



POLYLOGOS



2020
ANNUAL REPORT

BRIDGING FRONTIERS, SHAPING COMMUNITY

www.polylogos.eu
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 3	LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS
PAGE 4	OUR MISSION AND VISION
PAGE 5	CORE VALUES
PAGE 6-7	HIGHLIGHTS 2020
PAGE 8	CORE PROGRAMS
PAGE 9	OUR APPROACH
PAGE 10	PROJECTED ACTIVITIES 2021
PAGE 11-12	TEAM



LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

Liviu Bocăniață,

President and Executive Director

Camilla Bocăniață,

Vice-President and Programs Director

2020 was a year to remember.

When we set out on our mission to start an organisation that will work as a platform to build bridges, shape communities, and empower aspiring leaders, we did not anticipate that this would be the same year that we, as a human race, would arguably be facing the greatest global crisis since WW2.

We signed the papers in January, 2020, and started working full-time in March. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic, and we were starting to feel the consequences in our own countries and neighbourhoods. While we were ready to host our first Aspiring Leaders conference in May 2020, the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown forced us to postpone all our on-site activities.

It's been an incredibly challenging year, but it also highlighted the importance of the work we're doing. Good leadership is desperately needed, especially in times of trouble, and sorely lacking many places. The pandemic revealed the importance of basic leadership skills, communication, decision-making, humility and, the underlying factor that impacts everything else - trust.

2020 was also a year where relationships were put to the test; many people lost their jobs; democracy was put under intense pressure; fake news and conspiracy theories spread like wildfire; and seeds of distrust exploded into massive riots and unrest.

In light of all this, we are deeply thankful that we had the courage to launch Polylogos, and the strength to keep working in order to make it something worthwhile. When seeing the world trembling around us, we know we are at least doing what we can to make a positive impact in our communities. And while we're not opposed to grand gestures, we firmly believe that it's the small every-day efforts of every-day people that save the world.

Looking forward to 2021 and all the new experiences, dreams and challenges it will bring!

Camilla & Liviu Bocaniața

MISSION AND VISION

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to shape inclusive communities, in which people can grow to be leaders of integrity, influence and impact.

Academics are always part of all curriculums, but we strive to offer extended access to experience, by putting together people willing to become, with people who are already there.

Mentorship is key to the Polylogos approach to fostering inclusive communities and leadership. Mentor- and mentee relationships grow out of inclusive communities, which transcend ethnic/national identities, age-groups, gender, and professional and educational background. We firmly believe that mentorship, rather than being a one-way street, should be mutually beneficial relationships based on trust and openness, in which both mentors and mentees are supporting each other on their growth journey.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to offer a civic platform, which bridges divides, promotes transformative leadership, and strengthens the democratic culture and capacity – locally, nationally and internationally.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and invest in aspiring leaders with a proven capacity and willingness to get actively involved in making positive changes for their communities.
2. Offer trainings, guidance and a networking platform for leaders from across sectors in society, who want to grow in their capacity as leaders and mentors.
3. Educate and empower citizens to get actively involved in their communities and in democratic decision-making processes.
4. Strengthen the democratic culture and capacity of policy-makers and citizens, and help bridge the gap between political elites and the general public.

CORE VALUES

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

We are willing to listen to and be receptive of new, and even challenging and diverging, ideas, thoughts and opinions.

INTEGRITY

We are committed to maintaining high standards of honesty, truth and transparency in our words and actions.

HUMAN DIGNITY

We firmly believe in the inherent, inalienable right of a person to be valued and respected, simply for being a fellow human on this earth.

CREATIVITY

We highly value and encourage creative exploration and expression.

HIGHLIGHTS 2020

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS QUARANTINE?" #WAYDTQ

polylogos.eu/waydtq

In March, 2020, we launched a storytelling initiative with the purpose of building a sense of community around the experience of the pandemic; across countries, religions, faiths, backgrounds, genders, ages, professions and ethnicities. We collected stories, poems and perspectives, written and shared by people all over the world. The WAYDTQ-initiative was based on the assumption that providing a space for open reflection and exchange between us would help counter-act some of the loneliness and isolation that people are experiencing during this time.

By the end of summer 2020, 21 stories and reflections were shared, with an organic reach of more than 5600, and engaging almost 1000 people on social media.

"BECOMING AMBASSADORS FOR A BETTER WORLD"

polylogos.eu/romania-102020/

ROM Romania 2020 was an intensive 4-day leadership training for 20 aspiring leaders from Cluj and across the country. The event was organised by Forum for Leadership and Reconciliation and hosted by us in our Polylogos headquarters.

From Thursday, Oct 1 to Sunday, Oct 4, the young participants learned about finding direction and purpose for your life; servant leadership, in theory and practice; entrepreneurial leadership; art as a tool for reconciliation; healthy dialogue and disagreeing well; and about the power of friendship and community.





WOMEN EMPOWER FORUM 2020

polylogos.eu/women-empower-forum-2020/

The Women Empower Forum (WEF) was first organised in December 2019, by a coalition of organisations, businesses and individuals in Cluj-Napoca, as part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. It is now an ongoing Polylogos programme, which continues to bring together exceptional women from different backgrounds, ages and professions, offering a platform of sharing successes and challenges, and empowering the next generations of women to overcome barriers and strive for their dreams.

The WEF vision is to create a more just and egalitarian future where women and girls are free to safely and fairly pursue their dreams.

WEF 2020 was organised online, and featured two online events - one global and one local - and one storytelling component. WEF 2020 brought together over 100 participants from 25 countries, who were actively engaged, sharing experiences and building bridges. The storytelling component featured 1 short film every day during the entire 16 Days Campaign, with women from all across the world sharing their stories and inspiring actions toward eliminating sexual and gender based violence and empowering other women to strive for their dreams.

CHRISTMAS PROJECT 2020

polylogos.eu/equipping-kids/

The Polylogos team and Board of Mentors worked together to raise money and collect second-hand laptops and tablets, in order to provide children from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds in Romania, with the tools they need to be able to go back to attending online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the schools most places remained closed. The distribution of the tablets and laptops was done in collaboration with PFR - Prison Fellowship Romania.

CORE PROGRAMS



REAL - RELEVANT EDUCATION FOR ASPIRING LEADERS

polylogos.eu/real

The REAL Academy is a school of leadership offered to young professionals and aspiring leaders in Romania. Our aim is to provide regular seminars, workshops and trainings, in which participants will gain tools and know-how to be leaders of integrity, influence and impact, both personally and professionally. Upon completion, each participant will receive the REAL DEAL – Diploma of Excellence for Advanced Leadership, attesting to the skills, experience and competence they acquired through their participation in the REAL academy. Furthermore, REAL students will gain and maintain access to a pool of experts and fellow aspiring leaders by being active members and contributors of the REAL Network – a platform for mentorship, resources, learning and, most importantly, friendship.



PRACTIC - POLITICAL RESOURCE AND ACTION CENTRE

polylogos.eu/practic

Providing useful and evidence-based materials and resources, such as policy briefs, books and publications on various topics of relevance, based on empirically grounded research conducted by the Polylogos research team and partners. PRACTIC also provides capacity building and dialogue actions, such as seminars and trainings, cross-party dialogue sessions, and a forum for interaction between policy makers, professional experts and the general public.



PEACE - PROJECTS FOR PAN-EUROPEAN
COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE

polylogos.eu/peace

While seeking to remain sensitive to the needs of civil society in Cluj, and more widely. We will effectively address the identified needs by implementing projects, which are aligned with the priorities of the EU, the EEA and other funding entities. Projects can be either research- or action-oriented, and will be developed according to the opportunities provided and partnerships developed.

OUR APPROACH

A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

While remaining sensitive and alert to real and current issues and challenges in society, we always try to find constructive solutions in a collaborative way. As such, while addressing challenging issues of xenophobia, intolerance, hate crime and hate speech, GBV and more, we always aim to frame our activities as constructing something positive (e.g. enhancing social inclusion) rather than as fighting something negative (e.g. combating hate-speech). This is based on the belief that narratives matter. While it is absolutely crucial to speak honestly about the ugly realities on the ground, it is equally important to paint the picture of how the future might look if we properly address these issues. This perspective forces us to maintain a proactive, rather than reactive, approach, and is more likely to mobilise support from our target groups and the general public.

A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

While all activities are bound to a beginning and an end, we always seek to develop projects and implement activities that include a strategic plan for ensuring sustainability. We want our activities to matter, to make deep structural changes, and have an impact that goes beyond the timeline of the activity or the project. For us, sustainability is not simply a concept that should be checked off from a list, or that can be left to tackle at the end of a project or activity. We believe that sustainability should be thought through, addressed and planned for from the very beginning, in the project's design phase. Furthermore, it should continuously be monitored, evaluated and re-assessed throughout and after implementation. This perspective forces us to be rigorous in our planning and design, to think critically about our lasting impact from the very beginning, and at every stage of the project, and ensure lasting results that benefit society in the long run.

A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH

Different societal issues and challenges affect men and women differently, and, as such, are perceived differently. While many organisations talk about gender mainstreaming, very few organisations manage to maintain a gender-sensitive approach throughout every aspect of their organisation. We know that gender mainstreaming is more than equal representation or equal opportunities for women and men. We strive to maintain a gender-sensitive approach by (1) ensuring that both women and men benefit equally from our project activities, and by seeking to address areas where inequalities might be identified; (2) by aiming to integrate a gender perspective and analysis into all stages of the project; and (3) by assessing the implications a planned activity or project for women and men, with a view to enhance the overall quality of project, and strive for gender equality. In order to ensure this, we continuously seek advice, guidance and input from a dedicated gender expert on our board of mentors. This holds true for all our activities, projects and major organisational changes and decisions.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

We are dedicated to collaboration – internally, as well as externally. This is based on the assumption that we will achieve greater results and more lasting impact by working together and making decisions collaboratively with all, or as many as possible, of the stakeholders involved. This is, in essence, a democratic value, which guides us in the way we make decisions and in the way we do our work. As much as possible, we reach out to other organisations, practitioners and experts in the field, to gain their insights, to coordinate actions and find ways of creating useful synergies between our projects and activities. By gaining a broader understanding, and taking into consideration the views and opinions of all who will be affected or involved, we believe that our actions and decisions will be better and more successful.

PROJECTED ACTIVITIES 2021



REAL 2021-2022

In October 2021, we are planning to begin a regular training and mentorship program for aspiring leaders. We will bring together a group of 15-20 participants, for a series of interactive 3-day courses, to equip them with tools and know-how to be leaders of integrity, influence and impact, both personally and professionally. The REAL Academy 2021-2022 will be the pilot of a programme that will hopefully continue equipping, connecting and empowering young leaders for many years to come.

ASPIRING LEADERS:

Students and young professionals, ages 21-35, with proven leadership potential and initiative.



WOMEN EMPOWER FORUM 2021

During the 16 Days Campaign 2021, we will organise Women Empower Forum GLOBAL (online) and Women Empower Forum CLUJ (on-site). The theme will be aligned with the global theme of the 16 Days Campaign, and, as usual, we will work closely with other organisations, businesses and individuals, locally and internationally, to ensure a successful event. Our objectives are to

1. Challenge and change a culture of stereotypes, in order to promote empowering role models for both women and men;
2. Build and connect a community of professionals, activists, volunteers, donors and organisations dedicated to women's rights and gender equality;
3. Provide a platform for exchanging knowledge and experiences, and raising awareness on gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence;
4. Empower and equip youth to actively pursue their dreams.

TEAM

As an extension to our team, the Polylogos Board of Mentors are actively involved in contributing to our activities, projects and initiatives. They provide expert guidance, deep knowledge and practical support.



LIVIU DANIEL BOCANIALA
President & Executive Director

Liviu is a dynamic motivational speaker, working to empower people of diverse backgrounds within society. He is also an effective communicator and event's organiser having worked in national and international settings including cross party-political events. Liviu has proven skills in mediation and logistics having led and organised many events of different nature throughout Europe.



CAMILLA BOCANIALA
Vice-President and Programs Director

Camilla graduated with a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict studies from the University of Oslo in 2016. She has worked several years as project manager and coordinator in national and transnational projects in the past, both in her role as project manager at PATRIR (Peace, Action, Training and Research Institute, Romania) and in her role as project coordinator and International advisor at KrFU (Christian Democratic Youth Party) in Norway. Among other things, Camilla is experienced with coordinating and facilitating trainings, networking and exchange forums.



VIOLETA ALTMANN
Leadership Trainer

Violeta is a writer and a community leader who has a heart for leadership and adoption. She is the co-founder of Wanderlust Coffee Company, and she worked as Lead Creative and Specialist for Apple in California, where she, among other things, trained new employees and managers, coordinated youth programs, and built effective partnerships. Violeta is an excellent trainer and public speaker, skilled at cross-functional team leadership, creative problem solving, project management, business strategy/sales, event management, strategic planning and people development.



CONRAD ALTMANN
Creative Director

Conrad is a seasoned graphic designer and business owner from the heart of California, now living in Cluj, Romania. He mainly uses his talent in graphic design and creative expression to improve and expand community. He is a creative writer, expert communicator, and is experienced with management and facilitation of small-group discussions and events. Conrad provides everything from visual identity, branding and promotional materials, and website development, design and content management.



CATHERINE LOURDES DY, PHD.
Researcher & Special Advisor on gender

Kate is an experienced academic-practitioner with a double Ph.D. in human rights and migration. She is an expert gender advisor, research professional and leadership trainer, with longstanding experience managing and coordinating European projects. She is a seasoned public speaker and trainer, and has experience coordinating and facilitating academic and practitioner conferences, local- national and EU-level forums and roundtables, as well as youth empowerment trainings and initiatives.



MARGARETA MIHALIC DOGAN
Special Advisor on grant-writing and fundraising

Margareta is a seasoned project manager, EU grants writer, trainer, consultant and author with 10+ years of professional experience in managing EU financed projects, non-formal education, organising events (conferences, seminars, trainings, exhibitions, public events), leading project teams, budget management and reporting.



AURORA DEGAN
Financial Manager

Aurora Degan likes receiving top ratings for every control or audit, which she did get while working for Habitat for Humanity Cluj-Napoca and for PATRIR, where she was supervising financially six to eight concomitant projects. As she approaches the final of her carrier, Aurora is rejoicing looking back on all the experience she accumulated throughout her professional life.