

Academics Stand Against Poverty launches its first Eastern European Chapter in Romania

In a world where the inequality gap is extremely disproportionate, where [67 individuals own a fortune equivalent with 3.5 billion](#) (half the planet's population) poorest people, where famine and poverty related diseases are killing more than 18 million people a year and where the global institutions, through policies, have the capacity and the moral obligation to eradicate poverty worldwide and offer universal respect for human rights, a group of prominent academics have united to find the policies that can adjust to solving the current problems.



Official
launch of ASAP
Romania, May
25th, 2015

Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) is a global

organization focused on utilizing scholarship to influence policy and public attitudes to poverty. More than 150 academics, experts and researchers worldwide, are constantly working on a global institutional formula that can rapidly and through clear measures is designed to end world poverty. Because the status quo of the world institutions consists in policies that are rather pursuing the interests of the most affluent, the ASAP members are doing rigorous research to tackle the causes and give recommendations suitable for a just global society.

So far, many academics were debating essential global issues within conferences and in niche articles, with no actual success in reaching the ears of the policy makers, the civil society, or the general public, even though their research and possible solutions were very well thought. As a consequence, the global discourse on poverty was only sold to the public by the global institutions which were responsible to end poverty. Thus, the data on progress offered to the public by the UN or the World Bank was not really put under the question mark.

ASAP has been developed as an international platform that facilitates contact between North-South poverty focused academics and that helps academics pursue applied research and intervention projects, as well as campaigns on specific issues. In the five years of existence, it has extended in over 18 chapters in different corners of the world. ASAP Romania is one of the newest, representing the first Eastern-European chapter.

The launch of [ASAP Romania](#) took place on May 25th, 2015 at the Romanian Diplomatic Institute in Bucharest, with the financial and logistical support of the [Centre for International Cooperation and Development Studies](#) (IDC) of the [Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest](#). The event gathered over 100 academics, government officials, NGO representatives, development workers, students and other civil society actors to discuss current and urgent issues of international

development, with a focus on systemic poverty.

The ASAP Romania launch was marked by the [Kapuscinski Development Lecture](#) held by [Thomas Pogge](#), Leitner Professor of International Affairs at Yale University and President of *Academics Stand Against Poverty*, 'Development Goals – Brilliant Propaganda?' during which he emphasized the flaws within the Millennium Development Goals and how we should address them in the post-2015 development agenda.



Thomas Pogge speaking at the Kapuscinsky Development Lectures, May 25th, 2015

According to **Professor Pogge**, the main issue is that the development goals are merely a 'wishlist' that doesn't specify who is accountable for what, while too much effort is invested in trying to make us more successful than we really are in implementing the development goals.

With this occasion, Thomas Pogge has recommended to the responsible experts **three immediate actions necessary to improve the SDGs framework**:

- 1. We should sharpen and specify the responsibilities of capable agents. Who are the agents that are undertaking this effort together and what is the division of labor among them? Who is supposed to do what?*
- 2. We need a clearer outside independent measurement of success. So we need to have independent agents and*

agencies that monitor progress in particular dimensions and report independently to the world as to how we are doing.

- 3. We need to pay more attention to the systemic factors. Why is it that poverty persists? Why is it that inequality is rising in most countries? We have to change these mechanisms in order to stop increasing inequalities at the source, rather than counteracting them through development assistance.*

The second session of the launching event was the workshop called **Combating Poverty and Inequalities: New Perspectives for Romanian Academics & Practitioners** where Romanian and international experts have presented their theoretical and empirical work on issues of poverty. Speakers such as Ciprian Necula (Ministry of European Funds), Leslie Hawke (OvidiuRO), Cătălin Berescu, Grațian Mihăilescu, Dani Sandu, Doina Doroftei (MFA Romania) or Alexandru Ciorobea ([Together for Development](#)) have discussed issues of child poverty, youth poverty, living conditions in extreme poverty in Romania and Europe and its link to racial segregation, the problem of communities of Roma that have no identity cards or other official papers, therefore considered invisible and showed examples of successful actions that managed to ameliorate or even eradicate the extreme poverty in several communities. The discussions raised a high interest on behalf of the participants, who took the chance to ask insightful questions regarding the methodologies used in studies or the ground-experiences of the speakers.



Alexandru Ciorobea, Doina Doroftei, Andrei Poama, Leslie Hawke, Gratian Mihailescu, Ciprian Necula @ Romanian Diplomatic Institute

Besides putting an urgent global debate on the table of the Romanian experts and academics, the innovative aspect of the launch of ASAP Romania consists in giving those who work on poverty-related issues the opportunity to increase their impact through ASAP's international network which encourages them to collaborate with other academics, enables them to effectively outreach to policy-makers and broader public audiences and helps them to pursue applied research and intervention projects.

The event was also an online success online. The lecture of Professor Thomas Pogge had a rating equivalent to that of a prime time news journal in Romania, one of the European countries with the highest number of TV viewers. In total, the Kapuscinski lecture reached more than 200.000 people from over 60 countries.

Needless to say, the whole event was an opportunity to get engaged with global debates, issues and solutions, meet new people, create new partnerships, but also to reconnect with fellow colleagues in a pleasant and constructive atmosphere.

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In order to find out more about **Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) & ASAP Romania** and their activities, visit:

www.academicsstand.org

www.facebook.com/AcademicsStandAgainstPoverty

www.facebook.com/ASAPRomania

Talking the language of Human Rights activism in Romania

Amnesty International Bucharest Group, the first and only local group of Amnesty International in Romania, was founded in August 2014 gathering at the very beginning 10 members only. Since then, the group developed and it consists now of 30 members who undertook four campaigns in order to raise awareness about refugee and asylum-seekers' rights, sexual and reproductive rights, women's rights, freedom of expression, political and civic rights and the ban of torture practices.



Ionela Maria Ciolan is the initiator of the Volunteer Facilitators movement of Amnesty International in Romania and the founder and leader of the first Human Rights activists group of Amnesty in her country (**Amnesty International Bucharest Group**). She has extensive experience in youth work,

advocacy and Human Rights (HR) and had organized 9 international campaigns in Romania concerning Roma/ LGBT /sexual and reproductive rights, women's rights, refugee and asylum-seekers' rights, housing rights, freedom of speech, etc.

Alexandra: Since 1961, Amnesty International has been involved in major campaigns, investigations and communications in order to promote a world of Human Rights for all. It has more than 7 million activists, members, supporter and donors all around the world. In Romania, you have been working as an Amnesty Volunteer Facilitator since 2011 and afterwards you created Amnesty International Bucharest Group. What were the incentives that led to the establishment of the AI local group in Romania?

Ionela: After 3 years of intensive collaboration and 6 Human Rights campaigns with Amnesty as a Volunteer Facilitator, I have decided that I got enough experience and understanding of the way the organization works in order to move to the next level. Founding this group came from my desire to promote AI and its values in my country. I wish I could bring my contribution towards changing the Romanian mentality concerning Human Rights, namely making ordinary citizens more tolerant and open to embrace diversity. A large number of them do not know what Human Rights are and have never had any Human Rights education in school or throughout their life. Thus, the degree of intolerance and discrimination in Romania is, at some extent, worrisome.



Apart from my idealistic goal to improve Romanians' attitude

in this direction, I have also been motivated by my willing to positively change Romania's image abroad. If my country is internationally perceived as one where various Human Rights (i.e. Roma/ women/ LGBT/ prisoners' rights, etc.) are persistently violated, I wanted to stand up against such practices and bring my contribution towards building another side of Romania, one, where we care about Human Right, respect them and fight to promote them, both locally and globally.

Alexandra: You have served as a Volunteer Facilitator at AI for almost four years now. What are your responsibilities as a volunteer facilitator/group leader in Romania?

Ionela: As a Volunteer Facilitator, I've been in charge with the organization of several Amnesty campaigns over here (i.e. finding out what are the most efficient ways to organize a campaign on a certain subject, preparing working strategy plans, recruiting volunteers, coordinating and training them, promoting the events through social media, maintaining a constant contact with my Regional Coordinator from the International Secretariat in London, preparing the logistics, facilitating the events, delivering Amnesty messages on all their specific campaigns, collecting petitions and letters of support and sending them to London, etc.).

As a group leader, I would mention that I am in charge with the internal communication of Amnesty International Bucharest Group, the coordination of my team of activists, namely motivating and offering them support, intermediating the communication between the group and our coordinator from the International Secretariat, etc. I also make sure that the message we present through our campaigns and other coordination tasks perfectly matches with the one promoted by Amnesty.

Alexandra: Since 2011, you and Amnesty International Bucharest Group have organized several campaigns that aimed to raise awareness for several causes such as Roma rights ("Stop forced

evictions of Roma community in Romania”), the fight against torture (“Stop torture”), Women’s rights (“My body, my rights”), etc. *Could you recall any moment or any lesson about freedom and dignity that had a tremendous impact on your activity as a volunteer for AI in Romania and motivated you to work harder in order to improve the Human Rights situation in Romania?*

Ionela: Last year, I was involved in the 3rd Human Rights Action Camp of Amnesty in Bulgaria where we’ve discussed the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. At that time, the refugee crisis wasn’t so widely covered by International media; however, this does not mean at that time asylum seekers’ rights were not violated. Apart from AI activists from all over Europe, some refugees accepted to attend the camp with us. The stories they shared were simply heartbreaking. Very briefly, I will give you some examples and I wish readers could put themselves in the shoes of these people.

In 2011, when conflict erupted in Libya, Said, a 10-year old child was playing in a football competition in Libya. Against his will, Libyan authorities put him in an overcrowded boat and sent him to Italy. Apparently, this happened at Gaddafi’s instructions when Italian forces joined the NATO air campaign against Libya. However, there can be no justification for sending away a helpless minor in a foreign country where, as you can imagine, he didn’t know anyone and had zero-knowledge of Italian. Not even today, after 4 years, he couldn’t reconnect with his family. He doesn’t know if they are still alive or not, if they flew away from Libya or not.

Other refugees shared with us critical moments from their life back in their home countries where war is a daily fact. Escaping from war-torn Syria or Iraq was not an easy task at all, but a risky trip by boat towards unknown lands. All these personal recollections of the refugees’ journey to Europe have touched me so deeply that I returned to Romania

with the purpose of creating the AI group we have today. I wanted to fight harder in order to spread the AI Human Rights cases in Romania. If until this camp, I wasn't very convinced that I was ready to move from a single volunteer activity to leading a group of volunteers, that experience and the courage of the refugees I've met, gave me the reasons and the strength to be more determined in promoting human rights and less worried about *what if I'll fail*.

Alexandra: 2015 is definitely a watershed moment for all development workers involved in the fight for a better world for all. Human Rights are at the core of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are about to be adopted in 2015. From your point of view, as an Human Rights activist and a youth worker, how would you evaluate the new post-2015 agenda? If we define it as a new Human Rights agenda, how would you assess both its potential achievements and shortcomings?

Ionela: As we all know, the post-2015 Agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets that are to be attained by 2030. Of course, it is an ambitious, wide-range global plan to create a better world for all. From a Human Rights activist point of view, the new SDGs tackle some of the most pressing issues of our time: ending extreme poverty and hunger, reduce gender inequality, increase access to health care and education, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, etc.; some of these *things* seem pretty basic and are taken for granted by many of us. One of the most relevant aspect of the new UN agenda is the fact that the SDGs do not focus anymore on developing countries only (like the MDGs used to do), but they strongly claim that even in the most advanced nations, there are people left aside, living at the edge of poverty, people who don't have access to minimum basic facilities. Therefore, the UN system aims to raise a challenging debate with the participation of each and every country to analyse their own level of achievement in regards to the proposed sustainable development

goals.

While the new SDGs framework can make a lasting impact in the world as we know it and improve the current situation, there are many doubts about the results of the post-2015 Agenda. The main critique comes from the fact that some of the targets are vaguely expressed, generally presented and hard to measure and put into practice. Additionally, we have to keep in mind that some goals, although they sound really appealing, cannot (easily) be achieved within the desired timeframe. We also have to ask ourselves if all the countries have the necessary resources (material, technological and the knowledge) to accomplish these objectives. And in this particular case, how would countries select their priority items? Is there any scale system to measure what goals are the most important or in other words, the first / second priorities in a country?

Alexandra: Keeping in mind the new post-2015 Agenda, what are the goals Romania should place more emphasis on in the next coming years?



Ionela: If we are looking at all the 17 SDGs it is hard to select the areas where we have to be more engaged. However, keeping in mind the real concerns of Romanians, I believe that ending poverty (or at least, diminishing it), increasing health care, investing in quality education and promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth are the areas where we should invest more. Let me also add that *achieving greater equality and empower women and girls* should be one of our priorities and we need to keep on fighting the battle in order to reduce domestic violence, end human trafficking (affecting young girls and women in general), and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. In this direction, I totally support the idea of having sexual and

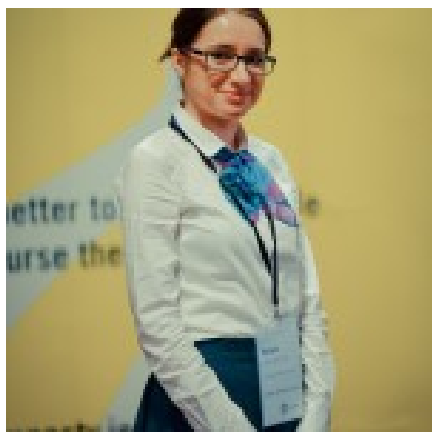
reproductive education programs in schools. At the moment, the rates of teen birth and abortion (under 19- year old girls) in Romania are one of the highest in Europe; moreover, 60% of sexual active teenagers (teenagers between 15-19- year old) have never used contraception. This can be a real problem not only in terms of birth or abortion numbers, but also concerning the spread of STDs. Needless to add, the economic impact on the state.

Alexandra: These days, many people are interested in humanitarian and development work. What is the message you would like to pass on to those who are interested by the activities of the AI group in Romania?

Ionela: I invite all those interested in the work of Amnesty International to visit [AI's website](#) and read about the ongoing campaigns and sign the petitions. By signing a petition, promoting it and encouraging friends to do the same, we are spreading the message of Amnesty and we are gathering support for that case. It's not a singular example where millions of individuals from different corners of the world supported and promoted the same case, thus helping Amnesty to have a stronger impact and succeed in freeing people, stopping governments from violating human rights and finally changing some people's lives. Because each of us can have the power to bring his/ her contribute to changing the world in a better place.

They can also join Amnesty by becoming online members. Needless to add, if they consider that they need to acquire more knowledge regarding human rights, they can join Amnesty's first massive open online course (MOOC) on freedom of expression, which is [now](#) open for registration.

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Ionela is the first Romanian in the history of Amnesty International who was selected as an International Movement Delegate for Europe to participate in the 2015 Amnesty's International Council Meeting. This is the highest position that an activist can have in the organization and Ionela has represented all volunteers and local groups from the

European countries where Amnesty doesn't have an office.

Recently, she extended her experience with a Professional Fellowship granted by the U.S. Department of State and an internship at [Chicago Coalition for the Homeless](#).

A PhD Candidate in International Relations, her research is focused on the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU's Eastern Partnership and the Union's relations with Russia.

Infrastructures for Peace- From International Need to Context Adapted National Implementation

According to the World Bank statistics from 2013 surveying 186 countries, 526.000 people are killed by armed violence each year. Even though, people being killed in conflict settings

represent only 12,2% of people being killed, the rest of 87.8% are killed in non-conflict settings with 75% of them being victims of intentional homicides. [\[1\]](#)

Other statistic, made by Wars in the World, reveals that 65 countries are currently directly involved in a war fighting over 650 militias-guerillas, separatist and anarchic groups in their region, with most of ongoing conflicts in Africa and in Asia. [\[2\]](#)

Reviewing these numbers and the statistics, one can notice that even the international context has changed in the nineties with the end of the Cold War, armed conflicts and violence are still present, impacting societies all over the world. The numbers I have mentioned are just a small part of the effects caused by **direct violence**, the visible effects of violent clashes. But there is always more than that, even if only the tip of the iceberg is visible to us. The willingness of states to get involved into armed conflicts, the eagerness of terrorist, anarchic and separatist groups to fight their enemies, the high death rates of victims of intentional homicides reveal a small part of the most dangerous facet of violence, which is strongly embedded in most societies: **cultural and structural violence**.

One can identify aspects of structural violence in many societies where authorities and public policies use violent methods to deal with conflicts. Their actions rather encourage the creation of structures which facilitate the escalation of conflicts, being supported by cultural violence, strongly embedded in people's mentalities and mirrored by their behaviors.

When it comes to conflict, every state has largely determined its own mechanisms for solving various types of conflict. Many or maybe most countries face various institutional gaps in order to manage conflicts – they lack tools, resources and structures needed to deal with them. Other states completely

ignore the possibility of peaceful settlement and draw on violence based tools, which are deeply rooted in their culture, in their human nature and are justified by the mentalities of the majority.

This is the point where infrastructures for peace are brought in discussion. They are less expensive than wars and can be built on existing structures.

The term infrastructure for peace is most often associated with conflict zones or countries experiencing various forms of direct violence or conflict escalation. The concept itself can be put into practice in countries experiencing tensions within society and that are dealing with other types of violence, such as cultural and structural with the purpose of transforming conflicts at an early stage and consolidating peace.

Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) is a term that knows a wide range of definition proposals although the concept is still in definition phase. Even if it is a new term, abstract and complex it has shown various ways of adapting itself to existing realities and specific contexts. **Jean Paul Lederach** is the first who introduced the concept in the 1980s, assuming that sustainable peace can only be the result of a deep and structural conflicts transformation, including socio-economic roots and political drivers.[\[3\]](#)

Chetan Kumar, Senior Conflict Prevention advisor at UNDP defined an I4P as a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills- shared by the government, civil society and community institutions. A functional I4P is in his opinion based on dialogue, consultation and peaceful mediation among these actors.[\[4\]](#)

Paul van Tongeren, author of many articles related to infrastructures for peace, defines infrastructures for peace as institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's

culture which promote conflict solving approaches based on dialogue and non-violence within communities.[\[5\]](#)

Summing up some major streams in the literature, one can identify common aspects as key elements to define an I4P which is in fact a structure based on institutional mechanisms, on peaceful mediation, dialogue and networking within communities aiming to prevent or to diminish violent conflicts.

I4P International – an international network of NGOs, local peace committees and peacebuilding practitioners – defines Infrastructures for Peace as following: “a dynamic network of structures, mechanisms, resources and interdependent qualifications contributing to conflict prevention and peace restoration in the society through dialogue, consultation, cooperation and coordination”.[\[6\]](#)

Reviewing the existing literature, one can notice that the majority of examples of implementing infrastructures for peace can be found in Africa, followed by some Asian countries or singular examples in the Middle East and South America. Some components of infrastructures for peace exist also in other contexts but are not gathered under the same umbrella called I4P. Even so, the External Action of the European Union acknowledges the importance of infrastructures for peace also at the European level, in terms of strengthening national capacities for dialogue, mediation and national dialogue platforms with regards to conflict prevention.[\[7\]](#)

The concept of infrastructures could be translated into reality in peaceful but also in conflict-torn societies with the aim of preventing violence and dealing with conflict. To this purpose, one can have as examples:

- National Dialogues:
- Local Peace Committees
- Mediation

The **National Dialogues** can be implemented as roundtables or

national conferences, aiming to ensure platforms for discussions legitimized by the national authority.

The **Local Peace Committees and Councils** represent structures which facilitate the creation of networks of local bodies. Within the network, interaction is encouraged with the goal of strengthening national peace infrastructure, addressing issues of local relevance considered to be a threat to peaceful conditions, supporting the peaceful settlement of disputes and establishing consensus among different parties involved in conflict situation.

Mediation is another component of infrastructures for peace aiming to restore broken relationships between and within communities, where tensions emerge among different ethnic and social groups.

A major remark is that even if infrastructures for peace have some common components, these have to be adapted to each context when implemented. An infrastructure for peace has to be acknowledged and owned by the community and by the civil society but has to be also legitimized by the national authority.

An example of a partly successful I4P can be considered the case of Nepal. This country found its path towards democracy in 1990, having free parliamentary elections one year later. Unfortunately, the high expectations of the population regarding social and economic change were not met, escalating into the Maoist insurgency from 1996, which had cost over 16,000 lives and had led to a large amount of internally displaced people. After the bloody conflict, due to the eight-party negotiations a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed and ambitious plans for an infrastructure for peace were made.

The components of the Nepalese infrastructures for peace were implemented at national and local level. On the national level the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) was

established having as major tasks to coordinate the implementation of the Peace Agreement, to set up local peace committees (LCPs) and to manage the Nepal Peace Trust Fund. At the local level, local peace committees were established in almost every district. These LCPs had the role to link the national peace process to the communities, to run programs on conflict prevention, to have activities related to domestic violence and psychological healing. Even the infrastructures for peace have had a comprehensive design and accordingly established institutions[8], the Nepalese model was not as successful as expected. It has been criticized that LCPs were not efficient in addressing core issues because they were not really owned by the communities and civil society due to high implication of the government, which had a too political oversight. Moreover, the infrastructure itself lacked capacities in terms of funding and skilled staff, which burdened the achievement of its goals.

Having the example of Nepal in mind, one can learn from its experience and before establishing an infrastructure for peace in an apparently peaceful society, former communist country starting to answer the question: why do we need I4P here?

The main argument why we need I4P in Romania is not because each of us is confronted every day with direct violence and we experience war, but because:

-structural and cultural violence are strongly embedded into every structure within the Romanian society and dominate the mainstream mentalities and behaviors

-Romania has a history in approaching conflictual situation with violence (the Revolution from 1989, violent uprising of the miners in 1990, the inter-ethnic conflicts between Romanian- Hungarian minority, Romanian- Roma minority)

-externally, due to contemporary interactions at the global level and to the synergies we are directly affected by the war

in Ukraine, the wars in the Middle East and the existing tensions and instability within the European Union

-internally we face increasing numbers indicating cases of violence in schools and domestic violence, with measures taken to address the effects and not the causes of violence

– internally, we experience very often political instability, inter-ethnic tensions due to the lack of inter-ethnic dialogue

-hate speech and violent speech is present in everyday life and promoted in the media

– lack of methods and instruments for transforming conflicts in a non-violent way, in order to prevent cases of violence.

In other words: we have perfect conditions for nurturing violent conflicts. With regards to the needs, challenges, gaps and threats identified, a new chapter on I4P starts to be written by AIDRom – the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania and PATRIR – the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania.



AIDRom in partnership with PATRIR have started on the 1st of March 2015 the implementation of a 14 months project called **I4P Romania- “Establishing Infrastructure for Peace Romania”** financed by the EEA Grants 2009-2014, through the NGO Fund Romania. The project

aims to create a network of organizations in Romania, to build and transfer capacities for conflict transformation to these organizations. Beside training NGOs and fortifying their capacities to deal with different conflict typologies, the project also aims to develop advocacy skills with the purpose of acknowledging the importance of infrastructures for peace

from national authorities.

Within these 14 months, the organization team organizes trainings on Complex Conflict Analysis, Reconciliation and Restorative Practices and on Design Intervention in Conflict Transformation Processes. Moreover, in order to achieve one of its goals and change mentalities with regards to approaching conflict, three Good Practice Guides providing examples for conflict transformation for different conflict typologies will be elaborated. These Guides will be presented within workshops and will be disseminated to the Romanian NGOs to fortify their capacity to deal with different conflicts. Another component of the project is related to developing a White Paper and create legislative proposals to consolidate the NGOs position towards dealing with conflict at the national level. The peak of the project is represented by the network of organization, which will have the legitimacy to come together and develop activities related to conflict prevention and conflict transformation in their communities, being in a constant dialogue with public authorities.

Through this project, one will set up the basis for an infrastructure for peace inspired by I4P internationally but designed in accordance to the specificities of the Romanian context, according to the existing needs and to the surrounding internal and external factors.

Being aware of the high rates of direct violence but also of the prevalence of structural and cultural violence embedded in the most of the existing structures, establishing an infrastructure for peace in Romania means raising awareness about the importance of peaceful settlements, changing mentalities and behaviors, challenging diverse actors, communities and authorities to have a dialogue and work efficiently on conflict prevention and conflict transformation.

To impact the Romanian society peacefully and change people's

lives. To maintain peace and prevent violence. To shift the terrifying statistics.

[1] Geneva Declaration: Global Burden of Armed Violence, <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence.html>, (25.09.2015).

[2] Wars in the World, <http://www.warsintheworld.com/?page=static1258254223>, (25.09.2015).

[3] Jean Paul Lederach in Embedded Peace. Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned, by Hans J. Giessmann (Berghof Foundation), 2015, p.6.

[4] Ibid., p.7.

[5] Ibid.,p.7.

[6] I4P International- The International Civil Society Network on Infrastructures for Peace, <http://www.i4pinternational.org/>, (25.09.2015).

[7] External Action- European Union, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/2013_eeas_mediation_support_factsheet_peace_infrastructures_en.pdf , (1.10.2015).

[8] Hans J. Giessmann : Embedded Peace- Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned, the Berghof Foundation, 2015, p. 31-33.

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Currently, she works as capacity building and networking coordinator at PATRIR- The Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania.

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Visit:

<http://www.aidrom.ro/proiecte/i4p-romania-pregatirea-retelei-infrastructuri-pentru-pace-romania/>

“Development Cooperation Days” Romanian Development Camp, 8th edition



The Romanian Development Camp 2015 – entitled “Development Cooperation Days” was a public event organised by the **Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND** in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme – Regional Centre for Europe and Central Asia. This

edition took place between 8th – 10th of July in Bucharest in the context of the **European Year for Development 2015**. Having the unique opportunity to bring the public closer to development issues, the event’s main purpose was to raise awareness on Romania’s role as an international donor and inspire Romanian institutions, organisations and individuals to become more involved in the global efforts of eradicating poverty in the world.

Reaching its 8th edition, the Romanian Development Camp has become a traditional annual event, which reunites representatives from NGOs, government, academia and mass-media within a unique space dedicated to fostering an open and constructive dialogue on topics relevant for the field of

international development cooperation.



This year's edition was different from all the others, being **an interactive and open event which combined plenary sessions and thematic workshops with side-events such as a movie projection and debate, photo exhibition, theatre forum and a projects' fair.** Throughout these activities, the audience had the chance to better understand how aid works and how they can become more involved in development efforts. Also the projects' fair offered visibility to development projects and activities with focus on results and provided the tools to better communicate development projects and results.

Moreover, the 2015 edition of the Romanian Development Camp enjoyed the presence of some of the most relevant speakers in the development cooperation field. The key note speaker was **Mr. Simon Maxwell**, an expert with a career in international development of over 40 years, currently Senior Research Associate at the **Overseas Development Institute** (UK's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues) who talked about the complexity of the field of international development, the achievements reached so far and the challenges we are facing in the context of a new post-2015 development agenda.

“An excellent event and a productive partnership between civil society and the Government of Romania, demonstrating the country's commitment to sustainable development in all its aspects, and Romania's leadership at regional level. There is a lot to do if we are to secure a safe, prosperous and sustainable world by 2030. Romania's engagement, on its own

account and within the EU will be essential.”

The audience also engaged in fruitful discussions with: **Ms. Carmen Burlacu** – *State Secretary for Global Affairs, Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, **Mr. Geert Laporte** – *Deputy Director, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)*, **Ms. Deirdre de Burca** – *Member of the EU Beyond 2015 Campaign Steering Group*, **Ms. Amalia Garcia-Tharn** – *Policy Officer, Policy and Coherence Unit, Directorate – General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid*, **Ms. Ebba Dohlman** – *Senior Adviser, Office of the Secretary-General, Policy Coherence for Development Unit* and many other representatives of national/European institutions and organizations (NGOs, think-tanks).

The plenary sessions were bolstered up by the **thematic workshops**, focused on more specific subjects such as: Promoting development through social media, Young people in international development, The role of academics, Migration and Development, Financing Development: The role of Multilateral Development Banks, Child Protection, Gender & Development, Humanitarian Assistance.

Nevertheless, one of the most interesting and engaging parts of the Romanian Development Camp were the side-events. Below you can have a quick peek of the most exiting moments during the event.

Living Library: Getting to Know Migrants' Experiences in Romania



Projects' Fair: Development Cooperation Initiatives and Projects



Forum-Theatre: From Spectator to Actor – Disaster Risk Reduction



Food Workshop: Traditional International Cuisine, Dance and Music



For more details regarding the Romanian Development Camp 8th edition – “Development Cooperation Days” we invite you to visit fondromania.org and [FOND FB page](#).

The Romanian Development Camp is an annual event organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND, in partnership with the

With Professor Thomas Pogge on the SDGs

Thomas Pogge, November 6th 2014:



The UN General Assembly's Open Working Group (OWG) on the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** has formulated a draft of the SDGs, proposing **17 goals**, which summarize **169 targets**. There is still time to improve the draft in the run-up to the UNGA meeting in September 2015. Among the most important improvements to be made are these.

(1) Goal 10, to reduce inequality, looks laudable but then laughable upon inspection: we should “by 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average.” In other words, inequality may increase without limit until 2030 so long as it then starts declining just before the SDGs expire.

(2) After witnessing many cosmetic revisions of definitions and measurement methods involved in the Millennium Development Goals, with each revision making our efforts against poverty look more impressive, we should insist that no such revisions be allowed from now on. Moreover, the measurement of progress should not be left to politically exposed and vulnerable international agencies, such as the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization, but be entrusted to a group of respectable academic experts.

(3) The SDGs should not merely express wishes that this or that should happen but should assign concrete tasks to competent agents, esp. to the most powerful governments and enterprises. Here reforms of the structural causes of poverty are crucial. The rich countries should agree to stop facilitating illicit financial outflows from the poor countries, to stop imposing their protectionism and pollution on the world without compensation, to stop blocking poor populations' access to advanced medicines, to stop blocking the adoption of decent global labor standards, and to stop supporting dictators by paying them for their countries' natural resources or by lending them money or selling them arms.

Never has persistent severe poverty been more easily avoidable and hence a greater moral scandal. We must eradicate it as quickly as we possibly can.

—

Mr Thomas Pogge is the Director of the Global Justice Program and the Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs at Yale University.

He is also president of [Academics Stand Against Poverty](#) (ASAP), an international professional association focused on helping poverty researchers and teachers enhance their positive impact on severe poverty. He is the author of

several well-known books, such as *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (second edition, 2008), *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right: Who Owes What to the Very Poor?* (editor, 2007), *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice* (2007), and *Realizing Rawls* (1989).

For more on Thomas Pogge, visit his [website](#).

Academics Stand Against Poverty – Romania



What is ASAP-Romania?

ASAP Romania is an initiative of [Academics Stand Against Poverty](#) (ASAP), an international network helping scholars and students enhance their impact on global poverty. It does so by promoting collaboration amongst poverty-focused academics, by helping them reach out to broader audiences on issues of poverty, and by helping them turn their expertise into impact through specific intervention projects as well as campaigns on specific issues.



ASAP's president, **Prof. Thomas Pogge** of **Yale University**, announced the initiative of building the **Romanian Chapter** during his visit at **the 2014 Romanian Development Camp**, where he gave two lectures regarding the role of academia in combating global poverty and how to track progress against deprivations.

How is ASAP distinctive from other poverty-focused organizations?

First and foremost, among ASAP's members are internationally recognized experts who are contributing with rigorous reviews on the work on poverty, trying to bring the research and the solutions proposed at the academic levels outside the ivory tower and have a real impact. Second, its network is extended globally, including numerous universities and academics, especially promoting North-South collaboration among its members, with a strong focus on creating opportunities for those who face barriers to full participation in the global academic dialogue.

ASAP is headed by Prof. Thomas Pogge (Yale University) along with the [board of directors](#). The [advisory board](#) includes prominent academics such as Prof. Peter Singer (Princeton), Prof. Paul Collier (Oxford), Prof. Ha-Joon Chang (Cambridge), Prof. Sabina Alkire (Oxford), Branko Milanovic (CUNY, formerly a leading economist at the World Bank) and many other experts working in the field of poverty.

Why Romania?



ASAP constantly aims to develop its network by opening chapters in parts of the world that it did not cover before. Eastern Europe represents such a region, and Romania is a country presenting two important characteristics for this choice. First, Romania is one of the European countries most affected by poverty and where action is urgently needed. Second, Romanian academics should be able to participate with their work in the global academic dialogue and increase their impact on poverty eradication.

How can Romanian scholars contribute to ASAP's mission?

The overarching aim of ASAP is to contribute to the eradication of severe poverty worldwide and to ensure that poverty policy and development efforts are guided by rigorous empirical and normative scholarship. ASAP's ultimate concern is for people, not for countries, thus it focuses on poor people from both affluent and less-affluent countries.

ASAP Romania is on the path of developing the first chapter in Eastern Europe which will be involved in ASAP's [international](#)

[projects](#) as well as develop local/regional related projects. In this context, we invite Romanian academics and experts whose work is focused on poverty to get involved or to become members, and to participate in our [Global Colleagues Project](#). ASAP's members are eager to share their expertise in public debates and policy dialogues where they have the opportunity to be heard and to work with their peers around the world.

Who else is contributing to this mission?

ASAP has Chapters launched or in development in Austria, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, India, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Oceania, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and West Africa. In total, more than 1,200 ASAP members work and study in universities, research centers and NGOs worldwide.

In the context of the upcoming SDGs, how could academics enhance their positive impact on poverty? / Could you give a concrete example of ASAP's work regarding the SDGs?

In 2012 at Yale University, ASAP has launched the [Institutional Reform Goals](#) project, a research and advocacy project that aims for the reform of supranational institutional rules and practices that are worsening poverty globally.

Why should we care about systemic reform?

A systemic reform of global institutions is a focal point in the debate regarding the post-2015 development agenda. Given the time-sensitive nature of this debate and official deliberations on the subject, IRG's **short-term** focus is on the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#). This means our objective is to ensure that the emerging SDGs are made as good as they can realistically be. Like many other civil society organizations, we call for the inclusion of meaningful language, in the new development goals, on issues such as human rights and inequality reduction. Our focus, however, is

to advocate for the strongest possible emphasis on accountability, and on systemic reforms of global institutions. We will intervene in the ongoing post-2015 debates through a variety of methods, such as producing and circulating original, research-based policy briefs articulating our objectives, and organizing awareness-raising campaigns with collaborating institutions.

Such an undertaking was already successfully carried out combining the efforts of ASAP's global network. More than 50 experts signed an open letter to Ban Ki-moon, UN's Secretary General, asking him to push for the inclusion of specific policies in the SDGs that would stop tax abuse, a practice that severely affects developing countries and increases global poverty. The letter circulated in a [petition campaign](#), where ASAP Romania made an important contribution toward raising the symbolic number of 2015 signatures. This shows a rising interest on behalf of Romanian citizens to have a voice in the global decision-making.

Moving into the **longer term**, we have identified ten focus areas in which the reform of global rules and practices could have a major impact on human development and poverty eradication: (1) **illicit financial flows**, (2) **international resource and borrowing privileges**, (3) **intellectual property law**, (4) **democratization and accountability**, (5) **international labor standards**, (6) **international trade**, (7) **environmental sustainability and climate change**, (8) **global migration**, (9) **the arms trade**, and (10) **debt**.

For each of our focus areas, we will:

1. Articulate politically feasible institutional reform **goals and illustrative targets** to be presented through research-backed policy papers.
2. Work to build a broad coalition of academics and civil society members to support our call for new **institutional reform goals**.

3. Promote these **institutional reform goals** widely (as a first step, by engaging with and intervening in the post-MDG debate).

ASAP's IRG project is ambitious and unique. While other NGOs are campaigning in many of the 10 areas we have identified, very few understand them as systematically interrelated.

Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan (CPCA)



Contributing to Peace Consolidation
in Afghanistan (CPCA): A Joint
Romanian-Afghan Effort

The [Contributing to Peace Consolidation in Afghanistan](#) project represents a one year joint Romanian-Afghan endeavour, having as aim the highlight and analysis of peace consolidation related capacity building gaps, challenges, achievements, lessons identified, and “best-fit” solutions in Afghanistan on the eve of the 2014 transition process and the 2015 MDG mark. As an integral part of Romania's Official Development Assistance policy, the implementation of the project was made possible with the financial assistance of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the Official Development Assistance budget, in partnership with UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, and is being implemented by the [Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania](#) (PATRIR) in

partnership with the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) from Afghanistan.

The CPCA project was developed as a result of a series of consultations with various Afghan and international organisations engaged in peace consolidation and sustainable development activities, which have highlighted the need i) to enhance Afghan ownership over peacebuilding and peace consolidation capacities required by a peaceful transition process; ii) to highlight the link between the nationally and locally owned peacebuilding and peace consolidation programmes and the successful engagement with the MDG targets; iii) to boost national, local and community based capacities to reach the MDG targets in the post-2014 transition period through the use of peacebuilding and peace consolidation skills and knowledge; iv) to place a central role on the traditional Afghan peacebuilding and peace consolidation practices; v) to strengthen the role of Afghan civil society in development of such capacities for national and local use.

In order to reply to these needs, the project had foreseen the development and implementation of a series of activities with multi-stakeholder character, in two phases: a needs assessment phase and a capacity building phase. The target group chosen for the project included key government/ state actors, policy and decision makers dealing with development, peacebuilding and peace consolidation in Afghanistan, key civil society/ non-state actors active in the same or adjacent domains, staff of UN agencies and peacekeeping missions and EUPOL personnel.



The first phase of the project was made up of a four months long capacity building needs assessment process, containing a comprehensive desk review process of relevant Afghan and international reports and resource materials on the status

of peacebuilding, peace consolidation and sustainable development capacities and programmes existent within the country. Coupled with this, the assessment team had undertaken a multi-stakeholder interview and survey process, involving representatives of the before-mentioned target group. After having overviewed more than two hundred online and hard-copy documents, more than thirty five online interviews and lectures, and having conducted more than sixty interviews and surveys, the seven-member assessment team had drawn a series of conclusions and presented relevant recommendations regarding the link between peace consolidation and development, peace consolidation and development related capacity building needs on the ground and existing strengths on which to build further efforts. The second phase of the project involved a four-day capacity building programme entitled "Collaborative Efforts for Building National Capacities for Peace Consolidation and Sustainable Development in Afghanistan", bringing together fifteen Afghan practitioners engaged in peacebuilding, peace consolidation and sustainable development.

The findings of the project show that "defining and contributing to the process of peace consolidation in the 2014's Afghanistan proves to be a challenging undertaking, due to the narrow connotation such a concept has received in the light of the impending security transition: that of general peace-making" (Observation made by UNDP Afghanistan staff of Afghan nationality). Basing strategy and action on the principles of systemic engagement, multi-stakeholder approach, national ownership and legitimacy, cumulative impact creation and evidence-based / demand-driven engagement aids in expanding and creating an integrated understanding of the concept itself, towards constructive and sustainable results. As such, peace consolidation needs to be understood from the perspective of positive peace creation, in which, based on the absence of direct violence, equitable and integrated outputs and outcomes are developed in the spheres of economy, social

services, politics, justice, human relations, and constructive conflict resolution. Essentially, successful peace consolidation may be achieved only through the interrelated cycle of peacebuilding/ peacemaking/ peacekeeping, sustainable development, and nationally owned capacities (Kacsó et al. 2014)."

Further on, the assessment team concluded that there is a series of historical and contextual factors impacting and being impacted by the lack of proper capacity, among which the general state-building project, the military and human security situation, the socio-economic and cultural realities and the available resources. The customization of international capacity building programmes to the particularities of Afghanistan's culture and context is quite scarce, which is coupled with a low level of local and national ownership of capacities and capacity building programmes serving peace consolidation and development. Due to a siloed work practice among the different actors, the cumulative impact of the capacity building programmes is minimal, especially when most of the programmes provided follow a supply- and donor-driven approach and little integration of previous lessons learned and local capacities.

The appraisal of existing capacity building strengths in Afghanistan has highlighted a series of principles aiding the consolidation of capacity building. Among these we may find a strive towards unitary planning and strategizing based on comprehensive situation analysis, country-led processes, the respect of dialogic principles in capacity building processes, and several others. The high awareness level of the interconnectedness between peace, conflict and development is coupled with gradually strengthened cooperation mechanisms between actors, both contributing to the decrease of dependency on foreign peace consolidation and sustainable development capacities. In order to contribute to the sustainable development of Afghanistan, the majority of actors

attempt to link to a more or lesser degree with national peace consolidation and sustainable development objectives, traditional Afghan peace mechanisms, and the Afghan National Development Strategy in particular.

The project, which is scheduled to end in December 2014, has managed to link closely not only with the existing MDG agenda, but also with the upcoming post-2015 UN Development one. Tackling the link between development and peace and security concerns, the project was developed and implemented closely in line with the UN System Task Team's "Peace and Security" Thematic Think Piece, offering a set of recommendations in the direction of systemic peacebuilding strategy development and implementation, and related capacity building requirements.

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