



ASPIRE

ASPIRE REPORT

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THE ASPIRE MESSAGE

Dear Friend of Aspire,

10 years ago, Aspire was a dream. A dream to offer access to affordable, qualitative education to Romanian students. A dream to create a community of young, brilliant students who could bring real change in their regions. We started with a program of 39 Romanian participants in 2011 and we have grown to a 1000+ member community, comprising 51 nationalities and 3 flagship programs which reunite yearly high school and university students, as well as young professionals for a life-changing experience.

Our Aspire year started under the sign of uncertainty, with a pandemic that encouraged us to think outside the box and be innovative. New initiatives and plans have emerged whilst building the well-known Aspire programs. We have built our first Aspire platform, a place where our alumni can interact with each other, exchanging information, forging new relationships and forming groups to drive change in their communities. We have redesigned our recruitment process shifting the focus from achievements to solving real world problems whilst also implementing our own recruitment platform. We have envisioned new projects aimed at bringing impact within the community and bringing the community closer than ever such as the Aspire Club (two layered community), Aspire Micro-communities (working on projects with social impact), Aspire Mentorship or Aspire Embassies.

The highlight of the year have been the Aspire Summer Programs which brought together in a hybrid environment the most beloved Aspire core professors with new professors, successful entrepreneurs and 113 hand-picked participants that traveled the world for a life-changing experience. The 10th Aspire edition witnessed the implementation of elective courses, turning the Aspire experience into a more tailored one and allowing each participant to mix and match courses based on their interests. Besides learning about the Aspire core subjects such as leadership, entrepreneurship, negotiation, design thinking, decision making or public speaking, Aspire participants have also learnt about Robotic Process Automation, gamification, organizational culture, technology, branding and marketing.

We strongly believe that this year's accomplishments, as well as our next years' ambitions, bring you joy and excitement. None of them would be possible without the constant trust and support you provide us with. With gratitude, we thank you for being part of our Aspire story, for helping us follow our mission, and confidently look towards the future. Thanks to you, Aspire will continue to identify and grow not only young people with leadership potential, but their ideas as well, and to bring a positive change to the society.

Elena Zaharia

Executive Director 2019 – 2021

THE ASPIRE MESSAGE

Dear Friend of Aspire,

As mentioned before, we reached an important milestone at Aspire - 10 amazing years of discovering, connecting and nurturing leaders around the globe. Both the good times and the bad times have strengthened our community and our organization, enabling us to get to the next level.

At Aspire, we have shifted our attention on developing our community, but also on the future of our organization. Our focus has been redirected towards identifying the perfect formula through which the Aspire participants and alumni can take advantage of their academic knowledge and the power of the Aspire community, in order to become an agent of change at a global level, through personal initiatives or projects supported by our community while also having a positive local impact. As such, this coming year we are allocating more of our resources towards continuing our Aspire 5-year plan, adding new layers to a well-made foundation, strongly supported by our pillars (leadership, entrepreneurship and personal development):

I. Continuing to tailor the experience of our participants through an innovative curriculum completed by elective courses, new professors and facilitators, new STEM modules and live business cases;

II. Launch the two-layered community model, offering access to resources, mentorship and guidance to people who have not yet become part of the Aspire core community;

III. Engage the Alumni community by giving back through Aspire Micro-communities and Aspire External Mentorship in order to increase the social impact our alumni can bring into their communities;

IV. Empowering our Aspire online platform for the community to a full transition from the Aspire Alumni Club Facebook group, increasing the interaction and networking of members of the community through dedicated career paths, academic curiosities or personal development interests;

We are proudly continuing our success story with the help of our founders, our alumni community and especially our ever-generous partners. As our first 10 years have unfolded, we are eager to enjoy the next 10 years of Aspire. Therefore, our eyes are set on the future. A future that is now, a future that is bigger, better, and brighter. We thank you for being with us during these 10 years and for contributing to the education of future leaders.

Andrei Vitiuc

Executive Director 2021 – 2022

THE ASPIRE CULTURE

VISION

Our vision is to develop a community of ethical, successful and influential leaders across a wide variety of disciplines, with diverse backgrounds, in Eastern Europe and beyond.

DISCOVER:

We adhere to the highest standards of recruitment and focus on four key areas: leadership track, intellectual and emotional maturity, driven personality and community engagement.

CONNECT:

We create year-long opportunities for our members by connecting them with their peers and companies.

MISSION

Our mission is to discover, develop and connect young leaders; we strive to inspire them, to help them find their true life meaning and contribute to the development of the society. More than an academy, Aspire is an experience that changes the lives of the great leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow, this non-profit organization identifying itself with a clear mission, vision and values.

DEVELOP:

Aspire has three core summer programs that kick-off the Aspire experience, followed by community development initiatives. All activities are designed to inspire and motivate the students, to help them grow in all areas of life and achieve their true potential.



THE ASPIRE CULTURE

VALUES

KEEP GROWING
STRIVE TO GIVE BACK
THINK LONG-TERM
EXCELLENCE IS A MUST
ASPIRE IS A LIFE-LONG JOURNEY

KEEP GROWING

Be introspective and challenge the status quo. Be committed to developing yourself personally and professionally.

THINK LONG-TERM BUT START NOW

Set clear goals for yourself and start working on them now. Think of what would make you proud years from now, when looking back at your life.

ASPIRE IS A LIFE- LONG JOURNEY

We provide opportunities that go far beyond our summer programs and which are committed to supporting you in all stages of your life.

STRIVE TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Bring about positive change in your community by engaging in social projects or starting a sustainable business.

EXCELLENCE IS A MUST

We select highly motivated and diverse participants who stand out in their communities. As an Aspire Alumnus or Alumna you become an ambassador for Aspire so you are expected to adhere to the highest standards of achievement.



THE ASPIRE MODEL



HOW DO WE DIFFER FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?

One of the defining elements of Aspire is the program the participants attend each day during their stay at Poiana Brasov. Every year we integrate the feedback received from our participants, professors and organizers, to improve the next editions.

The exclusive connection with professors from Stanford, Harvard or Georgetown is what confers the Aspire Academy, Aspire High School and Aspire Professionals programs the status of being the most prestigious leadership and entrepreneurship programs in Romania!

The 2021 Aspire programs were based on leadership sessions, communication workshops, but also on personal development exercises, inspired from a successful course at Harvard, called Authentic Leadership Development. More than this, the participants attended negotiation sessions, with a high degree of applicability in any area, and they were introduced to the technique of “storytelling”, which is increasingly becoming prevailing in business, but also in daily life.

Complementary, the participants benefited from team building sessions, business mentorship, but also discussion panels on the topic of studying abroad and the application process they must go through, if they decide to follow this path.



An important subject for all programs has been design thinking, which is becoming increasingly popular and useful in all domains of work. The participants were asked to observe their environment, to pay attention to details, to innovate and to find disruptive solutions.

The participants were also trained on the crucial skill of public speaking by having to pitch their ideas, participate in debates and in mock interviews.

All these were completed by informal moments in which the participants were able to socialize among themselves and with the professors, speakers or Alumni from previous generations. This type of networking led to the birth of many ideas, initiatives and friendly, durable bonds, which more often than not evolved into lucrative professional collaborations.

We have offered our participants a mix between core & elective courses. Being strong believers that there is no such thing as “one size fits all” we are convinced that this way each participant has personalized their experience at Aspire according to their own needs.

THE PROGRAMS

ASPIRE ACADEMY

Our flagship program and the one with the most history, as Academy is the first summer school that Aspire ever ran. The program has continuously grown over the years through the development of a qualitative curricula, focused on providing a transformational experience to our participants. In 2020 we have successfully recruited 17 members, until we were forced to stop our recruitment process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, we have focused on the development of the curriculum, in order to make sure that, academically, we offer our participants the best possible experience so that they continue to learn and grow. As such, the Aspire Academy 2021 program has contained a new Aspire curriculum comprising core courses on leadership, entrepreneurship and personal development, as well as elective courses based on the participants' interests. The 2021 Aspire program has welcomed 39 participants for a life-changing experience.

ASPIRE HIGH SCHOOL

A program meant to select the most proactive high school students in terms of volunteering and entrepreneurship. Besides the curricula itself, they benefit from interactive courses assisting them in the process of applying to top universities. In 2020 we were able to recruit 12 participants until the pandemic situation hit Romania. In 2021, we have grown our cohort to 31 participants. Each year we are looking for the best and brightest high school students from all over the world who are not afraid to challenge themselves and strive for excellence. Emotional maturity and driven personality are just a few qualities that our participants possess.

ASPIRE PROFESSIONALS

A unique educational and professional development experience, during which young professionals interact with professors from top universities, such as Harvard, Stanford or Georgetown and are inspired by successful leaders, local managers and entrepreneurs. Our program is designed to offer a captivating experience, in which the participants create bonds and interact with speakers, organizers, the Aspire board and ultimately with the whole community. Before the pandemic started, we have recruited 19 participants originating from different countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Pakistan and India. All of our 42 participants are high-achieving and motivated young working professionals, who are willing to bring a positive change in the community. Besides our lectures and workshops, our participants have the chance to connect, network and form life-long relationships.

ALUMNI WEEKEND

A special weekend created for all the Aspire alumni, supporters and partners. It focusses on a more in-depth analysis of the knowledge gained from the previously graduated program, as well as on the development of particular transferable competencies, which are very important in today's constantly moving and evolving world. Sadly, in 2020 we weren't able to organize our event as usual, due to the pandemic, but we managed to bring our alumni together through our Aspire Digital series. This year we brought back the community for a weekend of reunions and inspiration and celebrated an important milestone for Aspire, namely our 10 year anniversary.

A DAY AT ASPIRE

Breakfast

ADVERSARIAL COMMUNICATION

with Sam Potolicchio

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

with Alex Radu

Lunch

DESIGN THINKING

with Phil, Lucy and Celia Malone

THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY

with Dani Oros

OR – (Participants choose their Elective course)

FILM MAKING 101

with Daniel Jacob

Social time

Dinner

ASPIRE ACADEMY

Based on three core modules: leadership, entrepreneurship and personal development with a deep dive into authentic leadership development, which allow students to apply the knowledge acquired academically in real-life situations, through case studies and debates. This alternative learning methods help the participants critically analyze problems related to leadership, management and entrepreneurship in different contexts.

ASPIRE HIGH SCHOOL

A summer school addressed to the best high schoolers from all around the world, which gives them the opportunity to learn and develop themselves in an informal learning environment, while being taught by professors from top universities.

The participants benefit from numerous interactive educational consultancy sessions meant to help them choose and apply to prestigious universities.



We facilitate the exchange of opinions and experiences between people who study in Romania and those who attend university outside the country. The students acquire different transferable skills, such as negotiation techniques, presentation abilities and efficient communication. The participants who need career orientation have the opportunity to engage with our alumni and participants from other programs, as well with our professors and speakers.

ASPIRE PROFESSIONALS

The participants gain knowledge in areas such as negotiation, strategic interaction, leadership and constructing and delivering a powerful and efficient message. They also have the opportunity to network with professionals from their own field and build long lasting relationships.

RECRUITMENT

As in the previous years, the Aspire 2020-2021 selection process was rather complex, yet with a well-defined aim: recruiting young individuals with diverse backgrounds, having the potential to be agents of change within their communities. We focused on finding those young individuals who have clearly showcased leadership potential, a willingness to surpass themselves, an interest in their home communities and, last but not least, intercultural sensitivity.

Each candidate was evaluated through a careful consideration of their CV, an essay detailing an instance of their leadership potential and ultimately, an interview. The recruiters worked exclusively in pairs and were assigned on a rotational basis. Consequently, each application was reviewed by at least 4 recruiters. We are proud to state, that we have a general admissions rate of 15%.

The Aspire concept and its community have constantly developed. If in 2011, Aspire Academy merely brought together 39 individuals, the total number of Aspire Alumni has continued to grow, reaching the milestone of 1000 members in 2019, with the constant addition of new programs and new generations.

The Aspire recruitment process is split into two phases: Early and Regular. Our Early Recruitment Phase consists of applications from people recommended by our alumni.

There are no marketing campaigns during this phase. The quality of applications received in the Early phase is higher than in the Regular one, yet the number of applicants is lower compared to the latter.

Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic caught us in the middle of the recruitment process which impacted our recruitment efforts given the uncertainty surrounding the situation. As such, we have stopped our marketing efforts in April 2020. Last year, we received a total of 121 applications, recommended by Aspire alumni, out of which we managed to successfully recruit 48 members for our new generation. In 2020 the Aspire X generation consisted of 17 Academy participants, 12 High School participants and 19 Professionals participants. In 2021 we have completed this cohort of participants, after reopening the applications. The Aspire X generation comprises of 39 Academy participants, 31 High School participants and 42 Professionals participants.

Starting with the 10th edition of our core programs, we have implemented a recruitment process specific to Aspire, To be able to select young people with the ability to solve real problems through innovative solutions. We wish to have by our side young people with ambitious visions and hopes which, together with our already-created professors, speakers and alumni network, will exploit synergies and create the context in which their ideas become reality.

THE PROFESSORS AND SPEAKERS



PROF. LUCIANA HERMAN

Luciana Herman is a university lecturer in Public Policies at Stanford University. In the past, she taught writing and rhetoric courses at Harvard University and at University of California, Berkeley. Her academic interests include American political rhetoric, racial formation and immigration policies. Dr. Herman holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley.



SAM POTOLICCHIO

Sam is Director of Global and Custom Education at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. Potolicchio was named as one of “America’s Best Professors” by the Princeton Review, the only one in his field and the Future Leader of American Higher Education by the Association of Colleges and Universities. He has served as the department Chairman and Distinguished Professor in Political and Social Communications at the School of Public Policy at RANEP, the biggest university in Europe and as the President of the Preparing Global Leaders Foundation, a leadership training program for rising leaders from over 100 countries.



PROF. PHIL MALONE

Phil Malone is a Professor of Law and Director of the Juelsgaard Intellectual Property and Innovation Clinic at Stanford University. His work is focused on understanding and promoting innovation and exploring how intellectual property and competition policy in high-tech industries affect it. Phil came to Stanford from Harvard Law School. He was one of the faculty directors of the Berkman Center and was the initial HLS liaison to the Harvard Innovation Lab, a new, university wide center aimed at facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship among Harvard students and faculty.



PROF. STEVE JARDING

Steve Jarding is an American and international educator, writer, political consultant and former Lecturer at Harvard Kennedy School, where he taught between 2004 and 2019. He has served as a senior strategist and campaign manager for various US representatives. In 1996, Roll Call magazine shortlisted him one of the “50 most influential political people in Washington”. Professor Jarding received the Teacher of the Year Award at Harvard Kennedy School in June 2016. Steve also teaches annually at the IESE Business School in Madrid, Spain, and has consulted and managed political campaigns in Europe, Asia, and South America.

THE PROFESSORS AND SPEAKERS



ALAIN HEUREUX

Alain is university professor at Gdansk University of Technology and is a serial entrepreneur who founded his first company in 1984. In 2010, he opened one of the first incubators in Brussels, enrolling over 60 beginners in the creative industry, but also hosting events for several corporations and institutions (The Egg Brussels& Pepibru). As of now, Alain is the co-founder of Creative Bruxelles and Creative Ring, as well as trainer in Virtuology Academy.



DANI OROS

Dani is member of the Aspire Steering Committee. He was the co-president of Aspire between 2014 and 2016 and managed to take Aspire to the next level, dedicating himself completely to the programs implemented. From his first days as a participant in the 1st edition of Aspire Academy in 2011, and years later, while serving in different positions in this organization, Dani brought added-value to the Aspire programs. As of now, he is Head of Marketing Romania at Google, in the past having worked for Ana IMEP as Head of Special Projects and in consultancy at A.T. Kearney and IBM.



JANET MARTINEZ

Janet Martinez is the director of the Martin Daniel Gould Center for Conflict Resolution and Senior Lecturer in Law at Stanford Law School. Martinez practiced corporate law for ten years before moving to Cambridge, Massachusetts where she did research, writing, and teaching in various aspects of negotiation at Harvard University's graduate schools of business, law and government.



JENN DONAHUE PhD.

Jenn Donahue PhD is a civil engineer and US Navy Captain who works on large scale, high profile geotechnical projects. Over her 25-year military career, Jenn has built a bridge across the Euphrates River in the midst of the Iraq war, commanded an 800-personnel Battalion in Afghanistan, and constructed combat outposts in the middle of deserts filled with insurgents. Today Jenn runs JL Donahue Engineering. She also lectures at UC Berkeley and UCLA. Jenn is working on her first book, Go Do Great Things: The courageous art of genuine leadership.

THE PROFESSORS AND SPEAKERS



ALEX RADU

Alex Radu studied at Harvard University and graduated the MBA program of Harvard Business School in 2012. He worked in the past for Morgan Stanley and is now part of the Goldman Sachs Special Team, conducting his activities from both London and New York offices. He is passionate about transforming the educational process and also enjoys piloting, sailing and travelling.



ANASTASIA SOARE

Known by many as the Brow Queen, Anastasia Soare is a beauty industry icon and the Founder/CEO of Anastasia Beverly Hills, whose fierce determination and entrepreneurial spirit, led her to create one of the most highly respected brands in beauty. For the past two decades, Soare has pushed boundaries and set industry standards. Anastasia Beverly Hills has developed a cult following, and Soare maintains a client list of iconic women, including: Michelle Obama, Amal Clooney, Jennifer Lopez, Kim Kardashian or Oprah Winfrey.



FLORIN ILIE

Florin Ilie is the Deputy Manager CEO and Head of Wholesale Banking ING Romania. Florin joined the ING team in 2004, during which time he went through all three of the bank's business divisions: Retail, Mid Corporate and Wholesale. He was, in turn, financial director of the Retail division, head of the capital markets department, director of strategy of the bank and, later, head of the financial markets department in Romania. Florin has a master's degree in Economics and Social Sciences from the University of Manchester, a doctorate in Economics from the Academy of Economic Studies and a master's degree in Finance from Harvard University.



MIHAI BONCA

Mihai Bonca is a Senior Consultant at Brand Architects. He has extensive experience involving brand repositioning, renovations and communication development. The local and international brands led by Mihai achieved market or segment leadership. Together with his teams, Mihai received more than 25 industry awards for marketing contribution, including 2 Grand Effie, the highest marketing accolade in the world.

ASPIRE 2020 - 2021

RECRUITMENT MAKEOVER

We started the Aspire year enthusiastic and ready to prepare a unique Aspire experience for our cohort. We created our very own Recruitment platform which decreased the time spent by our recruiters evaluating applications and which also made collaboration easier. We redesigned the online application for our programs focusing more on solving real-world problems. This change helped us select a 150-people cohort of inspiring, driven youngsters who we are confident are going to change the world. Furthermore, the quality of the applicants increased substantially. Thus the feedback from our professors and speakers praised the new classes.



THE ASPIRE HUBS

Due to the whole pandemic situation, we were only able to host two digital events: Moldova and Ukraine. We started organizing the Aspire International Hubs with the aim of helping the youth in the Black Sea region develop skills such as entrepreneurship, leadership or critical thinking. We also hope that our events provided a glimpse into what Aspire has to offer and encouraged them to apply for our summer programs and become part of our global network of alumni.

This year's sessions have been conducted by Professor Andreea Gorbatai who teaches Management of Organizations at Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley. The topic was Working Remotely Efficiently, sessions revolving around time management, motivation and success, networking from home. Through these two events we were able to recruit inspiring people for the summer programs. We are planning to continue the hub series with more events in the near future, hopefully in a physical format.

ASPIRE 2020 - 2021

THE ASPIRE DINNERS

As part of the 10th Aspire Anniversary, the Aspire Dinners initiative is a series of local events which bring together members of the Aspire Community with top leaders, businessmen or valuable individuals of our society in a close and friendly dinner setting, aiming to accelerate the networking and communication opportunities within the Aspire Community. Each event has a specific topic for the night, so that the people from different professional fields can benefit from them. Last year we managed to organize two dinners. For the first dinner we invited Sebastian Chiriloae, Co-Founder and Business Development Manager at MidoWeb, who shared stories about his entrepreneurial journey and offered insights to our participants. Our second dinner had Daniel Iacob, Film Producer and Managing Director at Zazu Film. It was an evening full of life stories, advice and sharing.

THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Through our Mentorship Program we aim to match the members of our community as mentors and mentees, in order to collaborate and work on achieving their goals and objectives. We make our matches based on the skills and experience of our applicants, so that everyone can benefit from this experience. In this year's edition of the Mentorship Program we were able to match 30 pairs of mentor-mentee, the highest number we have ever achieved since the beginning of this project. The program offered guidance and materials for the mentors – mentees pairs, creating a more responsible environment where both parties had the chance to propose topics, to initiate discussions. In the same time, the structure offered the option to use the time any way the participants deemed necessary.

“The Mentoring Scheme was a dual learning opportunity since I was both a mentor and a mentee. This growing experience inspired me to teach STEM subjects in Kenya and enhanced my development in non-technical areas.” - Maria Ivanciu, Aspire High-School 2014 alumna, Cambridge Engineering Graduate and current member of the Aspire Organising Team



ASPIRE 2020 - 2021

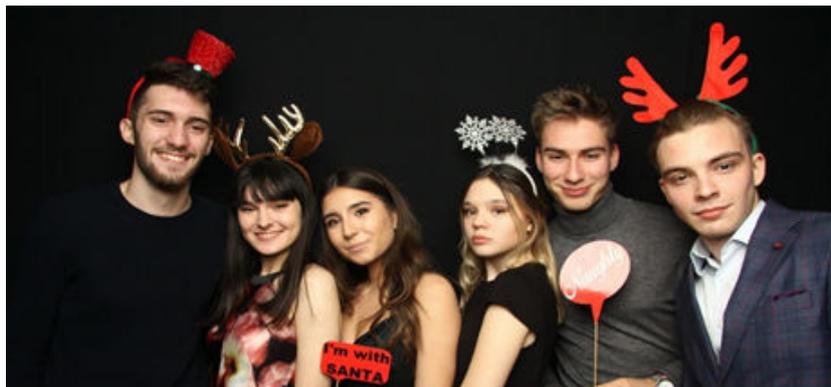
ASPIRE GLOBAL WEEKEND

Aspire is all about the community and the amazing connections among its people. These connections never get started by themselves, they emerge from all the Aspire events, ranging from the summer programs in Romania to the Aspire events around the world. One of our most famous events is Aspire London. The event usually consists of a dinner, a conference and a party or a small gathering.

This year, the odds were against us. With the Covid-19 Pandemic basically shutting down all possible travelling, we found ourselves in the unpleasant situation to cancel our Global Weekend Event. With the latest developments in the battle against the pandemic, we are optimistic that the Aspire Global Weekend will make a return in 2021-2022 year. We have already started organizing the events, with a couple new cities being taken into consideration for the Global Weekend (Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels and Wien). We are eager to discover a new city together with our alumni community and we are hopeful that Aspire Global Weekend 2022 will be a success.

DIGITAL CHRISTMAS BALL

The Aspire Christmas Ball is maybe one of the most important Aspire events of the year, after the summer programs. On the last Saturday before Christmas, Aspire alumni from all over the world put on their best outfits and get together in Bucharest to socialize, have fun and build memories with their Aspire friends. Despite the pandemic, we did not want to miss any opportunity to bring our community together, so in 2020, we successfully celebrated the Christmas Ball online, via Zoom. It was the first edition where we had the chance to have Professor Jarding as our keynote speaker. Thus, the Digital Christmas Ball took a “learning” twist through but also managed to remain a good fun time with our alumni community.



OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In light of Aspire turning 10 years we started to think about the future and how we would want Aspire to look like in 10 years. We did a product redesign exercise in which we asked ourselves “What does the future of Aspire look like?” As a result, we were able to forge 4 goals, which we are going to work on in the following years:

OFFER A TAILORED EXPERIENCE

Our first goal was offering the best experience for every participant and giving them the opportunity to tailor it to their own needs. The Aspire Summer Programs have witnessed the introduction of the elective courses, offering a more tailored curriculum. Thus, Aspire has become among the first programs who allow the participants to select part of their curriculum based on their interests and objectives. After a successful pilot, the curriculum is now formed of several core courses on leadership, personal development and entrepreneurship and elective courses on skills of the future such as AI or applied leadership in different areas of expertise. At the same time, Aspire will continue to develop the elective choices introducing more STEM modules as we believe leadership is needed in all aspects of activity, both business and entrepreneurship, liberal arts and humanities as well as more mathematics and engineering focused activities. Furthermore, Aspire is planning on bringing a much more hands on experience to the participants, as we want to encourage our partners to bring live business cases to Aspire and use Aspire’s incredible participants to try and solve them.

DIGITALISATION

Our community has grown a lot in these 10 years and now consists of a whopping 1000 members. The second goal was bringing digitalization to the community through the

Aspire platform, which has been adopted by 45% of our alumni. We have noticed smaller communities being formed, with a regional and a generational tendency. Through the constant engagement in the various micro-groups, the Aspire Platform is gaining more and more traction, getting closer to our goal of having the Aspire Platform as the go-to place for information inside our community. Soon, the Aspire Platform will be part of every Aspirer’s everyday life.

TWO LAYERED COMMUNITY

Through our third goal, we planned on adding a new layer to our community:

- the first layer is represented by our **Core Community**, the people who graduate an Aspire Summer Program
- the second layer is going to be the **Extended Community** and will encapsulate people who have shown potential for participating in our programs, but aren’t fully prepared to be a part of the Aspire community yet. We planned the entire project and finished the final details, with a launch being scheduled in the first quarter of 2022. We will offer the members of the Extended Community access to resources, several digital sessions and in person events (when possible). Each extended-member will have a non-renewable limited time membership of 6 months during which they can use our resources to develop themselves, get to know us and then apply for one of our programs. The plan is to build a pipeline for potential candidates & expand our impact towards people who might not be ready to join the Aspire experience, but can benefit from our resources and materials to develop and eventually join the core members.

THE ASPIRE LIFESTYLE

The fourth goal was introducing the Aspire Lifestyle, which will consist of the Aspire Embassies (a team of ambassadors in the major cities of the world who will organize events every month), the Aspire Micro-Communities (groups of 15-20 alumni with similar interests who will work on different projects under the supervision of a “patron”) and the Aspire External Mentorship Program (providing mentorship to high school students in order to achieve their goal).

One of the most considerable takeaways of being an Aspire Alumnus is the Aspire Community. Now surpassing the impressive number of 1000, it consists of an incredible group of smart, like-minded individuals. It is a constant source of *opportunities*. Our Alumni Club is a platform for job or internship offers, event invitations, recommendations, but at the same time, a place where people can always seek professional and personal support. One of this year’s most successful opportunities offered to our community has been the *Mentorship Program*. Considering every person’s needs, abilities and traits, we have matched different alumni with mentors from our network and provided them with support and suggestions in order to create a useful and successful mentorship experience. We have received incredibly positive feedback from both mentees and mentors who have had a meaningful and helpful experience within our program.

An example would be this moving feedback of a mentee: "for me the mentorship program brought me someone that I could share my vision with and really understand me. It gave me confidence in my powers and guidance for the process to find my way in my professional career". Another important aspect of the Aspire community is the networking, the socialization.

The Aspire Hubs are not only great learning opportunities, but also incredible occasions for networking with other inspiring people from our region. In true Aspire nature, we like to end our year in style, by attending the *Aspire Christmas Ball*, which has become a true tradition. It is an occasion to rekindle with the Aspire family, but also to get to know other members of our incredible community.



THE ASPIRE LIFESTYLE

We are proud of our community of *1000 leaders*, 1000 young and active people who are involved in their communities and who represent leaders in their areas of work. Through the *Aspire Blog*, we are constantly presenting the stories and the achievements of the members of our community members. Our community is defined by the incredible achievements of our alumni and we pride ourselves to empower them and promote their initiatives through our articles. For the past year we have posted content on our blog on a regular basis, ranging from alumni success stories to the latest updates about our organization or amazing opportunities from our partners.

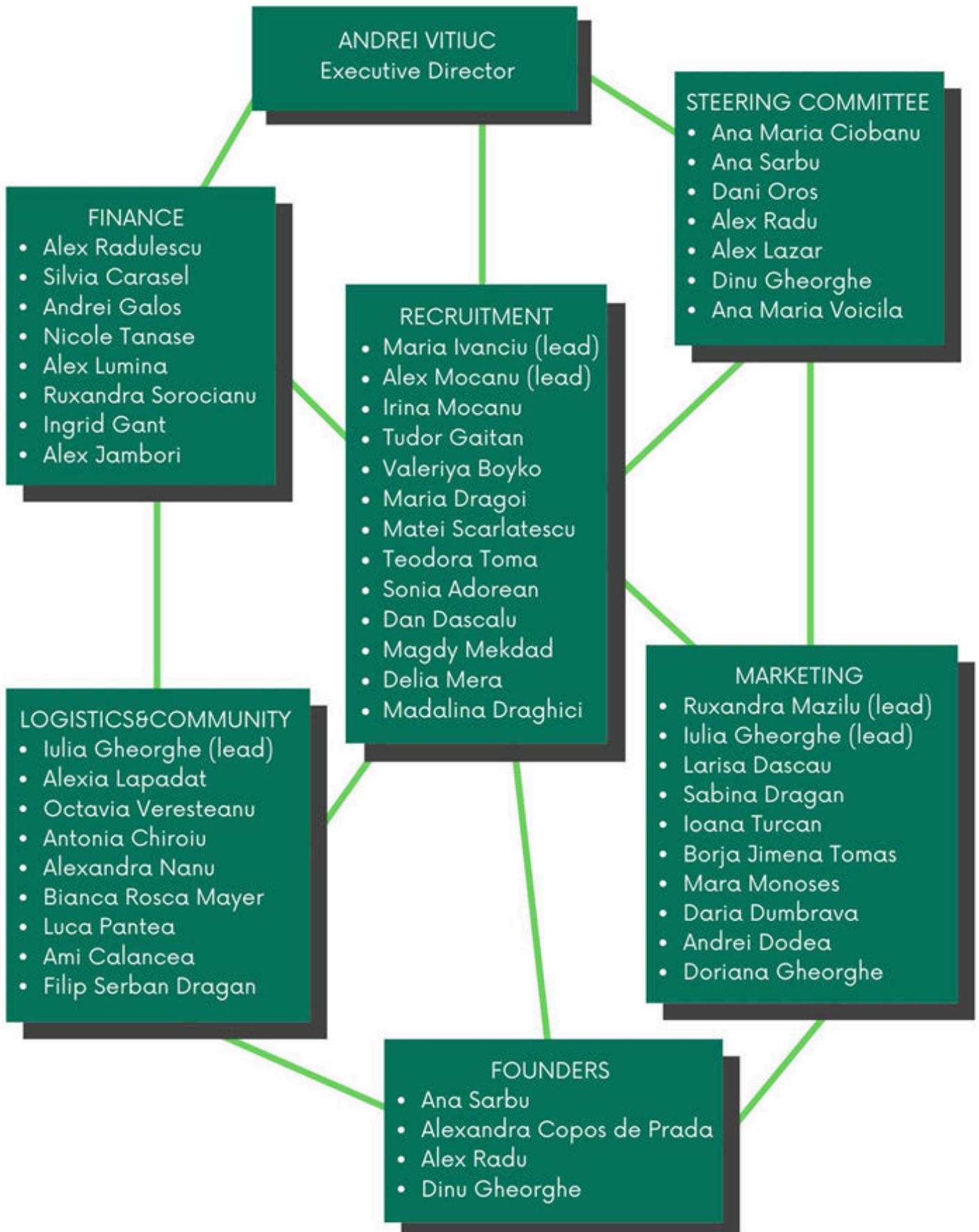
Aspire's most important asset is our incredible community of leaders. Alumni are always sharing their thoughts, impressions, experiences with their friends and recommend the Aspire programs, doing their part in expanding and developing the Aspire brand. Through the *Aspire Ambassadors*, we equip our alumni with the tools needed to promote Aspire in their communities (schools, universities or companies). In this way young people with demonstrated potential are connected to our Aspire opportunities. We are convinced that our alumni network has the power to connect us to people who share our values and develop our powerful network.

The *Aspire Embassies* is one of our latest projects to be launched in the last quarter of 2021. The goal of this project is to bring together people from different regions and encourage them to build small communities. This year we aim to pilot 3 embassies (Bucharest as the first one) that we wish to become a *home away from home* for our alumni who across Europe. The role of the Aspire Ambassadors will be to organize events in which they will bring together several Aspire alumni and possible candidates. Consequently, these events will also promote our organization in the respective regions.

Our alumni make up a diverse community, with people having various backgrounds and working in different fields. The *Aspire Micro-Communities* project that is going to be launched in the first quarter of 2022 brings together alumni with common interests and give them the possibility to identify new opportunities and work together to achieve a common goal. Each Micro-Community will have a mentor (one of our professors) and will interact with leaders of the chosen field for more "real-life" advice. The pilot edition will feature combination of policy making, research and hands-on experience, culminating with an impactful project in one local community.



THE TEAM



ASPIRE PARTNERS

B | S | T The Black Sea Trust
for Regional Cooperation
A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND



ASPIRE SUPPORTERS





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