

Open World Alumni

MĂDĂLINA VOINEA

Communications Officer

Expert Forum, Prahova

Development & Fundraising South Bend, IN November 2022



Mădălina is a highly dedicated individual, advancing the Romanian society towards a functional democracy where citizens are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Her main activities at Expert Forum are communication and fighting disinformation. She believes that the Expert Forum's work needs to be highlighted in order to gain traction and serve its purpose of informing the citizens of the current state, nationally and regionally, across different domains. Mădălina also works in projects of monitoring the propaganda narratives that influence public opinion but also developing better tools to fight disinformation and misinformation.

"Open World gave me the opportunity to experience live what civil society in the US means. In South Bend, Indiana, I stayed with a host family that had been involved in NGOs for over 20 years. I met people with a real spirit of solidarity and an honest perspective on the challenges they face. I felt that each person is open both in sharing their experience, but also in listening to what we as Romanians have to say. Culturally, the program has a huge impact on a person who has never been to the US, especially since we are staying with host families. I loved it."



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ANDREEA RUSU

Executive Director

FILIA Center, Bucharest

Development & Fundraising
South Bend, IN
November 2022



Andreea has been selected, at the age of 23 - as the youngest Executive Director of FILIA. As a young leader of a 20-year old, well-established organization, her team's focus has been to improve women's access to information about reproductive health and safety, through activism, advocacy, studies/analyzes and grassroots work. Since 2019, FILIA's staff has grown from 6 to 15 employees, while the organization's budget increased by almost 100%. Under her leadership, the FILIA Center has consolidated its voice as a watchdog that advocates for the women's dignity and safety and against any form of women discrimination or denigration.

"Being my first experience in the United States, I was nervous both for the time zone difference and the lack of contact with the family and the workplace, as well as for living with a family that I did not know beforehand. But the Open World experience has completely exceeded my expectations in terms of inter-cultural exchange, openness and kindness. The warmth we received from our American family and the host organization was amazing. Regarding the professional side of the program, I observed that the cultural differences in terms of civic involvement and especially fundraising make it complicated to replicate, but tools can be adapted to the local specifics of Romania."



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CIPRIAN STĂNESCU

Founder

Social Innovations Solutions, Bucharest

Development & Fundraising

South Bend, IN

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From the many years spent in the Aspen Institute network to the social entrepreneurs in the Ashoka community and the young leaders in the Global Shapers network, Ciprian's career was built on learning from his peers.

In the past years, together with a relatively small team of 4, he built Social Innovation Solutions into a strong and relevant NGO in Romania. Now, with almost 20 people in the team, more than 150 partners involved, tens of stakeholders and 10 running programs, Social Innovation Solutions enters a new stage of development.

"Open World helps professionals to better understand the culture and specifics of the United States through meetings with organizations from big cities but, more importantly, with organizations and leaders from medium and small cities."



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LAURA BURTAN

Project Manager & Researcher

Funky Citizens, Bucharest

Development & Fundraising South Bend, IN November 2022

Laura has been a member of the Funky Citizens team since late 2016, first joining as a researcher and fact-checker and currently working as project manager. She has joined this organization as a firm believer in the values it promotes, including transparency and accountability in all public matters, and for its continuous work in the field of civic education. Laura has added a layer of community building to all projects she has written for Funky Citizens in the last few years, hoping this will help other NGOs and would benefit the sector in general. In this sense, her greatest achievement to date is “the Funky Republic” project, through which they wish to establish a network of civically aware NGOs trained to behave like local branches of Funky Citizens in different municipalities in Romania.

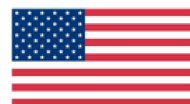
“A complete, professional and personal experience, which I wholeheartedly recommend! The theme of the program is only a small part of what you will learn during your time in the States - you will return home with new friends, new ideas, with a new perspective of your field of activity.”



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MIHAELA MANGU DĂRVARIU

Executive Director

ANAIS Association, Bucharest

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



Mihaela's colleagues, founding members of ANAIS association, invited her to join the team in laying the foundations of the association since she was 24 years old. Ever since, her professional activity has been dedicated to the development of ANAIS. Mihaela has focused on the development of programmes and services, their implementation, the management of financial resources as well as the identification of funding.

"Participating in the Open World program gave me the opportunity to get to know a small part of the United States of America and its culture through the eyes of the local communities I interacted with. This experience was a special opportunity to meet new people, experts in their fields and representative organizations, both from Romania and from the United States. The organized framework in which the entire visit took place is one of the advantages of this program."



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