



STAY ENGAGED: Upcoming events



Monday, December 11th 2023

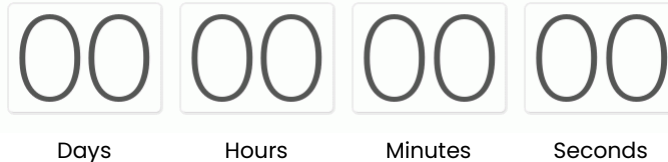
Elizabeth's Retirement Party!

She has made an impact on each one of us. She worked with many others to build an amazing and successful program and was always there to hold things together, save the day, make the change. Elizabeth Balint has proven to us all that there are no limitations to the human spirit (and to the power of e-mails).

Please join us as we wish Elizabeth a happy retirement and recognize the impact she has had on our personal and professional paths, on our fights for change and our communities.

[Zoom link to event](#)

[Link to Facebook event *](#)



* As we strive to keep our gatherings safe, please note we are only creating private Facebook events within the FB group 'GLC Pro Fellows Alumni Network'. You won't have access to the Facebook events unless you are a member of the group.

Please don't share publicly the Zoom links to our events. You are however welcome to invite trusted colleagues and friends who might be interested.

STAY INFORMED: News Bites

The seventh international reunion of the GLC/GLCAP Professional Fellows Program

The 7th in-person international reunion of the GLC/GLCAP Professional Fellows alumni community was a success! Over 60 participants from Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the US came together in Albania between November 1st and November 5th to reconnect, share successes, learn from each other, build and maintain relationships.



The agenda, which was built in a participatory process in an attempt to meet supply and demand of topics, issues and experiences, offered a variety of spaces for learning and collaborative construction of knowledge.

The official opening on November 2nd included contributions from our hosts and Albanian partners to the program Co-PLAN, representatives of the US Embassy in Tirana, long-term US mentor and advisor to the program Cris Doby and GLCAP International Program Specialist Brianna Dennis. Ice-breaking and getting to know each other activities were brilliantly facilitated by our alumni Diana Nedeva (Bulgaria) and Robert Furriel (Slovakia).



The day continued with a panel discussion with three alumni of the program who have won the International Alumni Impact Award by the US Department of State: Ana Majko (Albania), Sondra Youdelman (US) and Tara Parrish (US). Video messages from the other two members of our community who have received the award – Raluca Nagulescu-Balaci (Romania) and Martin Nagy (US) – were screened.



Under the thorough moderation of US mentor Leah Torrey, the next panel

session gave space for representatives from our five Central and Eastern European countries to share updates in the field of civil society from the last year, focusing on the successes of communities and movements, particularly those fueled by the work of our alumni.



The professional program of the day finished with breakout workshops on social justice (Renisa Beqiri, Elona Xhepa, Tara Parrish), organizing across differences (Leah Torrey and Hannah Willage) and building coalitions (Kristen Gerwin and Maria Radvakova).



November 3rd started with a panel discussion on using digital tools to enhance the work of civil society. Moderated by Slovak alumna Veronica Strelcova, the panel featured inputs by Mihnea Florea (Romania) and Martin Swinehart (US), followed by interesting discussion with the audience, particularly around using AI. Right after that, the group headed towards Durres for professional, cultural and gastronomic experiences. Alas, the weather was not on our side as a severe storm and heavy rains disrupted the program of the day, but also served as particularly bonding (and wet!) group experience.



After some drying activities, the professional agenda continued with another round of breakout workshops, led by US mentor Elizabeth Sammons - on accesible events and programs; US mentor Mo George - on fusion organizing; and by US mentor Cris Doby (in collaboration with Bulgarian alumna Diana Nedeva) - on personal narratives and storytelling.



Traditionally, the group also got together for some international exchange of music, food, drinks, merch and ideas in the evening reunion market.

Bright and early, the following day opened with the last round of breakout workshops, where people got together to discuss outreach and marketing strategies (courtesy of Martin Swinehart and Riges Beqiri) and European funding opportunities (facilitated by Robert Furiel and others).



The day continued with a collaborative plenary session on enhancing our alumni network, led by alumni Edita Bednarova (Slovakia), Zita Szederkényi (Hungary) and Luca Ciubotaru (Romania), with contributions by Hannah Willage (US) and Vladislav Petkov (Bulgaria). A special video guest also made an important contribution: program manager Elizabet Balint woke up at 4 am to address the audience from the US.



The closing session featured contributions from US mentor Sondra Youdelman and alumni coordinator Vladislav Petkov, who – among other program updates and alumni announcement – invited everyone to join the fundraising campaign for the Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships Program. Two community members who travelled on the program this year – Elizabeth Sammons (US) and Nevena Pashova (Bulgaria) shared their testimony on how the program have supported, impacted and inspired them. (Please consider donating [here!](#)).



Reunion participants did not waste the rest of the day. While many engaged in bilateral talks to discuss partnerships and ideas, some joined a workshop offered by our Slovak alumnus Juraj Vig, others joined the planning of [Elizabeth's retirement party](#), and third went to direct action: a brave group of volunteers, led by Veronika Strelcova, went trashpicking at the beach!



This recap still cannot fully exhaust everything that happened during the reunion. Serious talks and fun conversations, dancing and chatting, planning projects or just enjoying a nice company of like-minded people, building and sustaining relationship – organizers' style.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the hosts from Co-PLAN and personally to country director Enkela Poro for all the efforts in making this reunion in success; to all Albanian alumni who volunteered, to all members of our community who volunteered to lead sessions, workshops and different bits from the program, to EVERYONE who found time to join us in this adventure.

The next reunion is expected to take place in Slovakia in 2024: and we can't wait!



The Fall 2023 GLC/GLCAP Professional Fellows trip to the US completed successfully

The Fall 2023 European delegation of the GLC/GLCAP Professional Fellows Program has returned home after intensive six weeks in the US. After successfully completing their internships in September, our fellows reconvened in Washington, D.C on

October 6th for peer-to-peer learning and then joined the Professional Fellows Congress, which marked the end of their program in the US. During the congress, they got to meet our community members Martin Nagy (US) and Ana Majko (Albania) who attended in-person to receive their Alumni Impact Award.

Our fellows are not done with their program yet, as they are right now preparing to host their US mentors in Europe in the first part of 2024 and working on their follow-up individual projects.





Six US mentors visited Europe in October and November to work with Spring 2023 fellows

Six outbound trips of US mentors to Central and Eastern Europe were successfully completed in October and November. Mentors travelled to support our Spring 2023 European fellows in the work on their individual projects, but also to explore the social, political and cultural context of this part of the world.

Chandler Vaughan, Program Manager at ISAIC Detroit travelled to Slovakia in October 2023 to work with Slovak fellow Martina Marekova.



Tara Parrish, Executive Director of Pioneer Valley Project (PVP) travelled to Bulgaria and Romania in the second half of October, where she visited her two fellows Kostadin Belenozov and Ioana Serban respectively. Tara then also joined the international alumni reunion in Albania before heading back to Springfield, MA.



Kristen Gerwin, Executive Director of Oak House travelled to Slovakia in the second half of October, where she visited her fellow Veronika Porubcanska. After her stay in Slovakia, Kristen also joined the international alumni reunion in Albania.



Adriane Miller, Executive Director of NCCJ of Greater Dayton travelled to Slovakia and Romania in early November, where she visited her fellows Vlado Rafael and Madalina Musca respectively.



Moir Pyhala, Advocacy Manager at American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Alaska travelled to Romania and Bulgaria in mid- November, where she visited her fellows Andreea Chiriac and Rositsa Kratunkova respectively.



Emme Zanotti, Director of Advocacy & Civic Engagement; Equality

Michigan travelled to Bulgaria and Romania in the second half of November, where she visited her fellows Veselina Bozhinova and Adela Alexandru respectively. Emme is also publicly posting reflections of her trip on Facebook, so you can follow her [here](#).



Thank you to all US mentors, Spring 2023 fellows, country directors and alumni for making these trips a success!

Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships Program: five completed trips and one in progress

So far 4 people have travelled across the ocean as part of our own Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships Program 2023.



As we previously reported, **Nevena Pashova** (Bulgaria, Spring 2015) was the first one to complete her trip to the US, working with Pioneer Valley Project in Springfield (MA).

US mentor **Ellen Macaulay** from Environmental League of Massachusetts also completed her trip to Hungary working with our Hungarian alumna Zita Szederkenyi on sustainability initiatives.

Zsanett Fugg (Hungary, Spring 2015) came back to Hungary after a month in Ohio where she worked with Bill Hilt and World Affairs Council of Northwest Ohio.

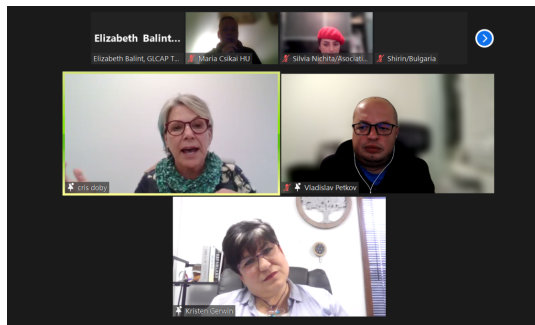
Elizabeth Sammons (US mentor) travelled to Slovakia and Bulgaria, working with multiple alumni across our network on issues of accessibility for people with disabilities, particularly around access to museums and places of art and culture. As part of her trip, Elizabeth also joined the international alumni reunion in Albania.

Annamari Kovács (Hungary, Fall 2013) came back from Florida, where she attended a long-term training on restorative justice, working with Center for Peacebuilding River Phoenix.

Victor Catalin-Toma (Romania, Spring 2019) is currently in the US, working with our mentor Adrienne Evans, building partnerships around rural youth engagement programs.

More details in this trip you will be able to find in the next (December) issue of our newsletter, but one thing is clear: none of these trips would be possible without the financial contribution of our community members and friends to the

program. If you want to support these opportunities for collaboration in the upcoming year, please donate [here](#).



We practiced 'Making an ask' in our October virtual event

As a warm-up for the fundraising season, our October alumni virtual program was dedicated to 'making the ask'. Our US mentors Cris Doby and Kristen Gerwin gave us a bit of context and some golden rules on

how to formulate our ask for money when we try to fundraise for our organizations and causes. We then role-played a couple of asks where Kristen and Cris gave a constructive feedback.

The event also served as a kick-off of the fundraising efforts of our community to sustain the alumni-only Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships Program 2024. If you have not done it already, please donate [here](#).

If you want to be persuaded, you can hear Vladi's ask to support the program at the end of the event: recording is available upon request to v.petkov@proeuropean.net.

STAY SUPPORTIVE: Fundraising

Support the Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships Program

We are fundraising for the Dave Beckwith Memorial Strategic Partnerships program. This is an alumni-only program, which financially supports trips across the Atlantic to boost and enhance strategic partnerships between people and organizations. The program was named after our beloved program advisor and friend of the GLC/GLCAP program Dave Beckwith, whom we lost in the spring of 2022. It is set to honor his memory and immense contribution to our community.



DAVE BECKWITH MEMORIAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM



Internal program within the GLC/GLCAP Professional Fellows Alumni Network providing support for overseas trips of alumni and mentors of the program to build and strengthen strategic partnerships between people and organizations from Europe and the U.S.

[SUPPORT THE PROGRAM HERE](#)

**Gratitude to those who have already
donated:**

Peter Szabados
Genoveva Horvath
Zita Szederkenyi

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

Luca Ciubotaru

ALBANIA

Ana Majko
Blerina Kureta

**THANK
YOU!**

THE U.S.

Cris Doby
Elizabeth Balint
Geoffrey Howes
Hannah Willage
Kristen Gerwin
Sondra Youdelman
Tara Parrish

BULGARIA

Ashod Derandonyan
Diana Nedeva
Dilyana Gyurova
Silvia Bakalova
Vladislav Petkov

SLOVAKIA

Robert Furiel
Edita Bednarova

ELIZABETH'S RETIREMENT PARTY



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11TH 2023
6 PM CET / 12 PM EST**

**ONLINE
ON ZOOM**



**PROFESSIONAL
FELLOWS**



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



**Great Lakes
COMMUNITY ACTION
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GLC Alumni Network

Contact us:

Vladislav Petkov, International Alumni
Coordinator at v.petkov@proeuropean.net

Brianna Dennis, International Program
Specialist at bydennis@glcap.org

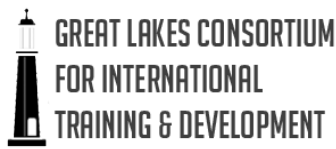
Elizabeth Balint, GLC Program manager at
eebalint@glcap.org

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PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS

