

Reflections on solutions in the context of COVID crisis

As we all know, the society during the year 2020 was affected by the crisis generated by the COVID 19 pandemic, which reached more or less all the sectors of activity at global level. Unfortunately, this general context generated a series of difficulties concerning the smooth running of our journey, and we tried to see how we could deal with this unexpected challenge.

An effect of the restrictions imposed at national and local level was that the ULG already created, with their 4 components – public, private, knowledge and NGOs, slowed down its activity, the degree of involvement of some categories of stakeholders. Also, during the lockdown, the organization of live meetings was not possible.

Beyond this immediate impact, the health of the people was affected, the economic activities in the private sector have fallen, the education sector has been reset - schools and universities tried to move their activities in the online environment. It's easy to notice that the COVID challenge is very big, as well as for the representatives of the public authority, who could not be preoccupied about the immediate reactivation of the ULG. Other things had priority, such as: communication / projects integrating anti-COVID measures, support to the sanitary units and hospitals in their fight against COVID, providing laptops and other equipment to schools etc.

An important aspect, related also to the crisis, regards the financial uncertainty.

During this period, the city budget is under pressure, the reallocation of the financial resources is made giving priority to the topical needs of the local community. At this moment, the City cannot provide the necessary financing for the rehabilitation of the building representing our “urban common”, which is not available for the organization of activities as municipal robotics center. Thus, we aren't sure what we have to offer, so it's difficult to hold discussions with the community.

Given this context, our LAWG started to reflect on the possible adaptations to the COVID crisis and how to motivate the community and together to identify new ideas and solutions to this challenge.



In order to re-activate the local community and to design a creative concept of the Municipal robotics center for children and young people, the idea of an open call/contest of ideas was considered as appropriate. Consequently, a point of discussion within the ULG meetings was to launch an open call, in order to identify the ideas and proposals of the community representatives regarding their vision about the municipal robotics center and its functionalities. A team of Iasi Municipality was designated to work on the elaboration of the text of the open call.

Through the contribution of those interested in this open call, we aim to obtain their expertise in terms of activities that could be organized in the benefit of the target segment of community, in response to the actual requirements of pupils and students. Regarding the effective operation of the robotics center to be established, given the new context, it would be very helpful to get new ideas, including the possibility to shift some of the activities carried out through this robotics center to online environment.

So currently, our idea is to work on writing the text of the open call and, depending on the evolution of COVID, to launch it as far as we get the financing resources necessary to make available the building which is the object of our pilot project.

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