features in the modern business world. Therefore Romania's children must learn how to use computers and be able to access the Internet to be competitive. This will give them an appropriate

background for future employment and will prepare them to become productive, self-supporting members of the society. The clubs members, teenagers in orphanages or pupils coming from poor families, are learning word processing and spreadsheet skills, while the Internet is opening up for them a whole new world of information and mode of communication. "The most important aspect of the Internet is that it gives us an unprecedented opportunity to overcome two of the contributing factors of extreme poverty – lack of information and isolation" said Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative.

The club hosted by the School no. 113 enjoyed the support of Sector 4 Municipality, School No. 113 management, MobiFon Connex, the "Open Doors" Foundation and Romania Data Systems. An exemplary cooperation among these institutions and organisations made this project possible. Through this effective public private partnership, UNDP wishes to set an example and invites all interested parties to help expand the computer clubs network at national level.

Keynote speakers at the opening ceremony included Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Resident Representative, Parviz Fartash, Senior Programme Manager represented UNDP New York, Mr. Vasile Mihalache, Mayor Bucharest District 4, Ms. Oana Lupu, Project Coordinator Department for International Development (DFID), the British Embassy, Mr. Terry Lobraico, Vicepresident MobiFon Connex, Ms. Marilena Stroescu, School no. 113 Director and Mr. Peter Barnes, President, Open Doors Foundation.

After the ceremony the club became too small for all the children eager to take their first lessons. Classes are scheduled during all summer and the two trainers will initiate more than 500 pupils into the world of computers.

For more information visit: www.undp.ro or contact socio@undp.ro

