

# Open World Alumni

## COSMIN CHIRIȚĂ

### Project Manager

#### Romanian Business Leaders Foundation, Bucharest

#### Mental Health & Counseling Baltimore, MD October 2022



Cosmin has been involved in training & facilitating activities, for the past 15 years (with a focus on the NGO sector). Being part of various NGO projects has brought him the most consistent personal development and learning opportunities, even more that he experienced in formal education. Moreover, in the past 10 years he has specifically dedicated most of his professional time and energy in learning development projects for K-12 teachers, context in which he feels he can have the most scalable impact, in this step of his evolution. Cosmin believes in the power of teachers to facilitate the changes needed in the system(s), from the grassroots level.

"I enjoyed the chance to be a facilitator for a group of teachers on the October 2022 trip to Baltimore, Maryland. Professional exchange experience; almost unrestricted access in NGOs, schools, public institutions and other specialized organizations, to professionals and their resources; of immersion in "everyday" American culture and staying with host families is...priceless - that is: hard to find in other contexts, extremely valuable and with many lessons and revelations about practices that can be adopted and adapted and in Romania, in various environments and domains. It helped our group a lot in our educational activity, to inspire good practices from schools, teacher training, school management, which we can apply and carry forward."



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**ELENA PERRY**

**Donor Relations Manager**

**"Inocenti" Foundation, Bucharest**

**Community Building Tools (NGOs)**

**Kalamazoo, MI**

**October 2022**



Elena supports the work and development of the Inocenti programs by attracting new supporters, partners, identifying funding opportunities, partnerships and collaborations, as well as maintaining and improving relationships with existing ones - networking, fundraising, PR.



"It was a privilege and an absolute joy to be part of the Open World program as a facilitator and to witness how Romanian leaders shared and debated challenges, ideas and best practices with American experts in the field. We need more Romanian professionals to be involved in such exchange programs."



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## ANA COJOCARU

**Project Coordinator/ Public  
Information Officer**

**Romanian National Council For  
Refugees, Bucharest**

**Refugee Integration Tools**

**Des Moines, IA**

**October 2022**



Ana's journey with CNRR began more than 3 years ago, as an integration counselor, providing legal counseling to refugees in Bucharest. Since then, she has undertaken increasingly challenging roles in the organization, including public information and PR, initiating and maintaining relations with external partners, and developing capacity building programs for civil society organizations. Throughout her professional activity, some of her main focuses have been community empowerment and capacity building. Ana is a strong believer in empowering grass roots initiatives and local leaders to create change in their communities.



"The experience of being a facilitator in the Open World program will always be special for me. Along with my colleagues, I had the opportunity to experience a different culture, better understand the American legal system, and create some connections that I'm sure will last a long time from now. We appreciated the commitment our dialogue partners have to building resilient and inclusive communities, where even the most vulnerable people have a voice. Des Moines is a relatively small town, but with a lot of artistic flair, and our hosts really made us feel part of the community. Regardless of whether it was institutional visits, the Sunday market, visits to natural parks or barbecues, we were always received with a friendly attitude."



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## MIHAI TOADER - PASTI

**Founder & CEO**

**Towards O, Bucharest**

**Facilitator of the 3 delegations from  
2022**



Everything Mihai has done in the last 11 years was to build a more open world, by uniting industries (construction, energy, education, research), stakeholders (citizens, students, NGOs, private companies, public administration and media) around global challenges (climate change, sustainability and technology) through design and build, policy making and local and international collaboration. He also engaged with various US organizations by being selected as a Young Professional at Aspen Institute Romania, Climate Reality Leader at Climate Reality (Atlanta, US) and Youth Fellow at Eisenhower Fellowship (Philadelphia, US), each experience being a stepping stone in his professional and personal growth. He has experience with civic and political leaders in Romania. He moderated civic groups, high-level panels nationally and internationally (ex: World Energy Council in Abu Dhabi) and learned how to do that both by doing, but also in a training with Aspen Institute Romania.



"I am glad that 25 years after the signing of the US-RO strategic partnership, Romania is included in the Open World exchange program. A world where people know each other and collaborate is a more prosperous and safer world. After the experience of 3 Romanian delegations in the USA this year, I can confirm that the professional, personal and cultural experience is beneficial for both parties. We return from the American experience with new information, new project ideas or procedural changes, but also with the pride that there are also areas where we are already performing and we are a positive example. As a result of this unique experience, I am convinced that a series of beautiful projects realized in partnership, both here and in the USA, will follow."



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## ALIN APOSTU

### Program Manager

**Romanian Business Leaders Foundation  
Bucharest**

**Development & Fundraising  
South Bend, IN  
November 2022**



Within the Romanian Business Leaders Foundation Alin is managing 4 programs aimed at building an entrepreneurship ecosystem for young people and bringing innovation closer to companies: "I want to be an Entrepreneur" - the most well known program in Romania amongst young people; "Insights" - Globally awarded best practice on Ecosystem innovation by ITU - United Nations Agency for Information and Telecommunication; "Insights PulseZ" - largest and most representative study in Romania among Generation Z - national barometer for entrepreneurship, sustainability, consumer behavior; "Young in the Arena" - the largest business event for young people in Romania, 2.800 participants, 40.000 viewers online; His responsibilities are: strategy, stakeholder management, recruitment, fundraising, communication, event organizing and moderating - online and offline, admin work and delivering materials for relevant stakeholders.



"For me it was a very cool program and at the same time a short authentic foray into American culture. I had some very local experiences: from living in an American house and neighborhood to sports activities like hockey or American football. From a professional point of view I met both interesting organizations and people and it was very valuable to connect better with my participants in the group that I have facilitated. I came back with some great ideas related to NGO development and fundraising to implement in my own organization."



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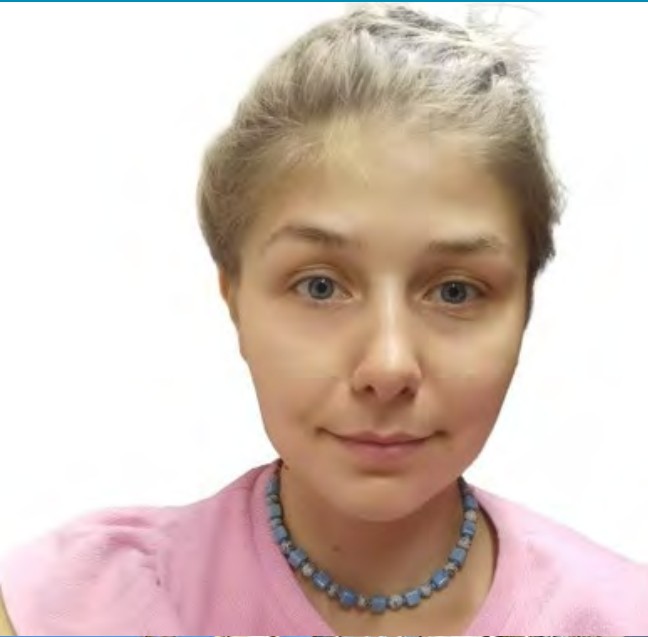
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**DARIA BENGHEA MĂLĂIEȘ**

**Founder/Entrepreneur**

**KidKit Edu Bucharest**

**Development & Fundraising  
Salt Lake City, UT  
November 2022**



Daria is the founder of KidKit Edu, an edtech startup that helps young children increase their autonomy in the learning process; KidKit develops worksheets that come to life through augmented reality. She is in charge of all operational activities, business development and content. Daria considers that here, in Romania, there is a much-needed mentorship experience for leaders in various fields, from politics to NGOs and academia, to witness the true rule of law, less corruption, and more accountability of elected officials.



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