

**Some aspects concerning the education, training and continuous development of the librarians and information specialists in Romania. The case of the professionals from the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest**

**Dr. Gheorghe Buluță**

General Director

The Central Library of the “Carol Davila”

University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest

Bucharest, Romania

**Crina Mihăilescu**

Deputy Director

The Central Library of the “Carol Davila”

University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest

Bucharest, Romania

**Dr. Octavia-Luciana Porumbeanu**

Lecturer

Library and Information Science Department,

Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest

Bucharest, Romania

E-mail: octavialuciana@yahoo.com

**Abstract**

The paper approaches some general aspects concerning the education, training and continuous development programmes of the librarians and information specialists in Romania offered at academic level and at the professional association level and the contents of these programmes, focusing on the situation of the professionals from the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest, the largest medical library in Romania, both in what concerns its collections and number of branches and its human resources. There are presented the directions on which the emphasis is put at present in the education and training of the specialists in direct connection with the new dimensions of the library’s activity, then some elements concerning the continuous professional development and the abilities which the medical librarians and information specialists must get and which must enable them to support the information, education and research approach at the level of the medical community, and also to implement the projects initiated, to accomplish their tasks within the co-operation actions and partnerships started, in short to exercise the new roles which these professionals indispensable in an ever more ICT-based society must play.

## **Introduction**

Along with the opening of the library for a more numerous and more diverse public, and in some cases also a more difficult or more demanding one, the librarian had to master a complex of abilities better adapted to the new requirements. He/She became a specialist in information science, a good psychologist, a pedagogue, a “social assistant”, a co-worker of the researcher and/or of the professor, a manager. His/her tasks diversified and specialized. The profession became more feminine with all that this phenomenon means from the psychological point of view. The collections, the information supports, the services, the public, the environment, the demands, the interest directions, everything has changed in libraries. These have crossed a “silent revolution” and a very complex one. The automation, the idea of “virtual library”, the distance communications, the unlimited access require also a continuous adaptation of the professional education.

Depending on the attention which the speciality education, the professional associations, and in some countries the sector ministries, are paying to it, the education of the professionals in library and information science varies as length, structure, level and programme from one country to another.

In Romania, the initial education and the continuous development in library and information science was achieved in the past and develops at present through:

- the speciality higher education;
- the services offered by the authorized professional training providers;
- the approaches of the professional associations, and
- the international actions of professional co-operation.

This paper presents some aspects concerning the library and information science education programmes in Romania and then it focus on the training and continuous development of the professionals from the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest.

## **The Speciality Higher Education**

### *The Past Situation*

In Romania, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the large libraries have been organized and developed by cultural personalities with education in the field of philology, history and philosophy – August Treboniu Laurian (1810-1881), Alexandru Odobescu (1834-1895), B.P. Hasdeu (1834-1907), Ioan Bianu (1895-1935) –, and some specialists in library science from the generations that followed, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, improved their knowledge in education or library institutions from different European countries – N. Georgescu-Tistu, Ioachim Crăciun, Dan Simonescu, Maria Dumitrescu, Getta Elena Rally and others. Having initially other specializations (philology, history), they understood the importance of the librarian profession as a distinct speciality. It was them that set up the library science education; they created departments, gave lectures, published handbooks and imposed a moral status of the librarian.

On the other hand, they activated in national and academic libraries, and sometimes in public libraries (Getta Elena Rally (1900-1982) organized and managed the Municipal Library in Bucharest between 1938 and 1949).

During more than 7 decades of speciality education there have been organized different forms of study and there have been experienced different teaching methods. Under the influence of the model of the famous École des Chartes from France, it was established in 1924 in Bucharest the Practical School of Archivists-Paleographers (which became in 1931 the Superior School of Archive Science and Paleography). Here Alexandru Sadi-Ionescu (1873-1926), the first Romanian professor in our field gave during the academic year 1925-1926 the first part of his lecture which included the study of library science. In 1929, after his death, N. Georgescu-Tistu (1894-1972), a philologist by education, but specialized at École des Chartes and École des bibliothécaires in Paris, retook the library science education interrupted in 1962. This included the study of book history, of library science and of bibliography.

Beginning with 1939, the Library Science Section of the Superior School of Archive Science and Paleography was managed by Maria Dumitrescu (1904-1969), specialized in France (at École de Hautes Études and École des Chartes), who taught bibliography and cataloguing, with application at the special collections and book history, especially the European Middle Age one.

Within the University of Bucharest, between the world wars, at the Faculty of Letters, the library science education developed through a speciality docentship and then within the framework of a conference, activity marked by what was called “philologic library science”. The library science courses at the University of Bucharest, begun with the docentship from 1932 of N. Georgescu-Tistu, were continued in time by Mircea Tomescu (1916-1969) between 1960-1969 and Dan Simonescu (1902-1993) between 1970-1972.

At the University in Cluj it was also established library science education through a conference of general bibliography, with the structure formed of bibliography, library science, bibliology (understood as history of book and writing in all times) and Romanian bibliography. At Cluj, a special attention was given to bibliography and intellectual work technique, disciplines that owe a lot to Professor Ioachim Crăciun (1898-1971). The opening lesson of his course, named “A New Science, the Bibliology, in the Romanian Higher Education”, was given at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, in 1932.

The evolution of the speciality education was parallel with the library development. Between 1953-1958, within the University of Bucharest, at the Philology Faculty, it was established the Library Science Department, where only two classes graduated.

Still in Bucharest, at the Pedagogic Institute with a length of study of 3 years, within the Philology Faculty, it functioned between 1963 and 1970 the Library Science Department, whose head was Professor dr. Dan Simonescu. The Institute trained good library practitioners.

The Ph.D. in Library Science was established at the University of Bucharest in 1968, under the supervision of Professor dr. Dan Simonescu, Honorary Member of the

Romanian Academy, this being a higher form of professional training and development which marked a progress in the evolution of the speciality education.

The Superior School of Archive Science and Paleography was transformed for a short period of time (1948-1949) in an Institute of Archive Science, Library Science and Paleography, and since 1950 in the Archive Science Department at the Faculty of History from the University of Bucharest, where N. Georgescu-Tistu gave his lectures in the field of library science till 1959 when he retired.

At the Philology Faculty of the University of Bucharest, it was organized an elective course of library science between 1970-1990.

### *The Present Situation*

Since 1990 the higher education in the field of library and information science (LIS) has been organized at the University of Bucharest, within the framework of a distinct department at the Faculty of Letters. At the same institution, the College of Administration and Managerial Assistance trained librarians and archivists.

The most difficult problems when the LIS education was established again in 1990 were connected to the profile outlining, to the discipline settlement and, of course, to the teaching content determination because its founders tried to link the previous Romanian experiences with those from other countries. It has been created a new structure starting from the necessity of putting up the requirements of a profound interdisciplinary specialization with the imperatives of a solid general culture.

There are some aspects that should be mentioned:

- the relation between the traditional disciplines (Library Science, Bibliography, History of Book and Libraries etc.) and the modern ones (Information Science, Management of the Infodocumentary Structures, Information Technology, Marketing in Libraries, Information Users, Information Retrieval etc.);
- the relation between the disciplines of general culture (Romanian Literature, World Culture and Civilization, World Literature, Reading Psychology, Romanian Language etc.) and the speciality ones (Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing, Collection Development and Document Communication, Reference Services, Documentation, Library Legislation etc.).

Within the framework of the “Transilvania” University in Braşov, there is a specialization in library science and museology. At the “Babeş-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca it functions a specialization in Library and Archive Science, and the programme can be studied in Romanian, Hungarian and German. At the University in Oradea, the Philology Section trains also professionals in Library Science. The College of the “Lucian Blaga” University from Sibiu includes also in its curriculum a specialization in library and archive science. The “Valahia” University in Târgovişte includes a library and archive science programme at the Economic and Administration College.

In what concerns the professional development, the Library and Information Science Department at the Faculty of Letters from the University of Bucharest offers a Master Programme and a Postgraduate Programme.

The Master Programme “Information Strategies in the Contemporary Society” is designed for the development of the knowledge level of the graduates with qualities, abilities and vocation for the research of the information transfer processes at the organizations, networks and systems level. The curriculum includes courses such as: Cultural Models and Library Structures in the Romanian Space, Information Management, Information and Communication Technology, Contemporary Theories in Collection Development etc.

The Postgraduate Programme is designed for graduates from other fields than LIS who work or want to work in the information and documentation field. The length of studies is of 2 semesters and the training process takes place through 3 convocations. The curriculum includes courses such as: Collection Development, Library Legislation, Cataloguing and Indexing, Library Automation, Management in Infodocumentary Structures, Documentation, Marketing in Libraries, Bibliographic Systems, Archive Science, Practice in Library etc.

We consider that in its current form the speciality education is structured on the requirements of the library institutions in which the future graduates will work. Still, it can be noted the continuation of training at the workplace through specialization in accordance with every type of library. This is the case of the librarians in the medical academic libraries who get their initial training during a period of 3-6 months from hiring. This trend is common to all librarians and it is in the tradition of the library and information science education in Romania.

### **Services offered by the authorized professional training providers**

According to the current legislation, the professional training of the speciality staff in libraries is accomplished through: elective courses at high-school level, post high-school education, higher education, postgraduate programmes, master programmes and Ph.D. programmes, and also other forms of professional training. These continuous professional training programmes include courses such as: Library Management and Marketing, Reading Sociology, Speciality Scientific Information, Methodical Training, Documentation in the field of general and specific Legislation, Practical Activities etc.

The financial resources for this type of professional training are provided by the library institutions. The staff newly hired in public libraries who didn't graduate from an education form in the speciality for which he/she was hired must attend a qualification programme or an initiation programme after which he/she will receive a qualification or graduation certificate nationally recognized.

Among the authorized professional training providers, the Centre of Professional Training in Culture, which functions under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Culture, has the main place, both through its programmes and through a more than three decades existence.

The Centre's Programmes offers to those that attend them the possibility of acquiring the necessary competences for the profession, following the requirements of the

workforce standard and of “the European Competences Reference System for the Information and Documentation Professionals”, that was published in Romanian in two editions, in 2000 and 2006, in correlation with the speciality higher education programmes and the endorsement of the Romanian librarians’ professional associations.

In the Centre’s Programme there are included disciplines such as: Library Management, Communication, Collection Development, Document Conservation, Legislation, Cultural Actions, Collections and Acquisitions, practically being covered all activity segments in a library.

### **The Approaches in the Field of the Professional Associations**

The main professional associations of the Romanian librarians, ANBPR (the National Association of the Public Librarians and Libraries in Romania) and ABIR (the Association of the Librarians in Education - Romania) have organized along the years different continuous professional training courses for the librarians and also a series of scientific activities (workshops, conferences etc.) for the same purpose. We’ll insist on the activity of the Section Medical Libraries of ABIR.

Thus, there have been organized yearly by the Central Library of the “Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj specialization courses for the information specialists in the medical academic libraries, focusing on the new aspects of information and documentation in the biomedical sciences.

The Central Library of the “Transilvania” University in Braşov organizes also yearly the International Library Science Conference “BIBLIO Braşov”.

Within the framework of these scientific actions, the medical academic librarians presented very interesting papers on the rationalization, modernization and diversification of the services provided for the users, especially in the context of the introduction and efficient use of the new information and communication technologies.

There is a tradition of scientific collaboration at national level of the Romanian librarians and information specialists, marked through documentation visits of the young ones at libraries with tradition and very well organized on speciality fields.

The profession solidarity is marked by the joint achievement under the co-ordination of the Section Medical Libraries of ABIR of the following projects which at present are under way:

- “Who’s Who in the Universities of Medicine and Pharmacy in Romania” (presentations of the teaching staff from these institutions);
- “the Handbook of Medical Information and Documentation”, a common project of the Central Libraries of the Universities of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest, Cluj, Iaşi and Braşov, meant not only to the librarians, but also to the students from these universities.

We consider that co-operation doesn’t have the value of universal panacea for the problems of the Romanian medical libraries, but it opens a gate and leaves to see a

way to the Romanian library civilization, which represents the basis of education and culture at the standards of today's world.

### **The International Actions of Professional Co-operation**

The opening towards Europe and towards the world of the Romanian libraries after 1990 was marked by the free participation of the Romanian librarians and information specialists in different international reunions, especially the IFLA Conferences.

These participations had an important role in the training of the Romanian medical librarians who came in contact in this way with the modern management of the foreign medical libraries. Other examples in this sense are: the Seminars of Medical Informatics organized in France by CIDMEF (Conférence Internationale de Doyens des Facultés de Médecine Expression Française) in which librarians from all medical academic libraries participated, then the bilateral professional meetings with librarians specialized in the medical field from England, Denmark, Norway and the Republic of Moldavia.

An important professional moment for the medical librarians in Romania was the organization in 2006 in Cluj-Napoca of the 10<sup>th</sup> EAHIL Conference.

### **The Training and Continuous Development of the Librarians from the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest**

#### *Short Presentation of the Library*

Having in view the context of the professional training and development presented, it is fit to discuss also the case of the librarians from the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest, an institution that stands out among the Romanian documentary structures both through its history – age, collections and personalities that were at its leadership and through the dimension of its activities that materialize in information services provided for an extended community of users that includes students, teaching staff, researchers, physicians.

Its beginnings are interweaving with those of the Romanian school of medicine. Thus, the library was established in 1857 simultaneously with the National School of Medicine and Pharmacy. It was formed by the gathering of a few collections belonging to smaller libraries. In 1884 it had less than 1,000 volumes (39 in Romanian, 212 in Latin, 160 in French, 28 in Greek and 267 in German). In 1890, when the first catalogue of the library was printed, there were 4,726 volumes, 762 being periodicals.

In 1869, the National School of Medicine and Pharmacy turned into the Faculty of Medicine and the library moved in 1870 in the premises of the University of Bucharest and from here, in 1901, in the premises of the Faculty of Medicine where it functions even today.

#### *The Library's Structure and its Reading Rooms*

At present, the library's structure reflects the university organization, that is:

- the headquarters of the library (the Main Library) with two reading rooms ("Thoma Ionescu" and "D. Danielopolu"), a Centre of Information and Documentation and the Lending Centre are in the same building with the Faculty of General Medicine and the Faculty of Medical Assistance and Midwives;
- the reading room and the collections at the faculty of Dental Medicine;
- the reading room with the collections and the Lending Centre at the Faculty of Pharmacy;
- the 80 branch libraries that are at the level of the university departments, chairs and clinics spread all over Bucharest. They are libraries that have from 40,000 – 50,000 volumes to 300 - 400 volumes depending on the educational and research interests of the teaching staff.

A LAN connects the library with all the preclinical departments and a WAN allows an Internet link.

### *The Library in Figures (Collections, Users, Staff)*

- The library has now:
  - 366,546 book titles, 5,531 periodical titles in more than 700,000 copies;
  - lectures, practical works, handbooks and monographs published by the medical teaching staff of the University;
  - specialized handbooks and textbooks published in Romanian or in languages of international circulation;
  - Romanian and foreign periodicals;
  - Ph.D. theses, master dissertations, graduation papers;
  - CD-ROMs;
  - atlases, dictionaries, encyclopaedias in Romanian and in foreign languages; reference materials.
- It has approximately 27,000 documents in open access.
- The active users of the library are approximately 11,000.
- The staff of the library is formed by 41 specialists.

### *The Library in 2007*

This year the University celebrates 150 years from its establishment, and the Library 100 years from the opening of the Reading Room for the users.

Most of the librarians in this institution graduated from faculty and continued their education through different master, postgraduate and Ph.D. programmes.

At national level, in the Romanian libraries there are: 479 librarians in the national libraries, 1,618 librarians in the academic ones, 1,846 in the county public libraries, 699 at the level of the municipal and town libraries and 2,317 in the village libraries, according to the Statistical Yearbook of Romania for the year 2005. Among them, librarians with initial training in the field of the medical higher education are very few.

On the basis of the speciality education or of the education from other field (especially philology, history etc.), those that work at the Central Library of the



“Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest graduated master and postgraduate programmes for their professional training and development but perfected their professional standard through practice in library.

According to a tradition in this library, the newly hired librarians work successively for a period of 3-6 months in all the library’s departments. The objective is not only to get to know the publications flow in library, but especially to discover their inclinations and abilities for a certain type of activity.

To this it can be added the monthly professional meeting in which there are presented and discussed papers on different themes.

The medical librarians work in a specialized field, the field of biomedical sciences. So, besides the professional skills recognized by the current standards, in the training and development process of the medical information specialists of the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest the emphasis is put on elements that will enable them to support the information, education and research approach at the level of the medical community, to implement the projects initiated in collaboration with other similar libraries, to accomplish their tasks within the co-operation actions and partnerships started, and to assist the users in retrieving the information with the help of the new information and communication technologies.

The abilities aimed at are:

- a good library science culture,
- an adequate culture of the biomedical sciences field,
- the assimilation and use of an adequate language for the diverse categories of medical documents and literature,
- the assimilation of techniques specific to the information and documentation in the biomedical sciences field,
- the continuous improvement of the knowledge and practices in using the new information and communication technologies with a view to accessing in an efficient way useful and valuable information for the users,
- the improvement of the linguistic capacities with a view to knowing as many as possible languages of international circulation and of the specific biomedical language.

The Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest organizes also every year a Scientific Symposion with the theme “The Library in the Medical Higher Education, Tradition and Modernity”. Besides the scientific papers presented by the other Romanian librarians and by those from abroad, the librarians of the host institution are encouraged, especially the younger ones, to present the results of their own research approaches. Many of their papers were accepted to be published by the Romanian specialized journals (“Biblioteca/The Library”, “Biblos”, “Curier bibliologic/Library Science Messenger”, “Revista Română de Biblioteconomie și Știința Informării/ The Romanian Journal of Library and Information Science”).

As a proof of the continuous development tendency in library science are the works published by the librarians: “The Catalogue of the Ph.D. Theses”, “The Catalogue of

Foreign Book (XVIth-XVIIIth centuries)”, and also personal books on diverse themes: “The Library Nowadays. Information and Communication”, “Legislative Vademecum for Libraries”, “The Library in the Information Society”, and others.

For the same purpose of professional development the Romanian speciality librarians had access to the Mobility Programme Leonardo da Vinci, collaborating with the Academic Libraries in Exeter (England) and Bergen (Norway).

The preoccupations of professional development are also present in a series of projects of the Library that are under way:

- “Free Medical Access for Documentation, Information and Training/ Liber Acces Medical pentru Documentare, Informare și Formare (LAMEDIF)”.

It is a co-operation project for setting up a consortium of the Romanian medical libraries on purpose to promote the new information and communication technologies, the evaluation and the joint provision of the necessary information and documentation for the higher education and research approach, the continuous medical education and postgraduate professional training.

The objectives of this project are:

- the increase of the quality in education, research and training in accordance with the contemporary trends of development and the user needs;
- the provision of a quick access to the useful and valuable information by using the online resources;
- the users’ training with a view to assimilate the necessary competences for an efficient use of information.

The library partners in this project are:

- the National Centre for Postgraduate Education of the physicians, chemists, other staff with higher education and medical assistants;
- Softlink Romania.
- “RoBiblioMed” (the indexing of the Romanian medical journals)

It is an initiative of the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest, in co-operation with the other medical libraries in Romania, and with the Section Medical Libraries of ABIR. It is a project based on Softlink Liberty 3 for indexing the important Romanian medical journals in the whole country at the level of the component parts description.

## **Conclusions**

At present, in Romania the speciality higher education, the professional associations and the authorized professional training providers offer a complete and diverse range of LIS programmes (initial education and training and continuous professional development) at all levels. The programmes’ contents focus on the knowledge and abilities which the librarians and information specialists must get nowadays for an efficient activity in support of their users.

In what concerns the situation of the medical librarians, at the Central Library of the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy – Bucharest it is encouraged the educational and academic research approach and the professionals from this institution, on the basis of their initial education and continuous development in LIS wish to become true professionals as the European and world standards require and

especially in the context of the implementation and efficient use of the new information and communication technologies.

The general trend is well known and it is assimilated by the Romanian librarians too, that is the user orientation and the development of information services and products that will meet the users' information needs.

There is pointed out in the speciality literature the fear that the library function as place of meeting, socialization and communication could disappear while we make for a virtual library which through the networks allows the access to digital materials and to media.

That is why in the tradition of the Romanian library science education, we believe also in the cultural action in the academic library destined to point out the values of the written communication civilization in the past and today.

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