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Nicoleta Fotiade: Beruf Medienpädagog*in: Rumänien/Romania

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Nicoleta Fotiade, media educator with Journalism studies

I am not a clear-cut media educator with a teaching job. The profession is not yet officially recognized in my country. There was no formal teaching or training program where I could have formed as one. Still isn't.

I am a self-made media educator with Journalism studies, an MA in Communication, Media and Cultural Studies, molded in the matrix of a long-term media analyst working for a media watchdog and for different international election observation missions.

Early in my professional life, I began managing media research and education projects too. My first media education project was the creation of the first Romanian media education textbook for high school students and of a teachers' training program. The project developed into a Media Education program that I got to manage for several years.

I feel particularly privileged for my educational and professional background that led to be a media educator. But due to the lack of the infrastructure to teach media education, I have to constantly reinvent my job.

I teach to professionals that want to teach media education further (teachers and librarians, in particular). And for the last three years, I have been teaching media education to final year Pedagogy students at the University of Bucharest. More of an introduction course into the critical learning concepts of media education, which does not form actual media educators. Whenever I get the chance, I work with children and teenagers. But it happens ever so rarely because of the lack of dedicated programs or institutions that could host such courses. I mainly get to work with them in short term courses or workshops initiated in partnership with schools or other NGOs on a voluntary basis or with small private funds.

My working day is never the same and I like that. But it can also get pretty tough sometimes with this permanent mental load to maintain my job, build a team and an organization to serve a professional community, and also pay the bills. As five years ago, I embarked on a media education project that should have built into a training and resource center for media literacy education. Mediawise Society (www.mediawise.ro) is still work in progress.

I get a lot of satisfaction in my media educator shoes.

When I teach about media, I teach about nuances. I work with my students to develop the habit to question the information and to put things into perspective. We practice to get flexible about the things we see, perceive and judge.

The media content with its language and representations give me the chance to extend my teaching to other daily social, cultural and political issues that tend to be overlooked or taken for granted in our education. We get to

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reflect on questions like human and digital rights, racism, solidarity, plagiarism, social relations and so on. Self-reflection is also an important part of my teaching. We look at how and why we use (or produce) certain media contents, how they are produced and for what reasons. We try to understand the role of our emotions and beliefs in our media use. I do everything with the hope that what my students learn in the classroom is relevant to their immediate media experiences, and that they will use it in practice.