



**born in Romania**  
*raised around the world*

# YOUR ASPIRE REPORT

- 2021 / 2022 -



**„Aspire is the place where I became myself”**

*Irina Șerban. Aspire Academy 2022 participant*

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# Our Aspire Message

Dear Friend of Aspire,

11 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.

Last year, we have shifted our attention on developing our community, but also on the future of our organization. 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):

1. 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;
2. Engaging the Alumni community through organizing 2 Mentorship programs, 2 Global Week-ends, 2 Aspire Community Days (dedicated to future partnering organizations) focusing as well on creating online experiences for people not close to any Aspire Embassies: Virtual Speed Networkingss, Online Book Clubs and Aspire Talks with professionals from diverse industries;
3. Empowering our Aspire internal and external community, 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 11 years have unfolded, we are eager to enjoy the next 11 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 11 years and for contributing to the education of future leaders.

Maria Drăgoi  
Octavia Vereşteanu  
Co-Presidents of Aspire

# 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.

## 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.



## 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.

## Develop:

Aspire has 3 summer programs that kick-off the Aspire experience, followed by community initiatives. All activities are designed to inspire and motivate the students, to help them achieve their true potential.

## Connect:

We create year-long opportunities for our members by connecting them with their peers. We have Embassies in key cities (Bucharest, London, Amsterdam, etc.) and create online contexts for engaging events as well.

„Aspire is more than a leadership program, but a lively community in which expressing your thoughts is encouraged, an organization which brings together the most brilliant people and who makes you get out of your comfort zone.”

---

Andreea-Barbara Marinescu, Aspire High School 2022





# THE SUMMER 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. Aspire Academy 2022 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 2022 Aspire program has welcomed 25 participants for a life-changing experience.



## 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. Yearly we have participants originating from different countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Pakistan and India. All our 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.

## 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. 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. They bring about positive change in their communities by engaging in social projects or starting sustainable businesses.



# 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

## **ELECTIVE COURSES**

### **THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY**

with Dani Oros

or

### **FILM MAKING 101**

with Daniel Jacob

Dinner and Social Time

## NEW CLASSES

Tango, Teambuilding and Meditation sessions, among others, were also a part of this years' journey in the summer programs. So, the participants benefited both from formal lectures and engaging extracurriculars, promoting full level bonding between peers. Also, a considerable amount of classes focused on cultivating emotional intelligence, guided in the 2022 edition by dr. Emily Skinner, like „The Art of Listening”.

# SOME OF OUR PROFESSORS AND SPEAKERS



**Sam Potolicchio**

One of "America's Best Professors"  
(Princeton Review)



**Jenn Donahue**

Operations consultant;  
Military Officer; Lecturer at UCLA



**Dani Oros**

Head of Marketing  
Google and Youtube Romania



**Steve Jarding**

Former Lecturer (Harvard Kennedy  
School of Government)



**Emily Skinner**

Conflict Resolution Expert;  
Associate at Columbia University



# SOME OF OUR PROFESSORS AND SPEAKERS



**Alain Hereux**

Serial entrepreneur; CEO of  
Virtuology Academy Brussels-Paris



**Chia Jung-Tsay**

Associate Professor - UCL School of  
Management; classical pianist



**Alex Radu**

Harvard Alumn, working in  
Merchant Banking at Golden Sachs



**Mircea Geoană**

Deputy Secretary General  
NATO



**Anastasia Soare**

CEO  
Anastasia Beverly Hills



# LAST YEARS' MILESTONES

## ASPIRE CHRISTMAS BALL

One of the yearly main events for our community, a chance to reconnect not only to each other as members of Aspire, but also to Romania and the at home spirit, given the fact that many of our alumni are returning for the holidays with their families from studying abroad. We had 120 people gathering at the Intercontinental Hotel in Bucharest on the 18th of December. The theme was "The Great Gatsby" and people had a great time with quality music, smiles, interesting talks and rekindled friendships.



## ASPIRE TALKS

At the beginning of 2021 we started Aspire Talks, an online program with webinars where relevant and experienced professionals came to discuss and share their values and motivation with 20 of our Alumni in a private session of questions and answers. Some of the speakers were Ela Moraru, Country Manager Google Romania and Florin Ilie, Deputy CEO Ing Romania.

## ASPIRE EMBASSIES

Embassies are regional communities of alumni who organize global weekends and events, developing new skills and promoting the Aspire activities. Until now we have 4 Embassies: Bucharest, London, Brussels, Copenhagen and 3 more are in the making: Amsterdam, Cluj and Chişinău. Last year our Embassies hosted a number of interesting events. Here are some of the events listed: we went to an artisanal beer factory where one of our Alumni gave us a tour; we visited a coffee roastery of another Alumn and found out all about the magical process of turning green beans into a magnificent drink. There was also a BISM workshop about Value Stream Mapping and beautiful brunch gatherings filled with laughter and amazing energy.

## THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Through our Mentorship Program we aim to foster stronger connections between the members of our community by matching them as mentors and mentees. In this way, they 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 the program. In this year's edition of the Mentorship we were able to match 35 pairs of mentor-mentee, the highest number since the beginning of this project.

# LAST YEARS' MILESTONES



## BRUXELLES GLOBAL WEEKEND 2021

Aspire Global Weekend is a two-day event with the aim of encouraging people from different fields to discover new perspectives, while offering them a safe networking environment. This year's event took place at the Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU, in Brussels, between the 26th-28th of November 2021 and it was a beautiful opportunity for our community to reconnect after the Covid-19 pandemic. Lumința Teodora Odobescu was our host for this event, as she is the Permanent Representative of Romania to the European Union. The other speakers we had were Simona Lungu, JA Europe and Suzana Carp, EU Sustainability Policy Expert. The participants also had the opportunity to socialize at special dinners and to visit together the landmarks of this famous European city.

## MILAN GLOBAL WEEKEND 2022

Our second Aspire Global Weekend took place in Milan, at Grand Hotel et de Milan, where 50 students and young professionals, member of our community gathered for several interesting sessions. Our speakers were Daryoush Goljahani, Head of Channel Sales Italy at Google, Mihnea Gheorghiu, Co-chief Creative Officer at Publicis Italy and Amsterdam LePub, Alina Florea, Executive Coach and Ana Afteni, HR Director South Europe at Reckitt, Leadership coach, ACC. Through the Milano event we aimed to offer our young leaders a glimpse into the worlds of creativity and technology, a mix that drives forward individuals, businesses and societies. We had beautiful socializing opportunities and we visited the wonders of Milan together.

# ASPIRE NOW



11 years

1000+ Alumni

51 nationalities



250+ lectures





# OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

## Logistics & Community

For the next years we are looking to expand the number of our participants with 20%, we want to check and update all our content and offer the best personalized programs according to the needs and challenges of students and young professionals. The Aspire Logistics&Community team is looking to deliver a seamless experience for our participants in all our programs and to strengthen the ties of the community through constant communication, pleasant interactions and outstanding initiatives

## Brand & Recruiting

- Launching a video campaign for brand awareness & creating more context for national and international appearances in mass media;
- Increasing the pool of foreign participants with min 30% of participants in Academy and Professionals programs with non-Romanian and non-Moldovan nationalities
- Offer the summer experience to at least 45 participants/program while maintaining our application quality standards

## Fundraising

This year, the Fundraising team has a mission of increasing our partners and supporters. They are researching grants and finding adequate sources for providing as many scholarships as possible and making sure we have enough support for all our main programs. As we are navigating an uncertain economical period, the focus is on sending out the message far and wide and ensuring that people are aware of the opportunity to be a part of a terrific project by investing in Aspire.



# OUR TEAM

## FINANCE

### Andra Acsintoae (lead)

Iulia Ciobanu  
Alex Radulescu  
Ilinca Suciu  
Nascutiu Melania

### Ami Calancea (lead) Ingrid Flavia Gant (lead)

Violeta Banica  
Maria Bozga  
Luca Onica  
Sabin-Emilian Prunau  
Dinu Diana-Maria  
Robert Ruica  
Delia Elena Apetroaei  
Anca Balaceanu  
Ioana-Carmen Sofronici  
Antonia Chiroiu  
Matei Ghincea  
Tudor Aldea  
Neagu Maria  
Martina Orlea  
Dumitrescu Delia

### Nicole Tanase (lead) Alexandru Mocanu (lead) Matei Scarlatescu (lead)

Ramona-Delia Mera  
Ruxandra Sorocianu  
Diana-Ioana Ardelean  
Maria Dumitrescu  
Oana Meilie-Craciun  
Cristiana Tepes  
Tudor Gaitan  
Sonia Adorean  
Sophia Sanda  
Dana Maria-Daria  
Cristina (Maria) Andrei  
Juliana Petra Wells  
Uță Cătălina Ioana  
Mile Krstev  
Tudor Galan  
Anca Coanda  
Bianca Mirica

## LOGISTICS & COMMUNITY

## BRAND

### Teodora Toma (lead)

Maradin Octavian  
Iulian Oprescu  
Rucsandra Girlicel  
Andrada Pariza  
Razvan Foncea  
Alexandra Mihailopol  
Tanasoiu Alia

## RECRUITING

# OUR SUPPORTERS



**B | S | T** The Black Sea Trust  
for Regional Cooperation

**zizini**<sup>®</sup>  
ÎN ARMONIE CU TINE

 **Rewine**



NUCLEARELECTRICA



KEARNEY



*club&bar*  
**bound**

