



POLYLOGOS



2021
ANNUAL REPORT

BRIDGING FRONTIERS, SHAPING COMMUNITY

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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

Liviu Bocăniață,

President and Executive Director

Camilla Bocăniață,

Vice-President and Programs Director

It's hard to believe that another year is almost over. Two years ago, Polylogos was nothing more than a vague idea, a hope and a dream. We're so thankful to everyone who have chosen to be part of the journey, and joined our efforts to make it a reality.

In 2021, we have

- made ourselves known on local and national media in Romania;
- held our second webinar on "Trust in political leadership and democracy in times of crisis", with leading experts from around the world;
- supported ROM, a leadership and reconciliation programme in Croatia;
- participated at the European Migration Forum, along with 105 CSOs, DG Home and other EC Representatives;
- held a full-day conference, the Women Empower Forum 2021, organised in partnership with Minte Forte and the Women's Network for Equality in Decision Making (EDM);
- prepared the launch of the REAL (Relevant Education for Aspiring Leaders) pilot programme in early 2022.

Many exciting things are happening at the beginning of the new year, including new projects, women empower events, the launch of our school of leadership (REAL), and maybe even a podcast.

As Europe is slowly starting to recover from the latest wave of the pandemic, and with tensions on our borders and within our countries escalating, we know that the future can and does many times look hopelessly dim. We also know that those who suffered the most before will be the ones carrying the brunt of future burdens. But with renewed energy and courage, we hope our actions will bring some light to our communities.

We're looking up and ahead towards another year of bridging divides, shaping communities, and empowering aspiring leaders.

With courage,
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 2021

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (8 MARCH) STORYTELLING CAMPAIGN

<https://youtu.be/haa9wc35Z1k>



In partnership with EBS Radio and TVR Cluj, we interviewed and presented the stories of five powerful women in Romania, to celebrate their achievements, highlight existing barriers and challenges facing women in Romania and everywhere, and inspire a new generation of women and men, boys and girls, to overcome challenges and strive for their dreams.

The women featured in the campaign came from different backgrounds and professions; a local politician from the Roma community, an actress, a journalist, a professor and a social entrepreneur. The stories were shared on the local radio and on prime-time television, reaching hundreds of thousands of people. The shortened versions are also available on the Polylogos social media channels.

TRUST IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

<https://youtu.be/rtaCKyYcfcY>

On June 2nd 2021, Polylogos hosted a second webinar on the topic of "trust in political leadership and democracy in times of crisis", focusing on current trends in Europe and globally one year into the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel discussion, which was moderated by Camilla Bocaniala, Founder and Programs Director of Polylogos, and Dr. Susan Kerr, Senior Advisor for OSCE ODIHR on FoRB, included leading practitioners and academics in the field:

- **Christel Lamere Ngnambi**, author, lecturer and consultant in strategic and political communication;
- **Bulcsu Hunyadi**, senior political analyst at Political Capital (HU);
- **Heather N. Staff**, policy advisor on refugee, asylum and migration to members of UK parliament;
- **Jasmin Hasic**, Executive Director of Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina



RENEWING OUR MINDS 2021

June-July 2021

In the summer of 2021, the Polylogos team spent three weeks at the leadership and reconciliation gathering, ROM 2021 (@renewing.our.minds) in sunny Crikvenica, Croatia, conducting trainings, seminars and dialogue sessions with a group of 50 young emerging leaders from the Balkans, across Europe and more widely. More specifically, the Polylogos team contributed with

- a full-day peace negotiation simulation exercise,
- sharing our experiences and lessons learned from working with refugees and other vulnerable groups
- trainings on emotional agility, critical thinking, feedback and courageous leadership,
- mentoring young leaders through daily small group discussions



WOMEN EMPOWER FORUM 2021

<https://polylogos.eu/event/women-empower-forum-2021/>

The Women Empower Forum (WEF) is an ongoing Polylogos initiative bringing together 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. It 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.

The vision of the Women Empower Forum is to create a more just and egalitarian future where women and girls are free to safely and fairly pursue their dreams.

WEF 2021 was a full-day online conference in three parts, addressing three major themes:

1. Women's health and mental health
2. Powerful women empowering women in the world of work
3. Women in politics

Bringing together 180 people from 21 different countries around the world, WEF 2021 was a truly global, diverse and dynamic event. The speakers included women from many different backgrounds; doctors and health-care professionals, psychologists, academics, entrepreneurial leaders, business owners, civil servants, political analysts, journalists and politicians. While firmly grounded in evidence-based findings and research, the event upheld a special emphasis on sharing experiences, as a way to bridge divides, shape communities, broaden and deepen our understandings and learn from one another. The sessions included storytelling, presentations, plenary discussions, Q&A and small-group discussions.

The recordings can be found on the Polylogos YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/wnz7y4odLlc>



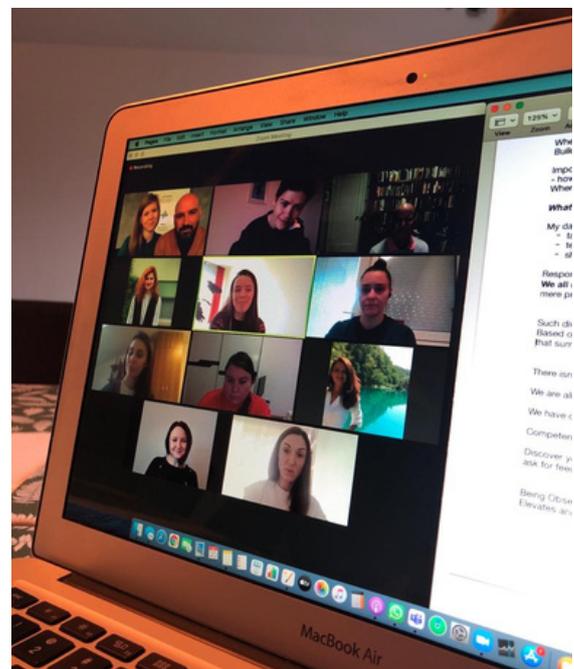
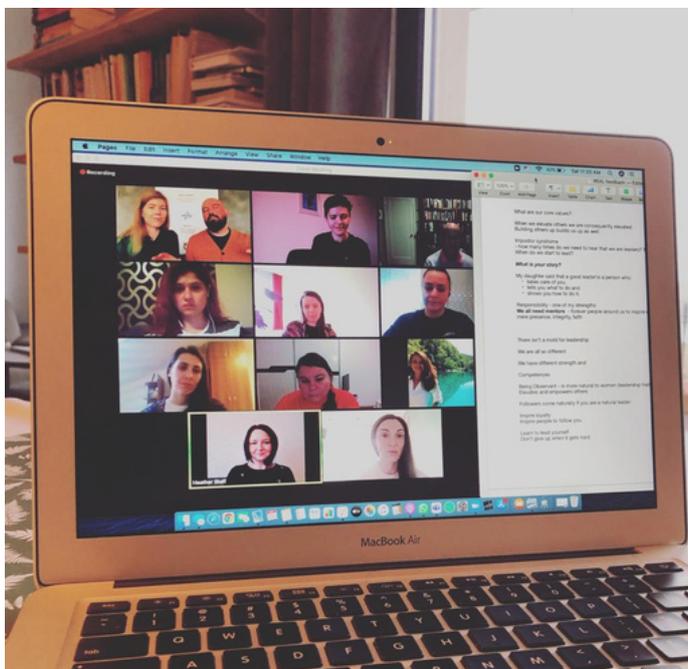


REAL (RELEVANT EDUCATION FOR ASPIRING LEADERS) 2021-2022

<https://polylogos.eu/real/>

The REAL Pilot Programme 2021-2022 was launched in November 2021 with a group of eight aspiring leaders from Romania, Moldova and North-Macedonia. Due to the pandemic restrictions, we were forced to re-think, adapt and move our trainings online temporarily. The online launch meeting included an introduction to the programme, "teaser" presentations from the Polylogos mentors, and Q&A and interactive discussions.

While continuing to host regular shorter meetings online with the REAL participants, to make up for the limitations of the online approach, the majority of the trainings will be conducted as an intensive course on-site at a later date, as soon as the Covid-19 situation allows.



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 woman 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 2022



REAL 2021-2022

From January 2022, we will continue the leadership- and mentorship pilot programme for aspiring leaders. Working with the same small group of selected participants, we will continue to host monthly online meetings/trainings, culminating in a full week on-site gathering where the participants will receive an intensive course of the REAL curriculum, going more in-depth and putting into practice the theoretical concepts and lessons they've been taught throughout the year. The pilot programme will equip the participants with tools and know-how to be leaders of integrity, influence and impact, both personally and professionally. Throughout the programme, the participants will provide regular feedback, which will directly feed into the curriculum, strengthening the usefulness and relevance of the programme for coming generations. 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 2022

During the 16 Days Campaign 2022, we will organise Women Empower Forum. 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.

ASPYRE PROJECT

ACTIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH THROUGH RELEVANT EDUCATION

ASPYRE is a project funded by the EEA and Norway Grants (Active Citizens Fund) with the purpose to enhance the democratic culture, capacity and active participation of youth, by equipping them, and those working closely with them, with practical skills and tools for active democratic participation and civic engagement. The project is led by Polylogos, and is implemented by a consortium of organisations and public institutions in Romania: ALL Roman, the Cluj School Inspectorate (ISJ Cluj), and the Political Science Students Association (SSSP). Each partner's contribution is essential to achieving this goal, by bringing their expertise, experiences and direct access to the project beneficiaries. The project was approved for funding in November 2021, and will be launched from the beginning of March 2022.

The ASPYRE Project will

- develop a practical toolkit, tailored for easy use by teachers, educators and youth workers in formal and informal educational settings, and train them on how to use the toolkit and become mentors for youth advocates,
- offer a training and a networking platform for youth (ages 16-24) from Cluj and Neamt counties, empower them to form thematic advocacy groups, and mentor them in developing and implementing advocacy actions on themes that are important to them.
- organise a series of political cafes (A6) - public meetings with public officials and decision-makers, where youth get to promote their ideas, thoughts and concerns in front of a larger audience of the general public, and have these heard and responded to by decision-makers. While effectively functioning as a public consultation meeting between decision-makers and the youth, the political cafes will be facilitated in such a way as to promote dialogue, openness and trust.

The project will directly empower and equip 80 youth and 20 teachers/educators from Cluj and Neamt counties, and will be implemented over a period of 14 months.

A CRISIS OF TRUST

the level of trust in democratic institutions in Romania, especially among young people, is very low - it has never exceeded the 15% threshold and sometimes drops as low as 6% (CPSD, "Thieves in the night", 2017).

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.