

Open World Alumni



ANCA SANDU

President

"Casa Bună" Association, Bucharest

Community Building Tool

Kalamazoo, MI

October 2022



Anca has the ability to take ideas and transform them into projects with real impact. She's one of the main drivers that helped create and grow 'Casa Buna' NGO, starting out as a volunteer in the ghetto in 2018 and continuing her activity ever since, constantly showing up and delivering on promise. Anca showed interest in picking up new challenges, designing projects and processes and improving the ongoing ones. Her passion and dedication to the cause are a source of inspiration for other people. She's an excellent communicator and an inspiration for other people who join Casa Buna activities.



"What I found fascinating about Open World is that it brings together professionals with common passions and that it is a hands-on experience with absolutely fabulous people from whom you can learn. In addition to the friendships and collaborations created as a result of the program, I greatly appreciated the immersive experience in the field: the NGOs and local professionals I met and with whom I had the opportunity to share good practices, as well as the wonderful hosts who had taking care of us during the visit. I am still in contact with my host and I believe that the time spent with her brought even more value to the visit."



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LUCIANA ZAHARIA

Vice President

"Zi de Bine" Association, Bucharest

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In 2020, Luciana gave up a profitable career to start working in an NGO at the beginning of the road, born on the day of the first case of Covid in Romania. Through her experience and involvement the association supported (after just two months) almost 100 hospitals with protective equipment and medical equipment that was needed in the middle of the Covid crisis. Luciana is a charismatic leader, loved by the team. In her role today, as coordinator of the community center "Zi de Bine", dedicated especially to Ukrainian refugees, she managed to build a community that helped over 1500 people.



"And, no, it's not about comparison in the world of NGOs. We don't do better or worse. We are in many ways the same, we operate in different ways sometimes, but we don't share the same ideals. It's about changing perspective. Two steps ahead or behind, the distance from which you look means an extra grain of inspiration to take to your family. And if there is one big thing that crosses my thoughts since I came back, it is about collaborating with purpose and meaning. Between NGOs, with local representatives."



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ADRIANA CÂRNU

Project Manager

The Civic Resource Centre, Constanța

Community Building Tools

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Adriana invests her passion and energy in two projects for the Ukrainian refugees, dedicated to their integration in the new context: community organizing centered activities, educational activities (vocational training for women, educational and recreational activities for children) and intercultural activities (trips, urban gardening workshops and creative art workshops) where children can better understand each other. Adding coaching and psychotherapy to her portfolio she has added more substance to designing better educational and transformation processes she hosts.



"The openness of the family and the organization that welcomed me on this trip and the way they hosted the whole experience for me is one of the most beautiful gifts I have received in the past years. I am thankful for the warmth with which I was received everywhere in Kalamazoo (Michigan). The Romanian delegation had the opportunity to get to know each other and connect. Totally grateful!"



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COSMINA SIMIEAN

General Manager

General Directorate For Social Assistance Of Bucharest

Community Building Tools Kalamazoo, MI October 2022



For many years, Cosmina has been working with vulnerable groups in Bucharest. This year was especially challenging for her and her team once the Ukrainians refugees started arriving in Bucharest in the first days after war started. During the last 6 month Cosmina gained a lot of experience and managed to develop a lot of programs that significantly impacted the life of the refugees.

Cosmina shows professionalism, deep knowledge of social issues and dedication. She has firsthand knowledge of Bucharest's social system challenges and the city's overall social service flows and processes.

"Participating in the program meant a lot to me. I work in a city that faces so many social challenges and it was a real chance to be able to see what community building tools are available for solving, at least partially, these challenges."



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DIANA FERARIU

Legal Adviser & Education Manager

Aprendis, Iași

Community Building Tools
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Diana is a key person in the Aprendis projects, helping Ukrainian refugees. Firstly, Diana is the legal counsel. Then, in their group of coordinators, she is responsible for communication and collaboration with central/government institutions. Diana is involved in legal work with passion and responsibility, and also tries to help out in all areas of the Ukrainian Refugees project. Furthermore, Diana is also involved in educational activities and social support projects, speaking at local events and encouraging development and involvement in the community.

"Open World for me was a program that promised a lot but gave me ten times more. It was an intensely lived experience that, although it sets you a schedule with a wide range of activities, it still gives you the freedom to acquire the knowledge and information you need. My 10-day trip to the USA answered my professional curiosities, at the right time. A unique experience, from which I leave richer in spirit through the prism of the people I met and a successfully added step forward in my professional development."



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