

DECADE of success

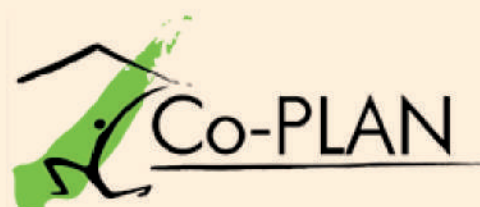


**10 YEARS OF
PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS
PROGRAM**



**PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS**

**2012
2022**



In 2012, GLCAP, through its GLC program, began operating the U.S. Department of State's Professional Fellows program. This program is designed to provide opportunities for young professionals to collaborate and share ideas with U.S. partners, build lasting relationships and make positive changes in their communities and societies. Our program focuses on human rights and social justice, ensuring that all voices are heard in minority and rural communities through community organizing, advocacy and civic engagement.

During our 10-year operation of the program, we have hosted 16 delegations totaling 300 young professionals from Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The fellows work with host organizations across the United States to complete a 3-4 week in-person internship.

Upon their return, these young changemakers work to expand and strengthen community organizing, social services, education and community development practices. The advances in policies, attitudes, and mindset they have been able to facilitate on both the local level and national level are very impressive. This booklet includes 50+ diverse members of our alumni network with highlights of their achievements in Roma, disabled, LGBTI+, immigrant, or rural communities, impacting hundreds or thousands of people.

This program would not be possible without the support of our many partners in the program, and we want to thank each of them for their invaluable contributions, including the U.S. Department of State and its embassies for their continued funding and support of the program; our host organizations, mentors and host families, many of whom have hosted multiple guests over many years; our in-country partner organizations in the 5 countries; and our program advisors and many volunteers.

Most of all, we would like to congratulate and give a huge thank you to all members of GLC Alumni Network, who left jobs, family and other responsibilities to come to the U.S. and have committed themselves to making a difference in their countries, often on a volunteer basis. We have gained significant learning and inspiration from you and wish you much continued success.



ELIZABETH BALINT
GLCAP/GLC PROJECT
MANAGER



DEB MARTIN
GLCAP INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



BUL GA RIA



**The Great Lakes
Consortium Professional
Fellows Program - under
GLCAP - operates in
Bulgaria since 2011. The
first alumni delegation
was sent to the US in**

2012



From 2012 to summer of 2022 an overall of 66 Bulgarians have gone through the program, while we also had the chance to host a lot of U.S. mentors in a number of outbound visits.

There are a couple of achievements that we are proud to highlight in the last 10 years.

For starters, the GLC Professional Fellows Program has contributed immensely to introducing concepts and tools of community organizing in the Bulgarian civil society. Observing how community organizing is being perceived by program participants and other civil society actors that benefit from our learning opportunities and resources, we can testify to a big change. Ten years ago, the approach of community organizing was met with a lot of skepticism and people exposed to it, including many of our fellows, did not believe it can work in the context of Central and Eastern Europe. The landscape is completely different now as more and more organizations and groups resort to community organizing know-how to shape their strategies for social change. While we can't claim this change in mindset is exclusively due to the GLC Professional Fellows in Bulgaria, we are certain that the program has contributed a lot to it.

Secondly, the Bulgarian program is especially proud of supporting minority leaders and activists throughout the years by engaging them in the program. Out of our 66 alumni, 14 are Roma, 5 belong to other ethnic minorities (Turkish and Armenian), 8 are openly LGBTI+, 3 are Deaf and 1 has a visual impairment. As these alumni finish the program, they apply different ideas and tools in their communities and movements, increasing their capacity and potential. Many others proactively work with disadvantaged groups and come from or support rural areas.



Diversity is present also in the fields of work of our alumni which spans from minority rights through youth empowerment, support for disadvantaged groups to environmental issues, access to education and employment, social entrepreneurship, civil participation and democracy in general.

Adding to that, the Bulgarian alumni network is characterized by intense networking and cooperation. Our efforts to provide space for relationship building and sharing, are actively used by the majority of the alumni (although, as it can be expected, we have lost some people on the way). Having realized how important relationship building is through the lens of community organizing, our alumni follow this principle in the interaction with one another.



Even during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, active alumni attempted to build networks and coalitions and amplify the voices of the once usually silenced. This was particularly visible with the Equality League – a diverse coalition of disadvantaged communities and allies which was particularly active from 2018 to 2021. Beyond the collective actions, many alumni and their organizations partner with each other bilaterally and/or turn towards each other for support, advice, know-how and resources.

Finally, the success of the program of Bulgaria is mainly measured by the successes of its individual alumni. And these are many! From big victories like winning national legislation changes that will benefit the Deaf community and winning a case in the European Court of Justice that benefits LGBTQ+ people across the European Union; to smaller, but equally important activities for supporting leaders, empowering citizens and groups, addressing immediate needs through providing services and assistance. Each of our alumni makes a difference in their local environment and we are extremely proud of each one of them!

What makes all these successes even more impressive, is the turbulent environment that they take place in. Many of our alumni had to lead their fights in a hostile and uncertain environment, as Bulgaria experienced political crises in 2013-2014 and 2021-2022 with rapidly changing governments and increased social tensions. In addition, from 2017 to 2021, we endured a coalition government with a nationalist junior partner that was proactively eroding human rights and blocking any progressive developments. Add to that the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent war in Ukraine, the looming inflation and uncertain economy.

In these times of uncertainty, it is ever more important to support communities in need, while continuing to build people's power. We are proud that we have prepared and motivated people to do that across the board and looking forward to adding more committed fellows to our alumni community in the years to come.

Vladislav Petkov and Emil Metodiev

Coordinators of the GLC program in Bulgaria
at Pro European Network



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



Fall 2018

**Environmental issues,
organizing, campaigning**

DEISLAVA STOYANOVA

An environmental organizer, Desislava dedicated more than 10 years of her life to campaigning against a highway going through (and effectively ruining) a geographic area in South-West Bulgaria called the Kresna Gorge. She has successfully organized local communities against the project and led advocacy efforts, promoting reasonable and more environmental-friendly alternatives. In June 2022, Desislava met with the prime minister in another attempt to save the gorge, and he signaled a possible change in the governmental position. A couple of months later the government was toppled - the fight continues.



Fall 2012

Disability rights, inclusive education

KALOYAN DAMYANOV

Kaloyan has built enormous expertise in inclusive education for children with disabilities, which informs his position as a director of Resource Center for Inclusive Education - Sofia, a public body with 150 people staff serving children with disabilities all throughout Sofia. Author of books and publications, he also teaches inclusive education in university. Previously, he founded the National Association of Resource Teachers, which currently has over 2000 members. In 2014-2016, he served as a councilor of the Bulgarian Department of Education.



Fall 2015

Zero waste, sustainability, social entrepreneurship

BLAZHKA DIMITROVA

Blazhka launched a zero-waste restaurant, which - in addition to being environmentally sustainable - offers jobs to young people in disadvantaged situations. She is the author of the book 'A life with zero waste in Bulgaria', published in 2020 and promotes zero waste through school workshops. In 2021, together with her partner, she launched the Zero Wave crackers, using malt byproducts from beer production as a main ingredient. The crackers can be found on the Bulgarian market.



Spring 2017
LGBTI+ rights, strategic
litigation, law

DENITSA LYUBENOVA

As a lawyer, Denitsa leads the legal program of the non-profit LGBTI+ Deystvie, offering legal services for LGBTI+ people and challenging conservative legal paradigms. In 2021, Denitsa led and won a strategic case in the European Court of Justice. The court decided European Member States are obliged to issue a birth certificate for children born within the union, recognizing both of their same-sex parents, regardless of limitations of national legislation. The decision favorably affects LGBTI+ people all across the European Union.



Spring 2012
Roma rights, education,
advocacy, activism

OGNYAN ISAEV

For years now Ognyan has been one of the most vocal Roma rights activists and contributes to the public debate on social media, TV and the press. He is currently the Director of Educational Achievement Program at Trust for Social Achievement Foundation, based in Sofia. In this role, he is actively engaged in advocacy efforts aimed at ensuring access to quality education for Roma children, while overseeing educational programs and training teachers.



Fall 2017
LGBTI+ rights, activism,
Pride

LILLY DRAGOEVA

Lilly is an esteemed LGBTI+ activist, currently an executive director of Bilitis Foundation, one of the few LGBTI+ organizations in Bulgaria. Together with other alumni (Denitsa Lyubenova, Dimitar Bogdanov, Simeon Vasilev) she is a member of the Sofia Pride organizing committee - in 2022 the march has a 15-years anniversary. In addition, Lilly is Board secretary of the European Pride Organizers Association (EPOA) - the organization which manages the EuroPride initiative.



Spring 2018

**Youth engagement,
community spaces, youth policies**

GEORGI NIKOLOV

Georgi leads Seed Foundation and manages Hub-a - a multifunctional youth community center, which has become a cultural phenomena in the small town of Samokov. His approach towards youth engagement through youth spaces, activities and festivals (including graffiti, music and other forms of art) has been successfully multiplied in other small towns in Bulgaria. Georgi has mastered the art of convincing municipal administrations to financially invest in their youth communities.



Spring 2017

Advocacy, Deaf people, empowerment

ASHOD DERANDONYAN

Ashod, along with other Deaf alumni from Bulgaria, led a number of advocacy campaigns which resulted in legislative wins for the Deaf community. Thanks to their efforts, in 2021 the Bulgarian Parliament approved Bulgarian Sign Language Act, recognizing sign language and securing access to education and services on sign language. This directly impacts at least 10 000 Deaf people in the country.



Spring 2019

Culture, art, immigration, refugees

VESY DEYANOVA

Together with alumna Diana Nedeva (Fall 2015), Vesly co-manages the non-profit Meeting Points, which uses culture (food, art, etc.) to create - as the name suggests - meeting points for people from different backgrounds and social groups. Their projects bring together locals with immigrants, Deaf with hearing, minorities and majorities. In 2022, following the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Vesly dedicated her time to working with Ukrainian refugees and now co-manages one of the volunteer reception centers.



HUNGARY



**The Great Lakes Consortium
Professional Fellows
Program operates in
Hungary since 2011. The first
Hungarian alumni delegation
was sent to the US in**

2012

The history of the GLC Professional Fellows Program, which has been officially written since 2011, is a real success story for the Civil College Foundation. We provided more than 70 talented young people, with a sense of responsibility for their own community, the opportunity to learn about the American methodology of community organizing and gain experience with American NGO's. In many cases, these experiences were successfully adapted to the Hungarian conditions.

We cannot go further without mentioning the role of Máté Varga, who initiated and coordinated the program as the president of the Civil College Foundation. Máté had a significant part in starting American-style community organizing in Hungary, and the Professional Fellows program helped him a lot in this, as well as the community organizers who gained experience with the help of this program.

We are particularly proud of the fact that, with the help of the program, we were able to help representatives of several disadvantaged groups and communities to gain valuable professional experience. In this way, disabled people and professionals helping them, several community organizers of Roma origin, and young people belonging to the LGBTI+ community could participate in the program. Their experiences helped a lot in improving their situation and recognizing their rights. We would like to point out two examples of this! One such example is when the local LGBTI+ team in Szeged, one of Hungary's largest rural cities, managed to achieve changes in local regulations and thereby limit the curtailment of their community's rights. Another example is the successful national campaign of our alumna Anett Csordás, which resulted in an increase in home care fees, thus helping many thousands of families caring for their disabled children at home.



However, our students did not only play a role in the success of disadvantaged groups, but also played a role in several successful campaigns related to environmental protection. Among these, the protection of the "Római" Danube-bank stands out, which is the only green coastal section of Budapest still preserved in its original form. Two of our alumni also played a significant role in organizing the local community.

We are also proud of those alumni who, in addition to community organizing, successfully manage after school programs in several settlements and deal with disadvantaged children. There is also an example, through our alumnus Tamás Horn, that the experience gained in America is also reflected in the creation and years of successful management of an entire NGO.

All in all, we greatly appreciate the assistance of the GLC Professional Fellows Program during these particularly difficult times! Let's not forget the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 virus, the war going on next door, the burdens of exceptionally high inflation! Last but not least, let's also take into account the political situation in Hungary, which means a particularly difficult environment for civil society organizations dealing with the organizing of communities. Our alumni successfully stood their ground even in such difficult circumstances, and we can safely say that the program has achieved its goal in Hungary, and we trust together in a similar successful continuation!

Péter Szabados and Mónika Bálint

Coordinators of the GLC program in Hungary
at Civil College Foundation (CKA)



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



Fall 2015

**Community organizing,
education, participatory
democracy**

ÁGNES MOLNÁR

As an organizer she started youth organizing in Debrecen and established with them a local advocacy group called Nativ. They had many events and campaigns through the years and had a great impact on the local society. In 2017 he was also able to open a new independent community space in Debrecen, run by the Alternative Communities Association (ACA) called Malter, a youth and civic HUB in the region. As the professional leader and vice-president of the ACA she started to do big capacity building programs in the North Plain region that supported the civic society and communities to do their projects and develop their organizations. Lately she also started to do piloting of participatory budgeting in schools or participatory action research with the local community members. Community organizing became the basis of every step she is doing, and can never forget the 3 O: Organizers Organize Organizations, that's still her mission in the fieldwork.



Fall 2018

**Disability, inclusion,
participatory action
research**

ZÓRA MOLNÁR

Zóra is a project manager at Jamba Hungary Foundation (JHF), an international social enterprise that provides training and career development opportunities for people with disabilities, inclusive services, counseling and training development opportunities for employers to become inclusive and accessible workplaces for diverse abilities.

Zóra has also worked as a community organizer, lobbying for suitable housing and accessible public transit for people with physical disabilities. In 2018, she was taking part in organizing a successful advocacy campaign to make all stops on one of Budapest's major metro lines accessible to wheelchair users.

Since her participation in the GLC-program, Zóra has focused on two main fields of her career: she holds and develops training and other educational programs for people with disabilities at the JHF and she also works with the approach of participatory action research: she holds training and workshops in this topic at the School of Public Life Foundation. In spring 2022, Zóra was selected to take part in the Obama Foundation Leaders Europe Program.



Spring 2017

Roma identity and culture, informal education, Roma volunteers

SZILVIA KISSNÉ SZÉNÁSI

Szilvia is the director of Uccu Roma Informal Educational Foundation since 2016. Uccu has initiated dialogue and intercultural encounters between Roma and non-Roma people in order to reduce prejudices and stereotypes in the majority of society. Szilvia and her team In 2018 launched the Uccu Budapest Romani Walking Tours as a social enterprise which offers interactive innovative walks in Budapest and Pécs. Participants will acquire a cultural experience; get a more authentic picture of the Roma issue and some districts of the cities by obtaining general knowledge about them. The interactive walking tours are guided by young Roma, who will share their knowledge and their own stories and experiences as Roma in Hungary.



Fall 2016

Social (inequalities, responsibility, innovation, service), charity, sustainability, raising awareness, building bridges

TAMÁS HORN

Tamas founded his organization called Charity Taxi Foundation in 2016 which aims to connect the unused items of households in Budapest with the most disadvantaged communities in the countryside. By today it has become one of the most known grassroots charity organizations, which already reached 3000 households in the capital, and supported 100 villages by approximately 150 tons of goods with 600 volunteers involved.



Fall 2012

Organizing, advocacy, solidarity

BÁLINT VOJTONOVSZKI

Bálint used the know-how on community organizing learnt in the program in NYC back at home in Budapest while working together with long-time unemployed people between 2012-2014. Afterwards he migrated to Berlin, where in the last 5 years he managed to find like-minded people and together they have been organizing the Hungarian-speaking diaspora in the form of a political association, the Freie Ungarische Botschaft. Along with regular community events, FUB organizes together with similar diaspora organizations and other partners go-to-vote campaigns for the Hungarian and European elections, fundraising projects for CSOs in Hungary and political advocacy actions on German decision makers. All this to advance rule of law and a solidary society in Hungary, from abroad.



Spring 2016
Movement building,
housing, participation,
political education

TESSZA UDVARHELYI

Tessza is the co-founder of the City is for All and the School of Public Life. Currently, she is the head of the Office of Community Participation at the Municipality of the 8th district of Budapest. She has been involved in grassroots organizing since 2004, mostly focusing on housing and social rights. She is an educator, helping people build skills and power for effective organizing and advocacy. She became interested in electoral work in 2017 when she became the campaign manager of an independent candidate in Budapest. After running a winning grassroots and movement-based campaign for the mayor of the 8th district in 2019, she became the head of the first municipal office in the country dedicated to the development of democratic culture and community participation. Tessza is a member of the Ashoka Changemakers network and an Obama Scholar alumna.



Spring 2015
Community organizing,
low-income families with
children, family allowance

JOHANNA LÁSZLÓ

In cooperation with Katalin Juhos (Alumna 2019) and with the committed involvement of the Dignified Living Working Group and the Chance Lab Association, Johanna worked on organizing a long-term participation-based campaign focusing on increasing the low-level universal social benefit, the family allowance in Hungary which has neither been raised nor been indexed to inflation since 2008. In order to engage the decision-makers with this issue, various tools were used: testimonies, shared videos, public events, press articles (print and online), radio programs, open letters, mails, e-mails were addressed to the decision-makers and almost 50 000 signatures were collected. 32 organizations joined the campaign and as a result of that, the issue of raising the amount of the family allowance became part of the public debate and also was a key topic for a number of parties before the 2022 parliamentary elections.



Spring 2019

Advocacy, human & Roma rights, disadvantaged groups, education

ANITA FÜRÖS

Anita is working with underprivileged children and the protection of abused women at the Élmény Tár Association as a mentor and co-leader. Their complex approach method is used by only a few people in the country, and they have already been able to record many successes with it. She is also a member of the staff of the Power of Humanity Foundation, where she is the coordinator of Roma advocacy projects. They want to make it easier for Roma organizations in the Southern Transdanubian region of Hungary to assert their interests by organizing themselves into a network.



Fall 2015

**Community Organizing,
Labor Organizing, Civic
Education**

MÓNKA BALINT

Monika is the Managing Director of the Civil College Foundation since 2021. She started her organizing work with the Workfare Movement for the Future group at the Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network. The group was fighting for better working conditions and higher wages for people in the Public Work Scheme. Since 2017 she has been training and mentoring other community organizers in Hungary and also works actively to promote organizing in the central-european region. In 2021 she created a coalition of five organizations, to work on the campaign Clear Vote. They managed to train more than 300 civic activists in the country to spread knowledge about free and fair elections and fight voter fraud.



Fall 2015

**Social disability,
education advocacy,
community organizing,
inclusive education,
participatory democracy**

ANETT CSORDÁS

She was the founder and for ten years the president of Step by Step! Association. In 2011 it was the first organization in the country to represent the interests of families raising children with disabilities. She was the leader of an advocacy campaign about homecare between 2011 and 2019, which was implemented in cooperation with other organizations. As a result, after ten years a new social benefit was introduced in Hungary, which brought changes in the lives of more than twenty thousand families. In 2019 she received the first TASZ Szabad award, as well as the Social Profession's Advocacy Award. Since 2018 she has been the director of the School of Tomorrow, which is the first real inclusive education experiment in Hungary and works for the creation of inclusive education programs in Hungary. In 2021 she formed a new local group, called Without Barriers. Their goal is to involve the decision-makers and residents of the 8th district to make it accessible, as well as to create accessible apartments. Her group won the district's participation budget tender, so from next year a Disability Officer will work in the district.



Fall 2016

Culture, art, community organizing

BALÁZS HORVÁTH-KERTÉSZ

Balázs has been a member of the CKA's professional board for many years, developing and teaching community organizer training. He leads a team that manages the organization of national community organizing campaigns, the most important of which are campaigns to improve the situation of Roma in slums, the development of neighborhood networks, and campaigns to fight corruption and limit priority investments to protect local natural and cultural assets.



RO MA NIA

Ten-year anniversaries are a good time to look back with pride at past achievements and to look forward to what remains to be done in the future.

Such is the case for The Great Lakes Consortium Professional Fellows Program, which has operated in Romania since 2011 and the first alumni delegation was sent to the US in

2012

Professional Fellows Program has supported close to 80 Romanian activists in learning community organizing from their more experienced US counterparts and in applying the lessons learned to build and empower a variety of communities across Romania.

In 2012, CeRe was one of the first organizations in Romania to experiment with community organizing. At the time, the first neighborhood civic groups were just registering their first victories from their own advocacy campaigns. The fellowship program greatly boosted the speed at which community organizing spread: CeRe's own capacity to do and teach organizing increased and more activists came into contact with community organizing principles and methods. The program's focus on minority communities ensured that people with very different backgrounds came in contact with each other through this fellowship and their collaborations built new bridges and networks of solidarity between women's rights organizations, neighborhood groups, organizations that build LGBT+ or Roma communities, organizations focused on empowering people living with disabilities, refugee groups, isolated rural groups and effervescent youth groups.

Over the past 10 years, we've seen communities move from a very skeptical stance towards the chances of success of community organizing efforts to more and more community organizations springing up across the country by adapting the blueprints provided by other more established organizations. Communities have become more confident, more willing to work together and to stand up to unjust authorities through direct action. More citizens have come to see in community organizing a way to foster real democracy.



As is to be expected, a significant number of alumni changed jobs over the years, taking with them the lessons learned during their fellowship. Some of them migrated towards foundations and managed to encourage and support more grassroots initiatives. Some, like Catalina Olteanu, brought real representation of their communities in national authorities. Alumni like Ionela Maria Ciolan and Anda-Ilona Serban coordinated local chapters of international organizations.



Expanding on the communities thought to be able to benefit from community organizing, alumni such as Alexandrina Dinga, Loredana Mihaly, Victor Toma and Irina Vasilescu focused their respective efforts on communities located in “civic wastelands” dominated by service provision, on marginalized and impoverished Roma communities, on rural youth with close to no experience in advocacy, and on boosting their service provision to vulnerable women by skillfully blending it with community organizing. Environmental organizers, such as Alex Tomescu, helped steer environment protection towards being more democratic and just by directly involving local communities in transitioning to a cleaner environment.

Recent years have been generous with opportunities for community organizations to demonstrate their power and resilience. There is not enough space here to mention all the work done by the alumni in the network during the covid pandemic and the Ukrainian refugee crisis to both maintain connections and exchange ideas among themselves and to mobilize and support their local communities.

Alexandru Palas resumed collaboration with MozaiQ to keep LGBTI+ communities together through the isolation brought by the pandemic and to help with the fundraising efforts necessary to provide aid to Ukrainian LGBT+ refugees. A grander scale example is Luca Ciubotaru’s work with Radautiul Civic, as they managed to mobilize massive resources from their region to help in both crises when authorities fell short.

With more global crises coming in the following years and the propensity of governments to slide towards authoritarianism as a reaction to them, we would do well to continue both transatlantic and pan-european collaboration and support. Only by continuing to learn from and inspire each other, can we keep community organizing as the ever-evolving method to bring people together against new difficult challenges.

Alexandru Palas and Anda-Ilona Serban

Coordinators of the GLC program in Romania at The Resource Center for Public Participation (CeRe)



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



Fall 2018

**Leadership, law,
coalition building,
refugees**

LUCA CIUBOTARU

Luca is a legal professional and a community organizer, working for 12 years in the NGO sector in Romania. In 2020 he completed the course on „Leadership, action and change” on community organizing at Harvard Kennedy School. He was involved in the student movement, leading and founding organizations for better student representation. In 2014, Luca became the Romanian Youth Delegate at the United Nations. Afterward, he worked as an Advisor to the Minister for Public Consultation and Civic Dialogue and now, he works for the Romanian President's Office on Legislative and Constitutional Affairs and he is a PhD Student. He founded Civic Radauti in his home community in 2017, a grassroots organization that aims to promote active citizenship and good governance at the local level, in the small communities in Northern Romania. He now works on building a coalition of community organizers and civic groups of initiative in Northern Romania. In 2019, Luca was actively involved in the COVID relief effort and since the beginning of the war, the organizations that he runs created a humanitarian Hub, managing to send over 800 tons of aid to Ukraine and assisting tens of thousands of Ukrainian citizens at the border or inside Ukraine.



Spring 2015

**Foreign policy, human
rights, policy**

IONELA MARIA CIOLAN

Ionela Maria Ciolan is a Brussels-based foreign policy and security expert and Board Member of the Transatlantic Alumni Network. She is a recipient of the Manfred Wörner Seminar of the Bundeswehr (2022), GLOBSEC Young Leaders Forum (2022), OSCE and U.N. Office for Disarmament Affairs Scholarship for Peace and Security (2019), and a New Security Leader of the Warsaw Security Forum (2018). Her policy work was published by the Center for European Policy Analysis (Washington D.C.), The European Policy Centre (Brussels), and GLOBSEC (Bratislava) and she was cited in media outlets in the US, Europe, The Middle East and South-East Asia. Ionela is also the founder of the Amnesty International Bucharest Group (AIBG). Under her coordination, AIBG has conducted 15 human rights campaigns in Romania on women's, LGBTI+ and Roma rights, freedom of expression, housing rights etc. with a reach of 40 thousand people.



Spring 2018

**Roma rights,
education, Roma
language**

LOREDANA MIHALY

As a Roma language teacher for 12 years, Loredana contributed to the preservation of the Roma language and culture, educating over 300 Roma students from the Roma community in Baia Mare. She is also a community facilitator since 2014, contributing to the improvement of the situation of the Craica Baia-Mare community, by involving and strengthening the initiative group in actions that aimed at 60 Roma children to be enrolled in school, better housing conditions, vocational education for young people, infrastructure improvement (bridges and access roads, housing), parents' education. As a community facilitator at the association Local Action Group-GAL Baia Mare, Loredana managed to set up 6 Roma and non-Roma initiative groups working together to find the best solutions for the local community, involving in the process the Young Roma Maramures and Baia Mare Social Services.



Spring 2017

**LGBTI+ rights,
community organizing trainer, fundraising**

ALEXANDRU PALAS

Alexandru is serving as President of MozaiQ LGBTI+ Association since 2021. Before getting elected for his current position, he assisted LGBTI+ groups outside of Bucharest adapt their community work to the pandemic context. During the first few months of the refugee crisis brought on by the war in Ukraine, he helped MozaiQ raise funds to be able to provide assistance to LGBTI+ refugees. Together with the rest of the board of directors, Alexandru is overseeing the organization's activity and is working on the new organizational strategy, which should guide the organization in the upcoming 4 years.



Fall 2016

**Roma rights, anti-
discrimination, human
rights**

CATALINA OLTEANU

Cătălina Olteanu is a steering board member at the Romanian National Council for Combating Discrimination. The Council is the government authority in the field of discrimination, and is an autonomous legal entity under the jurisdiction of Parliament. It guarantees the observance and application of the principle of non-discrimination, in accordance with current domestic legislation and the international documents to which Romania is a party. Since 2017 she is an alumna of the Young Leaders program of the Aspen Institute in Romania. Catalina has 11 years of experience working with Roma communities in Romania. This includes training over 1000 teachers on intercultural education and human rights. She believes in the power of education in creating better lives and has developed inclusive educational tools for promoting diversity among Roma and non-Roma students.



Spring 2017
Disarmament,
grassroot movements,
education, advocacy

ANDA – ILONA ȘERBAN

Anda is working on empowering grassroots initiatives in becoming just social changers in their communities and is currently part of CeRe team, as project coordinator. For years she focused on advocacy efforts at national level for an equitable public educational system in Romania, as a Board Member for the Coalition for Education. Her expertise on international relations, with an MA in Security Studies motivated Anda to be part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) since 2012, where she was active at international level as an advocacy expert, an European youth leader and campaign coordinator for Romania. She was part of the ICAN delegation, when the organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017, in Oslo. Anda also stands in the Board of Directors of Baylor Black Sea Foundation, part of the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) at Texas's Children's Hospital in Houston, USA.



Spring 2022
Environmental
organizing, art

ALEX TOMESCU

Alex managed to mobilize and involve the local community in Giurgiu in developing "Nature faces us" mural, a symbol of the community fighting to reduce the plastic waste pollution of the Danube. 100 people from the community got involved in the process and showed their desire to reduce plastic consumption and discussed about how the waste ends up in the water and affects their lives in the short term, but also how it affects the community in the long term. The 60 square meters mural, located in the city, on the street that leads directly to the Danube port, is made with Airlite paint, which takes pollution from the air and turns it into water drops when it rains. This action is part of Alex's long term community organizing efforts in Giurgiu community.



Spring 2019
Social services,
period poverty, women empowerment

IRINA VASILESCU

Irina is coordinating the Pe Stop's campaign where she is currently serving 400 beneficiaries - vulnerable girls and women - in Bucharest on a monthly basis, distributing menstrual hygiene packages. The organization holds menstrual hygiene classes and advocates for laws that facilitate vulnerable people's access to these basic hygiene products. As of September 2022, Pe Stop has started expanding its reach, setting up a nation-wide network of volunteers working to support vulnerable people with the menstrual products they need. They are hoping to have national coverage soon, since menstrual poverty is an issue affecting 1 million girls and women in Romania alone.



Spring 2019
Youth empowerment,
rural, youth policies

VICTOR TOMA

Victor is doing grassroots organizing and empowering the young people from rural areas and together with his team, they developed the European Youth Village Program to help young people to create opportunities for their peers in their rural communities. Each year they are organizing the Rural Youth Summit, a national event to connect young people and decision makers from all over the country and the Rural Youth Awards to give visibility to the rural youth and their initiatives. They developed the White Charter of the Rural Youth which sets rural youth policy priorities. The Informal Network of Rural Youth raises relevant issues and the needs of young people from rural areas to decision makers. They also built the (N)GoRural Platform, a federative structure which aims to support civic groups from villages. The European Youth Village became one of the biggest rural youth movements in Europe, a pioneer in organizing rural youth and changing rural youth policies. Next year Victor and his team will organize the first ever European Rural Youth Summit together with the European Commission and the Romanian National Agency managing the Erasmus+ program and they are discussing directly with the EU Commission in order to start improving policies at the European level.



Fall 2015
Community leadership,
transparency,
collaborative approach

ALEXANDRINA DINGA

Alexandrina Dinga is an activist for democracy, community organizer, and executive president of the CIVICA Association, an organization that carries out projects in the field of active citizenship and good governance in Iasi, Romania. For about 15 years in the non-profit sector, she develops and coordinates civic campaigns, community organizing projects and advocacy at the local level. She was the leader of an important civic moment for the local community, in Iasi, the campaign for replanting of heritage linden trees in the city center, a campaign that lasted approximately 2 years and in which more than 10,000 Iasi residents got involved. From that moment, with the lesson of the power of an organized community in mind, local authorities began to be more transparent, collaborative and open to the real needs of citizens.



SLO VA KIA



**The Great Lakes Consortium
Professional Fellows
programs has operated in
Slovakia with its coordination
by the Center for Community
Organizing since 2011 and the
first alumni delegation was
sent to the US in**

2012



From spring 2012 to fall 2022 an overall of 51 Slovaks have gone through the program, while we also had the chance to host a lot of U.S. mentors in a number of outbound visits. In our diverse network of altogether 51 amazing and unique alumni, 4 are Roma, 9 are openly LGBTI+ and 1 has a visual impairment.

Community organizing has had a long tradition in Slovakia, even before the beginning of the Professional Fellows exchange program, thanks to one of our main US mentors, Chuck Hirt, who settled permanently in Slovakia 25 years ago and founded the Center for Community Organizing (CKO) in Banská Bystrica. His spread of community organizing was very successful, but it was focused only on central Slovakia, where civic activism was growing and bringing unprecedented success.

Because of the Professional Fellows exchange program, community organizing, civic activism and civic participation have spread across Slovakia.

Over the 10 years of the Professional Fellows exchange program, awareness of community organizing and civic engagement has really spread across the country and has begun to be implemented by several nonprofit organizations and the Center for Community Organizing has been their proud partner to this day.

One of the most visible examples is Depaul, an organization that works with homeless people in Bratislava and is the largest provider of housing and social assistance to people who have lost their homes. Internship with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless inspired them to hire community organizers who seek to empower homeless people and give them a civic voice.



Some of our alumni also hold important senior leadership and government positions. Their motivation was to involve the public in political decision-making, increase transparency and civic engagement. Even despite such high work positions, they proudly support our Professional Fellows program and they have not forgotten the importance of civic activism and the importance of engaging the public in transparent political processes.

At the same time, we are very proud of the fact that among our alumni there are many civically active people who work with a wide range of communities, from small rural communities in eastern Slovakia, through



street work with youth from the peripheral districts of the capital, those who supports Roma communities, who face frequent social and ethnic discrimination in Slovakia. Activism in Roma communities is one of the most visible success stories of our Professional Fellows exchange programme. We have a number of success stories from our Roma alumni who are working as community organizers or leaders in marginalized neighborhoods in larger or smaller cities across Slovakia. Supporting LGBTI+ communities across Slovakia and the fight against xenophobia and hate crime is another important activity of our alumni and is all the more urgent after the October 2022 terrorist act targeting the Slovak LGBTI+ community, in which two young people were killed outside the entrance of Bratislava's gay venue.

One of the key tests of the cohesion of our Slovak alumni community was the period of the COVID 19 pandemic, which caught us all unprepared but all the more willing to join forces and help on the front lines where our health services were not able to intervene, and so by supplying disinfectants, protective equipment or spreading awareness, our alumni helped both in the excluded Roma communities, as well as among the elderly, lonely people and the homeless.

Perhaps the most significant involvement of our alumni in volunteer activities came at the beginning of this year, when Russia's direct military attack on the territory of Ukraine forced hundreds of thousands of people to literally leave their homes from one day to the next and depend on the help of strangers from foreign countries and cultures. That was when the solidarity of our Slovak alumni family showed itself, making humanitarian collections, organizing

transportation to detention camps for Ukrainian refugees, or going straight to the Slovak-Ukrainian border, where they gave psychological help, or just offered hot food and tea to desperate and fed-up people.

It is important to mention how the Professional Fellows program has significantly impacted the Center for Community Organizing itself. Its current director Maroš Chmelík, former National Co-Coordinator Veronika Strelcova, as well as its current National Co-Coordinator Miroslav Ragač are all its alumni. Also, part of its team is Jolana Nátherová, who runs a community organizing program in Roma communities and Ondrej Druga, who started a successful faith-based organizing, but also the education of young people towards democracy, inclusion, tolerance and critical thinking, which the Center for Community Organizing, through the Schools for Democracy programme, implements in more than 40 primary and secondary schools across Central Slovakia.

We have listed just a few inspiring examples that have succeeded in the 10 years of the Professional Fellows exchange programme in Slovakia. Behind every single alumni there is a story, behind every single one of them are the positive changes they have made thanks to the experience and knowledge about civic activism and community organizing they have gained through our exchange program.

Thanks to it, Slovakia is more democratic, active, transparent and participatory. And that is the main goal: empowering people towards positive changes and a tolerant society.

Maroš Chmelík and Miroslav Ragač

Coordinators of the GLC program in Slovakia
at Center for Community Organizing



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



Spring 2013

**Political scientist,
political accountability,
democratic values**

MARTIN KLUS

His successful career has been built on a bottom-up/grassroots model of community organizing. He started as a blogger and later as a political analyst in various Slovak media. He not only pointed out the problems of Slovak society, but also how to solve them, especially with examples from around the world. Then someone told him not to expect others to do it for him. They said: "Go and try it yourself". And that is how he first got into local politics, from which he later progressed to become Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament and later the State Secretary at the Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. But whatever he did, he always kept in mind importance of citizens involvement and that one of the goals of his political undertakings had to be the formation of a specific Central European political culture. To this day, even in tense situations, he still tries to do this by using diplomatic language towards his opponents, as well as respect for the values of freedom and democracy, which are increasingly rare in these turbulent times.



Fall 2015

**LGBTI+ rights, activism,
Pride**

RÓBERT FURIEL

Róbert is the director of the civic association Sapling, which works to improve the situation of LGBTI+ people in Slovakia using the foundations of civic activism. He is a founding member of Rainbow PRIDE Bratislava and Košice, passionate human rights activist, grant writer and resource developer and fundraiser for Amnesty International Slovakia. He also uses all his experience as a trainer of non-formal education for youth and youth workers. His involvement in the Professional Fellows Program has been a paradigm shift professionally and personally. It taught him to focus more on building power, talking to people, bringing them together and planning his work in the long-term, focusing on sustainability. He brought a visible change for the LGBTI+ community in Slovakia. For the past few years, his organization has increased its investment in the community and our society is already seeing the first fruits of his work.



Spring 2017
**Community organizing,
leadership, social justice**

KARINA ANDRÁŠIKOVÁ

Karina works as a social worker for the civic association called Street Youth in Bratislava. She used the experience and inspiration she gained during her US internship at the WV Healthy Kids and Families Coalition in West Virginia to co-create the grass-root community and youth center in Bratislava's Rača district. This is a unique project that brought together residents of the housing development, local community initiatives, and a professional organization that works with youth. Thanks to this, an open space for the community for active leisure, a low-threshold club for youth, community participation and community development activities was created. Karina and her colleagues work with children, youth and families from socially excluded backgrounds as well as housing estate communities to support them in improving their lives.



Spring 2013
**Community organizing,
leadership, social justice**

MAROŠ CHMELÍK

This program has completely changed Maroš's life. After completing the Professional Fellows Program, he started leading the Center for Community Organizing (CKO), a key institution in Slovakia and Central Europe that has been advocating the community organizing method across diverse communities for over 23 years, helping them build their voice for a better and more socially just society.

Moreover, his long experience of leading CKO on issues such as social justice, human dignity and human rights helps him to advocate at local, regional and national levels for interventions to mitigate radicalization and polarization in society.



Fall 2012
**Roma empowerment,
education, advocacy, activism**

JOLANA NÁTHEROVÁ

Jolana is herself Roma. Perhaps this is what helped her and her husband to start activities that had as one of their goals to erase the differences between ethnic groups and to counter extremist attitudes. These were already growing stronger when they launched their first projects. Jolana has been doing community work with Roma children from difficult backgrounds for more than 25 years.

She prepares them for school and later accompanies them through adolescence so that they are self-sufficient and ready for life. She is the recipient of the White Crow 2020 award for civic courage and advocacy for the public good.



Fall 2016
**Environmental education,
sustainability, social
entrepreneurship**

SOŇA KERESZTEŠOVÁ

"As a co-founder of an educational apiary and environmental education project about beekeeping, Soňa is based in the very rural central part of Slovakia, a region with one of the highest rates of unemployment in Slovakia. Environmental education and especially cooperation with the local community of farmers, marginalized groups such as rural women, Roma and long-term unemployed people seems to be a functioning example of local development and source of income. Through beekeeping she teaches people how to gain some income by creating new job opportunities. Also soft tourism that they bring to the region rich in natural resources is a good opportunity for the local community for economic development. Her project won the Slovak "Oscar" for non-profit organizations" - Community Development Award 2016.



Fall 2015
**Rural community
engagement, community
spaces, volunteering**

MÁRIA RADVÁKOVÁ

As a humanitarian worker, Maria helped all over the world, but she returned home to the east of Slovakia and is dedicated to strengthening civil society - she founded the Civic Agency for Community Development. If there's anything missing in eastern Slovakia, it's a greater interest of citizens in public affairs. She is particularly interested in participation, local government, public spaces, urban green spaces, sports, employment, volunteering and regional development. Not giving up, not taking "No" as an answer, perseverance and reaching inner harmony while realizing that some solutions simply take more time are skills, which strengthened her after her US visit and she disseminates in the communities she works with - small villages up to 50 inhabitants, active civic society representatives, municipal workers, artists, creative industry representatives and lately, locals in stress due to aggression in Ukraine, humanitarian aid workers and refugees.



Spring 2017
Empowerment of homeless and human rights

JOZEF KÁKOŠ

With the help of community organizing, Jozef as Executive Director of Depaul Slovakia and his team have succeeded in bringing the issue of homeless people to the center of local and national policy attention. Thanks to this, they have been able to push for legislative changes and strategies that aim to help people without their own housing more effectively and to raise the issue of ending homelessness.



Fall 2015

**Prevention and Elimination
of Racism, Anti-Semitism,
Xenophobia and Other
Forms of Intolerance**

ZUZANA HAVÍŘOVÁ

Thanks to her knowledge in the field of community organizing, Zuzana pushed for the adoption of the definition of anti-Roma racism in the national Concept for Combating Radicalization and Extremism until 2024 in 2019, and in 2020 she became the Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance. In the area of combating anti-Roma racism, she initiated several open letters to political representatives, which were signed by a number of Roma, pro-Roma organizations, activists and women activists. In order for our society to be a truly modern democratic country, she will continue her fight to stop systemic discrimination and segregation faced by many children, women and men from the Roma national minority in Slovakia.



Spring 2012

**Community organizing,
activism, campaigning**

VERONIKA ŠTRELCOVÁ

After her fellowship in 2012 Veronika became a program country coordinator for Slovakia. Besides these duties, she has been organizing activities and networking with alumni and community organizers in Slovakia and contributed to building a community of organizers and active people all over the region. Under Center for Community Organizing she helped to set the base for community organizing methodology in CEE, providing educational and mentoring support to community organizers, connecting principles of community organizing, community development and activism. Ten years later Veronika became a coordinator for participation at one of self-governing regions of Slovakia



Fall 2013

**Journalist, university
lecturer and
communication manager**

BOBA MARKOVIČ BALUCHOVÁ

As a communications manager and researcher at Platform for Development Organizations – Ambreia (gathering 29 non-governmental organizations in Slovakia with a focus on development cooperation, humanitarian aid and global education) Boba uses solution journalism and hope-based stories on a daily basis to raise awareness about lives of people from vulnerable groups and different cultures among us. Negative comments from haters and trolls on social networks (as expressions of intolerance, misunderstanding and fear of the unknown) only confirm how important it is to bring examples of diversity, tolerance, solidarity and coexistence to Slovak people outside the so-called 'nonprofit bubble'.



AL BA NIA



**The Great Lakes Consortium
Professional Fellows
Program has been operating
in Albania since 2017 and the
first alumni delegation was
sent to the US in**

2018



A total of 31 Albanians have gone and are currently going through the program, in addition to numerous U.S. mentors being hosted. Despite only being operational for five years in Albania, we may acknowledge some notable achievements.

First off and most importantly, the GLC Professional Fellows Program has provided the means and methods for fellows to better understand the fundamental concepts of community organizing and pave roads that help them improve their community and seek change for a better world. This in turn has directly influenced the Albanian civil society, by providing solid examples of community organizing through fellows and US mentors and gradually altering the stubborn Eastern European mindset present in our society.

Secondly, despite undergoing challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainties, imminent inflation etc., this program adapted and explored innovative approaches to influence people and spark changes amongst our community.

In addition, such a program has strengthened an already established partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, as well as partnerships within Europe and has provided new opportunities for professionals to share experiences and develop mutually beneficial collaborations between civil society organizations focusing on citizen engagement and advocacy with a special focus on minority and marginalized populations.

Lastly, this program has provided opportunities for us to exchange experiences with our counterparts in Europe and the United States, to compare approaches, to generate fresh ideas, and to implement new programs to strengthen our international partnerships and benefit our local communities.



Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development is committed to strengthening the activism and advocacy scene among civil society organizations and activists because we believe it is essential to a thriving democracy and the effective undertaking and implementation of Albania's reform initiatives. We are proud to have the Professional Fellows Program to provide enriching opportunities to locals looking to make a change in their communities, which continuously pass their experience, energy and willingness onto everyone around them.

Enkela Poro and Aida Ciro

Coordinators of the GLC program in Albania
at Co-PLAN



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



Fall 2019

**Social services,
inequality. human rights**

BLERINA KURETA

Blerina, along with other Albanian alumni, works with the organization ARSIS, the Initiative for Social Change. Since 2021, Blerina has been working as a Social Worker/Field Coordinator, in one of the projects implemented in the refugee camp in Shengjin, a project financed by the IRC (International Rescue Committee). The project consists in the creation of 3 friendly spaces: 1. Friendly Space for Women and Girls (WGSS- a concrete and abstract space which ensures the physical and emotional safety of women and girls); 2. Friendly Space for Children (CFS- child-friendly spaces give children an opportunity to escape the crowded living conditions in the refugee camps. These spaces provide children and parents alike with a much-needed escape from stress and any trauma caused by the ongoing emergencies.); 3. Friendly Space for Mothers and Babies (MBC- mothers can spend time in a safe space, take care of their babies, participate in workshops and most importantly talk to a midwife about nutrition, hygiene, early childhood development, their own health and the health of older children. This project has affected about 2000 people of the Afghan community living in Albania, including 1400 women and children and 600 adult men.



Spring 2018

**LGBTI+ rights, Activism,
Pride, Empowerment,
Family Education,
Political Participation,
QUEER FILM MARATHON
TIRANA**

ARBËR KODRA

Arbër is one of the strongest voices on supporting LGBTI+ people in Albania and has been very active in lobbying and raising awareness on human rights issues, minority issues, on the civil coexistence of LGBTI+ people, and other issues. He is the Executive Director of Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA) and they address the human rights of LGBTI+ people broadly, work to promote the visibility, empowerment, acceptance and self-acceptance of LGBTI+ people and they mostly focus on families and political participation of LGBTI people. The only LGBTI+ activist who is working closely with the Albanian Government and politicians on LGBTI+ advocacy. Another focus is the promotion of human rights of the LGBTI+ people through art, by founding and holding the position of the artistic director of the QUEER FILM MARATHON TIRANA, the only unique festival of this kind in the country.



Fall 2018

**Youth empowerment,
gender equality, mental
health, women
& girls' empowerment,
gender equality**

LORELA MUSTA

Lorela is co-founder and Executive Director of "STEPS" Center with the mission of promoting and advocating youth empowerment, psycho-emotional well-being and gender equality. She has taken on numerous social initiatives in topics such as gender equality, women/girl empowerment, access to mental health services etc. In the last 2 years, she led a few capacity building initiatives where more than 800 young people, educators in urban and rural areas were empowered to combat gender-based violence. Lorela was also part of an initiative for improving Mental Health Services, where 30 marginalized girls/women benefited free psychological group counseling for 3 months. She is also a part of AUSA (Albanian and United States Alumni) where she led the "Art Brightens your day" program from which 30 children and young women in the city of Kruja benefited, improving their emotional state through a socio-artistic approach, by raising awareness on the importance of engaging and empowering young people, promoting mental health and psychological well-being, empowering girls in the community, as key players in promoting gender equality and more.



Spring 2019

MIRELA JUKA

Mirela works closely and contributes to Down Syndrome Albania as a project manager and legal counsel, in addition to being executive director at RIAS business organization. Mirela has been working for years to further contribute towards inclusivity related to disability or gender.

**Disability rights, inclusive education,
advocacy and lobbying, gender equality**



Fall 2019

DEA MILOTI

Dea is a passionate young woman who works closely on matters related to different social aspects of life, such as mental health, human rights, violence against woman/women empowerment, etc. Dea works to bring awareness to these topics through artistic means.

**Social awareness, human rights, youth
engagement**



Spring 2019

Gender equality and youth empowerment

GELDONA METAJ

Geldona is working closely on issues related to gender equality, good governance, and youth empowerment. Currently, Geldona is working as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Tirana, and she is working on her PhD focused on gender studies and politics. Geldona has been a part of several publications regarding gender equality, and conducted several trainings focused on project management and youth empowerment. Recently, Geldona -with Marsela Allmuca (fall 2018 alumna)- was awarded by the U.S. Department of State 'Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund' to promote youth activism and build sustainable community development.



Spring 2022

Environmental issues, organizing, environment social change

KLAUDIO HYSENI

Klaudio is the executive director of "Durrësi Aktiv" Center. This organization aims to be a changemaker for the citizens of Durrës for better lives through economic, political, environmental, and social changes. Their activities through activism, arts, photography, cycling, and community collaboration aim to organize communities and empower them to raise their voices through democratic tools, advocating for environmental issues and spreading awareness of social resilience. Becoming a community organizer taught Klaudio to focus on what is most important at work and in life, and it gave him the energy to fight for people's empowerment. He always says, "Give the best to get the best."



Spring 2018

Activism, community empowerment, education, youth and women empowerment, health

SUELA KOÇIBELLINJ

Suela, with her organization "Vizion NGO" has worked closely with vulnerable communities and has been assisting in many areas, such as: food aid packages in the field, aid in education, direct help to families, trainings regarding activism amongst new activists and youth, women empowerment, help in the health sector and rehabilitating schools and kindergartens. She began operating mostly in the northern part of Albania, however is gradually expanding her reach.



BREJDON XHAVARA

Brejdon, an investigative journalist based in Tirana, is a strong public voice in supporting and reporting on the Roma and Egyptian Community and not only. He has created an online reporting platform called "Community Reporters" which he uses as an instrument of raising awareness and reporting on different issues based on the reality of Albania. One of the strongest ways to reach the citizens for Brejdon is to work on articles and podcasts.

Spring 2019

Roma and Egyptian rights, investigative journalism, community empowerment



SIDITA ZAJA

Sidita is a fierce feminist who is committed to ending cultural prejudice and works to bring about justice for both herself and other people. She has worked to promote human rights with a particular emphasis on minorities, women, and LGBTI+ persons. Her advocacy has been concentrated on campaigns to increase public awareness of hate crimes and hate speech as well as professional education. Over the past ten years, she has participated in a variety of advocacy initiatives, legislation changes, and country monitoring working groups that have improved the LGBTI+ community in Albania.

Fall 2019

Feminism, human rights, LGBTI+



ANA MAJKO

Ana is part of the organization Initiative for Social Change ARSIS, based in Tirana. Their goal is to ensure that every child, young person, woman, and family attains the right to protection, development, and participation. Ana leads the team of professionals in developing and implementing services for children in high risk, daily centers for children, and emergency services for children and parents in vulnerable situations in Albania.

Fall 2019

Child rights and protection, reintegration of people impacted by gender-based violence and trafficking, minority rights, advocacy, family strengthening and youth empowerment

Spring
2012



Metodiev Emil, Isaev Ognyan, Borisova Maryana, Lazarov Peter, Yordanova Miglena, Szollar Judit, Nagy Eszter, Janoskuti Boglarka, Avar Tamas, Gosztanyi Marton, Chiburte Lavinia, Suciu Ana-Maria, Carstea Mihaela, Bargerova Zuzana, Strelcova Veronika, Micek Martin

Fall
2012



Damyanov Kaloyan, Taneva Nedka, Vojtonovszki Balint, Dinok Henriett, Molnar Hegymegi Krisztina, Fugg Zsolt, Lupusor Anda, Buzec Andreea, Grigoriu Mihaela, Catuna Vlad, Raileanu Radu, Dumitru Nicu, Natherova Jolana, Beresova Marcela, Kacmarcikova Milena, Bandurova Monika

Spring
2013



Milenkov Milenko, Mahmud Dzhevid, Mihneva Delyana, Georgiev Georgi, Vodal Anita, Jakab Laszlo, Kovacs Timea, Szikra Csaba, Kiss Hajnalka, Negulescu Raluca, Petrache Ioana, Barbu Simona, Borca Ruxandra, Ursu Silvia, Vaskovicova Monika, Ragac Miroslav, Chmelik Maros, Klus Martin, Batova Daniela

Fall
2013



Hristova Kalina, Petrova Viktoriya, Petkov Vladimir, Angelichin Hristo, Darakchi Shaban, Kovacs Annamaria, Lenart Zsofia, Angyal Jozsef, Bekefi Robert, Tajti Andrea, Botazan Oana, Neagu Iustina, Stefanut Laura, Gaudi Lia, Carburaru Elena, Mezeiova Gabriela, Baluchova Bozena, Kollarik Romina

Spring
2015



Gyurova Dilyana, Angelova Kirilka, Pashova Nevena, Pal Bence , Petak Peter, Suri Szilvia, Laszlo Johanna, Fugg Zsanett, Szilardi Reka, Mihnea Florea, Ionescu Christinela, Bacil Oana, Popa Claudia, Ilie Magda, Ciolan Ionela, Gal Slavomir, Jurikova Monika, Raposova Ivana, Riecarska Eva, Machlovica Lenka, Korenova Sona

Fall
2015



Nenkova Antoaneta, Bozhikova Antoaneta, Mitkov Asen, Dimitrova Blazhka, Nedeva Diana, Csordas Anett, Balint Monika, Molnar Agnes, Szenttamasi Tamas, Anghel Gabriela, Nasture Florin, Galusca Ciprian, Dinga Alexandrina, Trombitasova Dana, Huray Peter, Balazova Zuzana, Furiel Robert

Spring
2016



Raduncheva Mina, Nenov Tsvetomir, Svetoslavov Martin, Karagyozev Asen, Pocsuvalszki Aliz, Udvarhelyi Tessza, Katona Krisztina, Galambos Attila, Molnar Simon, Molnar Luca, Braga Andreea, Ungureanu Iulian, Bruckner Andreia, Macaria Claudia, Grecu Diana, Hlincikova Miroslava, Simkovic Miroslav, Budaj Michal

Fall
2016



Nikolova Milena, Bakalova Silvia, Georgieva Liliya, Yancheva Yana, Lilla Matyas, Livia Asmany, Horvath-Kertesz Balazs, Horn Tamas, Dombi Boglarka, Galgoczi Peter, Dr. Kurucz Erika, Olteanu Catalina, Tanase Cristina, Martin Aurora, Tudor Marius, Keresztesova Sona, Bednarova Edit, Curillova Lenka

Spring
2017



Darandonyan Ashod, Lyubenova Denitsa, Koleva Teodora, Dimitrova Milena, Kissne Szenasi Szilvia, Toth Eva Maria, Danyi Daniel, Dancsa Eszter, Tikasz Bendeguz, Prisacariu Dani, Palas Alexandru, Urs Ioana, Serban Anda, Onufreiciuc Raluca, Petrescu Fanel, Fekete Richard, Andrasikova Karina, Kakos Jozef, Olah Miroslav, Lenco Peter, Bayerlova Jana

Fall
2017



Bogdanov Dimitar, Baycheva Genika, Chervenkov Krasimir, Dragoeva Liliya, Batembegska Lyuba, Somoskoi Tamas, Aradi Fanni, Brasso Vivien, Szarka Alexandra, Arany Kata, Irimia Anca, Dinica Eugenia, Georgescu Irina, Nichita Silvia, Grama Cezara, Tabusca Silvia, Radvakova Maria, Mirgova Lydia

Spring
2018



Kocibellinj Suela, Kodra Arber, Dragoti Nensi, Sauku Arion, Mecolli Erisa, Kisova Dobrina, Nikolov Georgi, Andrzhekarska Yulia, Todorova Kostadinka, Petrova Paulina, Berecz Zsuzsa, Beke Karoly, Csango Daniel, Kaprinyak Szilvia, Lupascu Andreea, Mihaly Loredana, Nica Georgiana-Anca, Matei Maxim, Bredet Daniel, Bilova Maria, Novakova Ivana

Fall
2018



Hasmeta Albana, Bejtja Ivi, Allmuca Marsela, Musta Lorela, Kondakciu Alda, Gueorgueva Valentina, Kochev Angel, Stoyanova Desislava, Alexander Ivanov, Bandev Boris, Kunert Annamaria, Kulcsar Angyalka, Molnar Zora, Horlai Sara, Racu Elena, Nechita Larisa, Marcu Madalina, Bielikova Jana, Engler Adam

Spring
2019



Xhavara Brendon, Metaj Geldona, Spahiu Marinela, Yuka Mirela, Deyanova Vesela, Hristov Mircho, Furos Anita, Ignacz Judit, Ivanyi Eva, Szabados Peter, Juhos Katalin, Toma Victor, Lincan Georgiana, Vasilescu Irina, Petre Joan, Toth Karol, Fuskova Jana

Fall
2019



Majko Ana, Miloti Dea, Tushe Blerina, Zaja Sidita, Saatcha Dzafer, Mitev Vihren, Petrova Tsvetelina, Abdallah-Magdy Szabrina, Kanya Kinga, Turcanu-Spatari Vera, Mitache Marius, Ciobotaru Luca, Kutlikova Andrea, Hokova Timea, Vig Juraj

Spring
2022



PARTIAL IN-PERSON SPRING 2022 DELEGATION MEETING IN CHICAGO:
Tomozi Bogdan-Ionut, Ondrej Druga, Julia Andonova, Alexandra Tomescu, Nora Kiss, Kristof Szollossy, Elona Xhepa, Loredana Pana, Klaudio Hyseni

Spring
2022



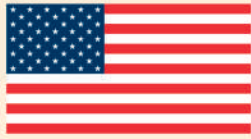
Xhepa Elona, Hyseni Klaudio, Hoxha Kreshnik, Vranici Ardit, Hasalla Gertjana, Atanasov Radoslav, Andonova Julia, Atanasov Atanas, Yurukova Veselina, Toth-Kallo Eva, Gutjahr Zsuzsanna, Szollosy Kristof, Kiss Nora, Pana Loredana Gabriela, Tomozii Bogdan-Ionut, Pinteilei Petra Iuliana, Anghel Gabriela Valentina, Dumitrescu Ioana, Tomescu Alexandra, Popescu Olga, Navojtsky Andrej, Galik Jan, Druga Ondrej

ONLY VIRTUAL ALUMNI: Kushi Megi, Qendro Kristin, Slavov Kiril, Kolev Vladimir, Tasheva Evgeniya, Pascu Dan Andrei

Fall
2022



Sako Enkeleda, Salianji Anila, Kreko Livia, Gjoza Briseida, Beqiri, Riges, Hodzheva Shirin, Vasilev Simeon, Ivanova-Valeva Theodora, Zlatinov Krasimir, Tarcsay Tibor, Lajos Brigitta, Hutuleac Viviana, Sigheti Una, Orlea Nicoleta, Fekiacova Beata



PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS

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**GREAT LAKES CONSORTIUM
FOR INTERNATIONAL
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**



The GLCAP/GLC Professional Fellows Program is turning 10 years in 2022. For this period it provided opportunities to 300 young professionals from Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. They've had the chance to learn about and practice community organizing, advocacy and civic engagement in the US, then returned to Europe to engage with their communities. This publication highlights some of the successes of a small portion of our alumni. It is not a comprehensive catalogue, but rather a mosaic of successful examples that can give an idea for the impressive impact the program has had in the lives of communities across Central and Eastern Europe.





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